

Dickson
Teacher's Bible

JOHN



Roger E. Dickson

2016

JOHN

WRITER

The writer of this inspired letter is the apostle John, the brother of James and son of Zebedee and Salome. John was a Jew from Galilee of Palestine who was very familiar with the geography of his homeland (1:44; 2:1; 4:5,6,21; 9:7; 11:18; 18:1). As a Jew, he was also very familiar with Jewish religious traditions (1:19-38; 4:9,20). Those to whom he wrote were not that familiar with either Palestine or Jewish customs and religion. Therefore, John was careful to describe in his writing various locations of Palestine, Jewish customs and religion with which his readers were not familiar.

Though John does not specifically identify himself in the letter, Bible students have associated the “beloved disciple,” who was a close companion of Jesus, to be the apostle John (13:23; 18:15,16; 19:25-27; 21:20). The early Christians knew the identity of the “beloved disciple.” Therefore, John could identify himself as the author of the letter by simply referring to himself as the “beloved disciple.” Since James, the brother of John, was killed early in the history of the church (At 12:2), and Peter, Philip and Thomas are spoken of in the third person in the letter, we would assume that John is the best candidate for authorship of this letter.

John was from Bethsaida. He was one of two sons of Zebedee and a fisherman by trade (Mk 1:19,20). Salome, his mother, was possibly the sister of Mary who was the mother of Jesus (Compare Mt 27:56; Mk 15:40; Jn 19:23). He and his brother James were partners with Peter and Andrew in a fishing business on the Sea of Galilee. John, and his brother James, were called the “sons of Thunder” (Mk 3:17). John was the disciple who “saw and believed” in 20:8.

The name John means, “the Lord is gracious.” John is known as the apostle of love because of his great writings on this subject in the New Testament. Tradition says that he died around Ephesus the latter part of the 1st century. It is believed that he was the last Christ-sent apostle to die.

The literary style and Greek language used in John, 1,2,3 John and Revelation link these five books to the same author. The Greek text is easy to read, with a vocabulary that is similar throughout all five letters. It is for this reason that few Bible students question that John wrote these New Testament books.

DATE

There has been much speculation concerning the date when John wrote this document. Dates have been given everywhere from A.D. 40 to 96. Many students have affirmed a date somewhere between A.D. 80 and 90. However, it could have been written earlier, possibly between A.D. 60 and 70, a time of social turmoil

before the destruction of national Israel in A.D. 70, when a document as this needed to be written in order to affirm that Jesus was the Christ (Messiah) and Son of God (20:30,31).

It was a time when those outside the cultural and religious center of Palestine were seeking evidence upon which to base their faith in Jesus as the Christ. In the historical context of John's readers, there were possibly denials, or at least doubts within the Christian community, that Jesus was the Christ and Son of God. Jesus and the apostles had prophesied of the falling away that would be led by false christs and false teachers (Mt 24:23,24). The work of false christs came about in the decade before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. It is for this reason that John and other New Testament writers, specifically Peter, James and Jude, wrote to defend the faith against those who denied the incarnation of the Son of God. In view of the apologetic nature of the document with reference to the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles throughout the world, the more probable date of writing would be sometime before A.D. 70.

In view of the fact that John introduces new material that is not recorded in either Matthew, Mark or Luke, it could be affirmed that John also wrote with the purpose of adding new information and details of the life of Jesus that had not been recorded by any of the other three recorders of His ministry. This would place the writing of John after the writing of Matthew, Mark and Luke, but before A.D. 70. John would thus be the last to write concerning the life and ministry of Jesus before His ascension.

THEME

John explains his reason for recording seven specific miracles of Jesus in John 20:30,31. *"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name."*

PURPOSE

John's audience was not familiar with the land of Palestine, Jewish traditions, or Old Testament prophecy concerning the Messiah. They possibly had little information concerning the deity of Jesus. John thus wrote in order to give a defense of Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God. Since Jesus is such, John affirmed that the teachings of Jesus were not the invention of men. They were the revelation of God to man through Jesus Christ. Through Jesus and His teaching, John affirms that one establishes a relationship with God who has reached out to humanity through Jesus. Therefore, John writes in order that his audience establish this relationship by accepting Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God.

John writes in order to produce faith (20:30,31). After the prologue of 1:1-18, he presents his case in seven natural divisions of the book: (1) 1:19 – 4:54; (2) 5 – 6, (3) 7 – 11:53, (4) 11:54 – 12, (5) 13 – 17, (6) 18 – 20, (7) 21. In these seven divisions, John records seven miraculous works of Jesus in order to give evidence for the sonship of Jesus. These evidences are (1) the changing of water into wine (2:1-11), (2) the healing of an officer's son (4:46-54), (3) the healing of a cripple (5:1-9), (4) the feeding of 5,000 (6:1-14), (5) the walking on water (6:16-30), (6) the healing of a blind man (9:1-12), and (7) the raising of Lazarus (11:1-46).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Though the systematic theology of Gnosticism was not formalized until the first part of the 2nd century, various concepts of what would later consolidate into Gnostic theology were finding their way into Christian thought during the middle and latter half of the 1st century. In this document, and especially the letters of 1 & 2 John, John deals with the foundational principles of Gnosticism (See comments in intro. to 1 Jn).

Since he identifies several locations in Palestine, we would assume that John's original audience was far removed from Palestine, either in time, distance, or both. His audience could have been greatly influenced by the religious beliefs of the culture in which they lived. The great influx of Gentiles into the church, who came out of the background of Gnostic concepts, possibly brought into the church the beginnings of the heresy of Gnosticism that would eventually take much of the church into apostasy in the 2nd century.

The Holy Spirit foreknew the 2nd century apostasy. He thus had this document of defense penned in order to guard the church against such and also give faithful believers a defense with which to stand against those who would deny the deity of Jesus. Since John wrote for this purpose, this document is a relevant document to be used to defend the validity of Christianity. As the student studies through the material that John relates to us, the careful student will focus on those evidences that he uses to prove that Jesus is the Christ and Son of God (Jn 20:30,31). John assumes that what he writes will produce a faith response.

CHAPTER 1

Revelation Of The Son Of God
(1:1-18)

THE REVELATION OF GOD

1:1 *In the beginning:* This was the beginning of the creation of all things (Gn 1:1; see Pv 8:22,23; Jn 17:5; Ep 1:4; 1 Jn

1:1; Rv 5:14). John begins this epistle by explaining who Jesus is. In doing so, he explains the purpose for the origin of all things. In order to understand the purpose for the existence of all things, we must understand what John here states concerning the creator of all things. All

things were created by and for Jesus (Cl 1:16). **Was:** This Greek verb is in the imperfect tense. Reference is to continuous action in past time. The Word about whom John speaks was in continuous existence in eternity before the time of creation. He was not a part of creation. The material world did not coexist with Deity in eternity. Deity first existed, and from Deity came that which now exists. **The Word:** Jesus is the Word, and thus, He is the totality of God's message to man (vss 14,18; see 1 Jn 1:1; Rv 19:13; compare Ps 33:6). The Greek word *logos* that is used here was often used by ancient philosophers as Philo (30 B.C. - A.D. 40). They used the word to refer to concepts as an impersonal individual who stood between man and a god who was considered an ultimate purity, reason and intelligence. However, John does not here introduce the vague concepts of unbelieving philosophers who had no revelation from the true and living God. He introduces Jesus as the personal and divine creating manifestation of the Godhead who brought all things into existence. There is no word in the vocabulary of man that could truly define the essence and character of Jesus before the incarnation. We are thus left with limitations in our complete definition of God. John's use of *logos* to embody the meaning of the revelation of God to man emphasizes to some extent that Jesus was God's communication of His word to man. The incarnation was God's ultimate communication to man concerning His plan to save all men. Jesus is the revelation and expression of God to man for the purpose

of revealing His grace (vs 17; 14:9; Cl 2:9; Hb 1:1-3; Ph 2:5-8). **With God:** The Word (Jesus) was in existence with God before the creation. He was in equality with God in existence, character and essence (vs 18; 17:5; Ph 2:6,7). The Word was with God in the sense of being God. **The Word was God:** The Greek article before the word "God" (*Theos*) is not present in the Greek text. This does not mean that the Word was "a" God. John is here emphasizing the quality of the Word. The Word was deity. The Word was divine (20:28). The preexistent Son of God was not an individual part of God or one of three gods. The Son was God. Though God has manifested Himself to us on earth in three ways in reference to His work to bring about the plan of salvation, we must not assume that there are three different and separate Gods identified as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God has manifested Himself in many ways. However, His manifestation through what we consider different personalities does not mean that the origin of the personalities is divided into three Gods. We must admit that our understanding is limited as to how God can so manifest Himself. But we must never presume that the character, being and essence of God is limited to the realm of our understanding. Before the incarnation of the Word, John simply stated that the Word was God. The Word was God, and thus, He embodied Himself through Jesus in order to make His final revelation to man concerning His plan of salvation.

1:2 In the beginning with God: The

preexistent Word was identified to be with God in the use of the Hebrew plural word *Elohim* in Genesis 1:1. "*In the beginning God [Elohim] created the heavens and the earth.*" After the initial creation, Moses recorded, "*Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image ...'*" (Gn 1:26,27). The eternal *Logos* was there with the "Us" in the beginning in the creation of man. It is from this beginning that God now starts to explain to us the revelation of the Word in order to bring the message of salvation to man who was created after His image.

1:3 All things were made by Him: "*For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him*" (Cl 1:16; see Ps 33:6; 1 Co 8:6; Ep 3:9; Hb 1:2,10). All that exists in the material world was brought into existence from that which did not exist (Hb 11:3). Such was done through the creative power of the Word. **Were made:** This Greek verb is aorist tense. Emphasis is on a onetime event or happening in the past. By using this form of the verb, John explains the instantaneous creation of all things at one time in the past. There was no evolutionary development of either the geological or biological world. There was simply a calling into existence of all things through the power of the word of God (See Gn 1; Ps 33:6). **By Him:** It was the work of the Son of God to work in the creation of all things (Cl 1:15-18). God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, worked through the Son to create that

which exists (Hb 1:2). It was not that any manifestation of God worked separately or apart from the totality of the purpose of God. The totality of God worked in harmony. However, God the Holy Spirit wants us to understand from our human perspective that it was the Word, Jesus, who directly functioned in the capacity of creator. It was not that the Word was the agent of creation, for such a concept places the Word before creation in a lower "form" than the totality of God (Compare Ph 2:6,7). The Word was the working of God to create all things. When understanding the word "God" in the Bible, the biblical student should be cautious not to think that there are lesser or greater gods of God. God is one, and to be one, all that is of His essence and being must be the same. There are no minorities within the Godhead of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All are superlatives, for only in this way can there be one God. **Without Him:** John wants us to understand that there was no evolution of that which now exists. Nothing came into existence without the creative work of the Word. All the material world now exists because it was created out of that which did not exist. John has thus stated His major proposition for this epistle. By the time he comes to his conclusion in 20:30,31, he will have recorded seven miraculous works of Jesus that prove that He is the Son of God, and thus, the Lord of all creation. Since He was the creator, then it logically follows that He is in control of all creation (Ep 1:20-22; Hb 1:3).

1:4 In Him was life: Since the Word

was the creator of life, then certainly in Him is both the origin and sustenance of life (14:6; Hb 1:3; 1 Jn 5:11). "Life" is the key word of the entire epistle. John uses the word thirty-six times. In these first few verses John wants us to understand that all physical life originated from the Word. Throughout the epistle, he wants us to understand that all spiritual life must originate from the Word. It is this life that originates from the Word who brings light to that which was created (3:19-21; 8:12; 12:35). There is no other source of life and light than that which originates from the Word. There is no other source of light that will direct man to the source of life than that which is offered through Jesus. *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me"* (14:6; compare At 4:12). *"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"* (8:12).

1:5 Without the revelation of the light of God, all men are condemned to sin and death (Rm 3:9,10,23; 6:23). Into this condition of the world the Word was manifested. Jesus came to bring grace as the means by which men can be delivered from a predicament of sin and death. He was the manifestation of the righteousness of God to men who could not deliver themselves from the darkness of their own sin (See 8:19; 12:46; Mt 4:15,16; At 26:18; Ep 3:1-4; 5:8,11). ***Did not understand it:*** This has been a difficult phrase for translators to translate. The Greek word for "understand" means "to overcome." This definition would

probably best fit the meaning of what John is trying to convey, though the words "understand" or "comprehend" convey the interpretation of the text. The light was manifested in the world and the forces of darkness could not understand the purpose and work of God to bring the plan of salvation to man. In this sense, Satan could not, through the morally corrupted enemies of Jesus, either understand or stop the plan of God, for the mystery had not been revealed to Satan. Those of unbelieving humanity could reject the work of the Word (vss 10,11). However, in their rejection they could not stop what God was doing through the Word. It was natural for Satan to work against anything that God would do through Jesus, though he did not understand that through the cross he would be crushed.

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN

1:6,7 *John:* John the Baptist was a unique prophet for he was specifically sent by God for a special purpose (Ml 3:1; Mt 3:1ff; Lk 3:2). ***To bear witness:*** As all prophets, it was not the work of John to call attention to himself. He came to announce the coming of One after him (3:25-36; 5:33-35). He came to prepare the way for Jesus that all men might believe on Him (At 19:4; compare 20:30,31).

1:8,9 John came to bear witness of Jesus as the light that proceeded from God. Jesus was the "true light" in that He was the only one who was sent forth directly from God. Only of Jesus are statements as this made in Scripture.

Therefore, Jesus cannot be compared with Moses or Elijah and John himself. Jesus was the Son of God, and thus, the only begotten who has come forth from God into the world (3:16). Because He is the only one who has come forth from God as the light of the world, then there have been no prophets since Jesus who could claim to be as He was among men. Jesus was not one in a succession of prophets or sons of God whom God has sent into the world. He is the only Son of God who came forth from God to reveal to man the one true God.

1:10,11 *The world did not know*

Him: The world should have known Him because He was the creator of the world. Because the unbelieving world had digressed from the nature of the Creator, the world did not know its own Creator (See At 13:27; 1 Co 8:6; Cl 1:16; Hb 1:2).

His own: Jesus came to the Jews who were in a covenant relationship with God, and thus, had been given the Sinai law (Rm 3:1,2). However, by the time Jesus came, the majority of the Jews had created a religion after their own traditions (Is 53:1; Mt 13:13-15; see comments Mt 15:1-9; Mk 7:1-9). Jesus did not fit into the Jew's definition of who the Messiah should be. He did not conform to their religious traditionalism. Therefore, the majority of the Jews rejected Jesus (Mt 21:33-45; Lk 19:12-27; compare Mt 23:37; Rm 10:21; compare comments Rm 3 - 5).

1:12 *As many as received Him:* We must not assume that all Israel rejected Jesus. Those who were sons of Abraham by faith accepted Him as the Mes-

siah and Savior of the world. Those who "received Him" and "believed in His name" were given the privilege of becoming the sons of God. Receiving and believing did not constitute one as a son of God. Receiving and believing were only conditions upon which one must move into doing that which God requires to become a son of God. "*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*" (Gl 3:26,27; see At 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pt 3:21).

1:13 *Who were born:* John now introduces the concept of a spiritual birth that refers to one being born into sonship. When Nicodemus came to Jesus after deducting, because of His miracles, that He was sent from God, Jesus taught him concerning the new birth that was coming (3:3-5). John's reference in the context of 3:3-5 is to one's spiritual renewal as a result of being born again from the waters of baptism (See comments Gl 3:26,27; 1 Pt 1:23). This birth is not the result of one's ancestral heritage from Abraham. Neither is it the physical birth that would result from a sexual relationship between a man and woman. Neither is the birth generated from the religious inventions of men who would pronounce themselves righteous before God. The new birth is from God. There is thus no cleansing power in the action of baptism. The cleansing of sin at the point of baptism originates from the One against whom sin has been committed. It is God who justifies. It is God who forgives sin. However, His forgiveness and justification are given when men respond by faith

to be buried and resurrected with the One who died for our sins (See comments Rm 6:3-6). It is at the point of baptism, therefore, that one is born again.

THE INCARNATION

1:14 *The Word was made flesh:*

John's statement presupposes preexistence of the Word. Before the Word was incarnate, the Word existed as God in eternity (vs 1; see comments Ph 2:5-8). The word "became" in this verse emphasizes the fact that the Word came into the world in the form of physical flesh at a specific time in history. Philippians 2:6,7 teaches that Jesus gave up equality with God. However, He did not give up the totality of His deity. To what extent the Word gave up being on an equality with God will always be subject to discussion. Though we might not fully understand Jesus giving up the form of God, we can understand that He became flesh as man (1 Jn 1:1,2). What John wants us to understand is that the Son was not a phantom or spirit that dwelt among men. He became as man. "Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren ..." (Hb 2:17; see Rm 1:3; Gl 4:4; 1 Tm 3:16; Hb 2:14; 1 Jn 1:1). **Dwelt among us:** The Greek text would literally read here that He "set up a tent" among us. Deity indwelt a physical body in order to be identified with man for the purpose of accomplishing the plan of redemption (Hb 2:17-18; compare Rv 7:15; 12:12; 21:3). **Beheld His glory:** Emphasis here is on a continual gaze. John wants to reassure us that as a personal witness to Jesus, that he, as well as the other

apostles, continually lived with the incarnate Word (See comments 1 Jn 1:1,2). They gazed upon His glory, for He was the representative of God on earth (Is 40:5; 2 Pt 1:16-18). **Only begotten:** John now introduces us to the uniqueness of the incarnate Word. Jesus was not one in a series of "sons of God." He was the only one sent forth as God incarnate among men. He was the *monogenes* (only begotten) Son. The incarnate *Logos* was the only one ever to come forth from God (vs 18; 8:16-18; 1 Jn 4:9). He had no predecessors from God. There would be no one as He who would come after Him. He was the one and only incarnate Son of God, and thus, the *monogenes* from God. **Full of grace and truth:** Jesus was the revelation of God's grace. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Ti 2:11). "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rm 5:8; see 1 Jn 1:5; 4:8,16). Jesus was God's statement that His grace had come to man regardless of the sin of man. The manifestation of God's presence among men witnessed to the truth that all men must approach God through Jesus. "And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (8:32). The truth was that grace had been revealed through Jesus. Therefore, if any man would approach God, he must go through Jesus. "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (14:6; see At 4:12). Any religion of the world, therefore, that does not have Jesus as Savior and High Priest, cannot begin to

bring its worshipers unto God. It is only through Jesus that we can approach unto God, and thus, Jesus must be our mediator through whom we approach God.

1:15 *He was before me:* God had revealed to John the Baptist the nature of who Jesus was. Therefore, John testified of the preexistence of Jesus. John was six months older than Jesus in the flesh. However, Jesus existed in eternity before John.

1:16 All those who have responded to Jesus by receiving, believing and obeying the gospel, have received the fullness of what He offered on the cross. In Him are all spiritual blessings that refer to our salvation. Therefore, those who are born again into Him, enjoy the saving grace of God that supplies the fullness of what Jesus offers through His atoning sacrifice (See comments Rm 6:3-6; Ep 1:3; 2:1-10). *Grace upon grace:* Those who are in Christ have responded to the grace of God by immersion into Christ in order to receive forgiveness of sins (Ep 1:7). Those who are immersed are born into a realm of grace wherein they work in response to God's grace (See comments 1 Co 15:10; 2 Co 4:15; Ep 2:10). We have been saved by grace in order to continually walk in thanksgiving of the grace of God (Ep 2:1-10).

1:17 The Sinai law was given to Israel through Moses who was less than Jesus because he was not as the incarnate Son of God (Ex 20:1; see comments Hb 3:1-6). Moses was a deliverer, but only a deliverer from Egyptian captivity. Jesus was our deliverer from sin. In contrast to law that was given through

Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus. Jesus was the manifestation of the grace of God that was extended toward man who was under the condemnation of law (See comments Rm 3:20; 5:21; Gl 2:16; Ti 2:11). The truth was revealed that Jesus died for our sins in order to answer our problem of sin and death. He was resurrected in order to answer our problem of physical death (See comments 1 Co 15:20-22; Hb 2:14,15). In John's reference to Jesus' use of the word "truth," emphasis is on the same meaning as the "truth of the gospel" to which Paul refers (See comments Gl 2:5,14). The truth is the sacrificial atonement of God on the cross for our sins. It is the resurrection of the incarnate Son of God in order to give hope of resurrection to those who have obeyed this gospel event (Rm 6:3-6). This is the truth. This is the truth that saves as a result of God's grace.

1:18 No man has seen God because no man can see that which is spirit, and God is spirit (4:24; see Ex 33:20; Mt 11:27; 1 Tm 6:16; 1 Jn 4:12). Our senses are limited to this physical world. Therefore, no one can sense that which is of the spirit world unless God allows a manifestation of the spirit world to be revealed to man. The word "see" in this context means more than seeing a physical or supernatural presentation of either God or one that God would allow to be manifested as in Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration (Mt 17; see Ex 24:10; Jb 42:5). John seeks to emphasize the importance of the manifestation of the *Logos* among men in order that men perceive the eternal Godhead. One

“sees” God by understanding Jesus as the one sent from God. ***The only begotten God ... has declared Him:*** The incarnate Word is the declaration of God among men (3:16,18; 14:9; Ps 2:7; 1 Jn 4:9). Some of the older and most reliable biblical manuscripts read, “only begotten God.” Though some translations have retained the text variant to read “only begotten Son,” reference to Jesus as God is a biblical truth (Is 9:6; Ti 2:13). John’s argument of this first chapter is this truth. Jesus was in the beginning when all things were created, for He was the creator of all things. And being the creator of all things, He was God (Cl 1:16). Only God can create. Nothing that is created has indigenous power within itself to create. Therefore, since Jesus was the source from which all things came into being, then the logical conclusion is that He is of the original source of power from which all things were created. He is thus God. And in reference to man on earth and the incarnation, He is the only manifestation of God brought forth on earth.

Public Ministry Of The Son Of God

(1:19 – 12:50)

Outline: (1) The witness of John the Baptist (1:19-28), (2) John introduces Jesus (1:29-34), (3) Gathering of the disciples (1:35-42), (4) Call of Philip and Nathanael (1:43-51), (5) Water into wine (2:1-12), (6) First cleansing of the temple (2:13-25), (7) Nicodemus comes to Jesus (3:1-24), (8) John’s testimony (3:25-36), (9) The Samaritan woman (4:1-42), (10) Healing a nobleman’s son (4:43-54), (11) Healing a crippled man (5:1-15), (12) Rejection by religious leaders (5:16-29), (13) Wit-

nesses of Jesus (5:30-47), (14) Feeding the five thousand (6:1-15), (15) The storm at sea (6:16-21), (16) Jesus as the bread of life (6:22-52), (17) Some leave Jesus (6:53 – 7:1), (18) The feast of Tabernacles (7:2-9), (19) Questions concerning Jesus (7:10-29), (20) Attempt to arrest Jesus (7:30-53), (21) Jesus shows mercy and forgiveness (8:1-11), (22) The light of the world (8:12-20), (23) Jesus exposes His enemies (8:21-30), (24) True sons of Abraham (8:31-59), (25) Healing of a man born blind (9:1-34), (26) Dealing with rejection (9:35-41), (27) Jesus as the Good Shepherd (10:1-6), (28) Jesus as the door (10:7-21), (29) Jesus at the feast of Dedication (10:22-30), (30) Jewish hostility (10:31-42), (31) The death of Lazarus (11:1-16), (32) The resurrection of Lazarus (11:17-44), (33) Reaction to Lazarus’ resurrection (11:45-57), (34) Anointing of Jesus at Bethany (12:1-11), (35) The triumphal entry (12:12-19), (36) Requests of some Greeks (12:20-35), (37) Belief and confession (12:37-50)

THE WITNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

1:19-21 *The testimony:* Throughout the remainder of this chapter John records the testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus, as well as, the response of John’s disciples to the coming of Jesus. ***The Jews:*** The Jews were the initial persecutors of the church. At the time John wrote this letter, the term “the Jews” was known among his readers as those who set themselves in opposition to Jesus and His work through His disciples. These were the unbelieving and disobedient Jews of the Israelite nation. Specifically, these were the religious leaders of Judaism in Jerusalem. ***Who are you:*** In the context here the Sanhedrin possibly sent

out representatives to John who was preaching in the wilderness (See comments Mt 3:1-12; Lk 3:1-20). Because of the multitudes who were going out from Jerusalem to hear John, these religious leaders were as curious as the rest of the people concerning the preaching of this one who wore camel's hair clothing and ate locusts. ***I am not the Christ:*** John stated that he was neither the Messiah, Elijah, nor the Prophet for which Israel hoped (3:28; Lk 3:15; At 13:25). ***Elijah:*** Israel was looking for the one who would come in the spirit and power of Elijah (Mt 17:12). Some had interpreted this to mean that Elijah would be resurrected and come as the forerunner of the Messiah. John's literal answer to their literal question was thus true. Though John was the fulfillment of Malachi 4:5, he was not the resurrected Elijah. What the prophecy meant was that John came with the zeal of Elijah and the power of a prophet among the people (See comments Mt 11:14; 17:10-13; Lk 1:17). However, those who were of rebellious and envious hearts would not understand what John was saying. Many of the Jews were looking for a physical kingdom that would be established by a Messiah who would reign as king in Jerusalem. This misunderstanding of prophecy concerning the Messiah would also hinder their understanding concerning the Messiah. ***The Prophet:*** Reference here is to the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 18:15-18. Israel was looking for the Prophet that Moses said would come after him. There were many prophets between Moses and Jesus. However, the one about whom

Moses spoke would be like unto him. Jesus was that Prophet (See 6:14; 7:40; At 3:19-23; 7:37). Moses was prophesying of a specific Prophet, not a succession of prophets who would come after him. Therefore, Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:15-18. There would be no more fulfillments of the prophecy in any other man.

1:22,23 *The voice of one crying in the wilderness:* In answer to their question, John gave a clear answer that he was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3 (Mt 3:1; Mt 3:3-6; Mk 1:3; Lk 3:4). He was the one who came to prepare the way for the coming King. He prepared the way by preaching repentance and the kingdom of God. He alerted the minds of the people to the presence of God, and thus, awakened within the hearts of the people a conscience that they accept the One coming after him.

1:24,25 *Why then are you baptizing:* They were perplexed concerning the work of baptizing (immersing) that John was doing. They were more concerned over this than the teaching of John. Such may suggest that the work of baptizing was something that was new to them. John baptized unto repentance for remission of sins (Mk 1:4). The Jews certainly did not practice this immersion before the coming of John. However, the Jews did understand that the practice of baptizing would be associated with the coming of the Messiah (Ez 36:25; 37:23). Because of this understanding they asked him concerning his baptizing. Since he was baptizing, they asked if he were the Christ, Elijah or the Prophet.

1:26-28 *Baptize in water:* The Greek text here literally means to immerse “in water” (vs 33; Mt 3:11). God had commissioned John through inspiration to immerse. He was not carrying on a Jewish custom of cleansing. He was immersing in order to cleanse the nation through repentance in order to spiritually prepare the people to accept the Messiah who was coming after him and the Messiah’s kingdom reign. The kingdom reign of the Messiah was to be a spiritual kingdom wherein the will of God would be done on earth in the hearts of men as it was done in heaven (See comments Mt 6:9,10; Lk 17:20,21). John’s work was to spiritually prepare the people to receive the word of the Messiah who was among them at the time John spoke. ***Bethany:*** Some translations read “Bethabara” (Compare 10:40; Jg 7:24). John was preaching on the east side of the Jordan River.

JOHN INTRODUCES JESUS

(Mt 3:13-17; Mk 1:9-11; Lk 3:21,22)

1:29 *The Lamb of God:* In the Sinai law, God instituted that the sacrificial lamb be the center of Israel’s sacrifices. This was especially true of the Passover feast when a sacrifice was made to celebrate the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian captivity. Jesus is the antitype, or substance to which the shadow of the sacrificial lamb pointed (Ex 12:3; Jn 19:36; At 8:32; 1 Co 5:7; Rv 5:6-14). ***Takes away the sin:*** The blood of animal sacrifices in the Sinai law could not take away the sins of the people (Hb 10:1-4; see Lv 16). Only the One against

whom the sins were committed could make the sacrifice for the sins of men. Therefore, only the incarnate God could be offered to take away the sins that exist between God and man. Nothing that was of this world could deal with the sin problem that existed with what was not of this world. Therefore, it was necessary that God incarnate into flesh in order to become the sacrifice for the sins of those who were created after His image. Jesus thus came to be the atonement for man’s sins (Is 53:7,11; Mt 8:17; At 8:32; 1 Pt 1:19; Rv 5:6). ***Of the world:*** John wants to make it clear to the Jews, who have come out to question him, that the sacrifice of the Lamb of God was not for the Jews only. The sacrifice was for all mankind (Compare 1 Co 6:20; 15:3; Rm 3:25; Gl 1:4; 1 Tm 2:6; Hb 1:3; 1 Pt 1:18,19; 2:24; 1 Jn 2:1,2; 3:5; 4:10).

1:30,31 *He was before Me:* Though John was born six months before Jesus (Lk 1:36), he here confesses to the pre-existence of Jesus before him (vss 15,17; 1:1,2). John thus confesses that Jesus is greater than he is because He existed before he was born. John knew that the Messiah was coming. However, he did not know that Jesus, whom he knew from childhood, would be that Messiah.

1:32,33 God had revealed to John that he would identify the One who was the Messiah of Israel and the Lamb of God that would take away the sins of the world. The signal would be the descending of the Holy Spirit like a dove upon the anointed One (See Lk 3:22; Hb 1:9). ***Like a dove:*** We must not assume that the Holy Spirit was here incarnate in the

body of a dove. John uses a simile which is a comparison using "like" or "as." This form of metaphor makes a comparison with something that is earthly and understood by the readers. When this event occurred, those of the culture of the time considered the dove to be a symbol of peace and mercy. God signaled to the people by the descending of the Holy Spirit like a dove a message of peace and mercy. This message was coming to all men through Jesus. ***He who baptizes in the Holy Spirit:*** Jesus is the One who would immerse with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would not be the one who would immerse others with Himself. His coming upon people would be for specific purposes at specific times (See comments Mt 3:11; At 2:4; 10:44). It would be the apostles who would be immersed with the Holy Spirit (Lk 24:49; At 2:1-4).

1:34 *This is the Son of God:* When John witnessed the signal of God that Jesus was truly the Lamb of God, he affirmed that Jesus was deity by proclaiming Him as the Son of God. All of John's work was for this moment. He had immersed people in order to prepare their hearts to accept the Messiah, the Anointed One of God (Lk 1:16,17). He had immersed people for the remission of sins (Mk 1:4). In this context, he immersed Jesus in order that Jesus fulfill all righteousness (vs 7; see comments Mt 3:15). After Jesus' baptism, God had identified to John that Jesus was the Anointed One of God, and thus, the One for whom all Israel had been waiting. Therefore, it was time for John to decrease his ministry and Jesus to increase in min-

istry among the people. John realized that his mission was coming to a close.

GATHERING OF THE DISCIPLES

1:35 *The next day:* The following events took place the day after the meeting with the delegation of Jews who had come from Jerusalem (vss 19-28). It was after Jesus' baptism that He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted (Mt 3:13 - 4:1). At the time the events occurred that are recorded in this verse, Jesus had already fasted forty days in the wilderness (Mt 4:1-11).

1:36,37 *Two disciples:* These two disciples would be Andrew (vs 40), and possibly, John who wrote this narrative. Both were formerly disciples of John the Baptist (See Mt 4:18-25). As Jesus walked by them, they looked upon Him with the intention of following Him because of John's proclamation that He was the Lamb of God. During the transition from John to Jesus, some of the disciples of John, before they knew and accepted Jesus, were apparently jealous that Jesus was gathering more disciples (See comments 4:1-3). John perceived this attitude, and thus, he again proclaims here that Jesus is the Lamb of God. It was not John's desire to control a following of disciples. He realized that his work was to hand over the loyalty of the people to Jesus. Humble evangelists do the same. They do not preach to gain a following, but to bring men to Jesus. ***Followed Jesus:*** The result of John's work to deliver unto the Messiah all who had followed him, begins here with the mention of these two disciples who followed Jesus (See Mt 4:20-22).

1:38 Rabbi: The fact that John had to define this common Hebrew word to those to whom he was writing, indicates that his readers were far removed from the Palestinian religious environment. This common term was used among the Jews to identify their teachers who were both the intellectual and spiritual leaders of Israel.

1:39 Those who are seeking to be taught will stay as close to the teacher as possible. Jesus' ministry of teaching begins with these two disciples and explodes into millions throughout the world. Wherever the work of God is established today, it starts as a mustard seed and spreads to all in any society (See comments Mt 13:31,32). **Tenth hour:** Because John is writing to a Gentile audience, he uses Roman time throughout the epistle. The tenth hour, therefore, would refer to 10:00^{AM}.

1:40-42 The first two disciples of Jesus were Andrew and John. John was the inspired writer of this document. Andrew was the brother of Peter (6:8; 12:22; Mt 4:18; Mk 1:29; 13:3). Both were in a fishing business with the two brothers, James and John, who were the sons of Zebedee. **First found his own brother:** When one finds the Messiah, the first inclination is to find one's relatives to tell them the good news. **Found the Messiah:** The receptivity of those who were the Israel by faith is here manifested in the actions of Andrew. They were waiting for the Messiah with great anticipation. We would assume that they knew that the prophecies of the Messiah were about to be fulfilled. Therefore, upon the

basis of John's announcement that Jesus was the Lamb of God, Andrew willingly believed. **He brought him to Jesus:** And so, such is the work of every disciple who finds Jesus. Those who are of a receptive heart as Andrew will bring people to Jesus. Their expectations of the Messiah will be fulfilled only when they have brought others to Jesus (See At 8:4).

Simon: The meaning of names was significant to the Jews. Therefore, Jesus changes Simon's name to Cephas, the Aramaic word that means "a stone" or "rock" (1 Co 1:12; 15:5; Gl 2:9). His name comes from the Greek word *petros* that means "rock." Peter is usually referred to after the Greek term "Peter" throughout the New Testament. By changing his name to "rock," Jesus envisions the work of Peter in reference to the establishment of the church and the beginning of evangelism in the 1st century. He would have to be a strong personality upon whom men would find strength in times of great trial and persecution (See comments Mt 16:18).

CALL OF PHILIP AND NATHANAEL

1:43-45 Philip: Philip grew up in the same city as Peter, Andrew, James and John (12:21). It is likely that all of these men had known one another for many years before they were called by Jesus. **Nathanael:** It is possible that this Nathanael is the same man as Bartholomew who was one of the apostles (Mt 10:3). Philip's reaction to finding Jesus was the same as Andrew's. He went to find someone else and tell

them about the One he had found. He also recognized that Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah (See Gn 3:15; 49:10; Dt 18:18; Is 4:2; 7:14; 9:6; compare Lk 24:27,44). The reaction of these Jewish men in relation to finding Jesus was completely different from those who were of the Jewish religious hierarchy of Jerusalem. These Galileans represented the common religious people of Israel who were waiting for the Messiah. They could understand the prophets without the authoritarian interpretations of the scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem. The application of the prophecies was not difficult to do. Therefore, the religious leaders' rejection of Jesus was not based on a difficulty of applying the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy of Jesus. Their minds were prejudiced against Jesus because He did not conform to their religious system or behavior. The humble presence of Jesus intimidated them to jealousy. His presence did so because He threatened their leadership positions among the people. Because He threatened their positions and possessions, they rejected Him, and eventually, carried out a plot to have Him killed (vs 11).

1:46 Before he met Jesus, Nathanael's reaction to Philip's announcement was negative. He questioned whether the Messiah could come from such an obscure village that was not even mentioned in the Old Testament (See 7:41,42). **Come and see:** Philip knew that if Nathanael encountered Jesus, he would be convinced. Before one accepts Jesus, he must see Jesus for

who He is. For this reason, John wrote this document. He wanted us to come and see through his inspired record of Jesus. He wants us to see Jesus' life and teachings, and thus, discover who Jesus really is (See comments 20:30,31).

1:47,48 *In whom there is no guile:* Nathanael had an honest personality. Jesus' ability to know the inward thoughts of individuals is clearly manifested in His seeing Nathanael's inner character of honesty (See also vs 42,43; 2:4; 3:1; 4:1; 16:18-29; Hb 4:13; compare Ps 32:2; 73:1).

1:49-51 Nathanael believed on the basis of what Jesus perceived him to be. His belief, therefore, was stimulated by only one pronouncement of Jesus. On the foundation of what Jesus did, he proclaimed Him to be the Son of God and King of Israel (18:37; Mt 21:5). The receptivity of Nathanael's heart, as well as the other disciples, is manifested in their willingness to believe. Those who are of a receptive heart will eagerly receive Jesus as these early disciples. When studying through the ministry of Jesus, much is often placed on the rejection of Jesus by the Jews, especially, the Jewish leadership. However, we must keep in mind that thousands of humble-hearted Jews as Andrew fully accepted Jesus for who He was. It was from this group of disciples that the gospel went forth into all the world. **You will see greater:** Jesus promised that the best was yet to come. The faith of all the disciples would grow as they experienced greater things throughout the ministry of Jesus (20:30,31). **Truly, truly:** Some transla-

tions render this phrase either “verily, verily” or “amen, amen.” This is a common phrase that is recorded by John throughout this epistle. Jesus makes this statement at the beginning of many of His pronouncements of emphatic truth. John records this introduction to key truths twenty-five times. **Angels of God:** As Jacob had witnessed angels descending and ascending on a ladder (Gn 28:10-22), so Jesus assured Nathanael that angelic beings would transition between heaven and earth throughout His ministry (See Mt 4:11; Lk 2:9,13; 22:43; At 1:10). Such

would be the sign of a unique era in the history of humanity. **Son of Man:** Jesus often used this phrase to identify Himself. In doing so, He was identifying His human nature. The phrase “Son of God” referred to His divine origin, nature and authority. As the Son of Man, He was the Messiah who fulfilled all prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. He was thus both the Son of Man, a reference to His fulfillment of prophecy, and Son of God, a reference to His origins, nature and divine authority.

CHAPTER 2

WATER INTO WINE

In this chapter is recorded the first of seven great miracles that Jesus worked and were recorded by John for the purpose of giving evidence to the sonship of Jesus (20:30,31; see “Purpose” in intro.).

2:1-3 Third day: This was three days after Nathanael became a follower of Jesus. **Cana:** See 21:2; Ja 19:28. It could be that Jesus and His disciples were at the marriage feast because of the invitation of Jesus’ mother. **They have no wine:** Jesus had worked no miracles in His life to this point. However, Mary turned to Jesus to ask Him to do something. Her dependence on Jesus at this time in her life may indicate that Joseph had already died. In this situation, she was aware of Jesus’ leadership, and thus, she asked Him to do something because of the embarrassing moment during the marriage feast.

2:4 Woman: In the Greek text this was not a harsh address to His mother.

However, Jesus was giving a mild rebuke to His mother. He used this occasion to initiate His ministry and the miracles that would confirm Him to be the Son of God (20:30,31). Her understanding of who He was must now make a change in their relationship with one another. She must be prepared for what will happen a little over three years from this time. Therefore, Jesus’ relationship with His mother here changes in the sense that His work is not to be directed according to her wishes. There is no scripture that indicates that Jesus’ work was under the control or commanding influence of Mary. In this mild rebuke, therefore, Jesus was telling Mary that He will deal with the situation in His own way and for the purpose for which He has been sent. **My hour has not yet come:** This statement should be understood in reference to the time Jesus would begin His ministry. In one sense, His ministry had already begun with the calling of the disciples.

What is meant here is that His opportunity to work the miracle on this particular occasion had not yet come (See 7:6).

2:5,6 Mary understood what Jesus wanted. At this time, she assumed her place in her relationship with Jesus that she would maintain throughout His ministry. **The custom of purification:** It was a Jewish religious tradition not to eat without extensive ceremonial cleansing of cups, pots and hands (See Mt 15:2; Mk 7:3,4). The content of these six stone waterpots was about twenty to thirty gallons each (about 27 liters each).

2:7-10 The miracle was in the transformation of the water into wine. The miracle was instantaneous and without any ceremonial performances on the part of Jesus. The miracle was simply worked, and the result known only to those who had direct dealings with filling the waterpots. **Master of the feast:** This man was the friend of the bridegroom who had charge over the organization of the feast. **Water that was made wine:** This was possibly the nonintoxicating fruit of the vine because everyone at the feast had drunk freely but they were not drunk. The Greek word that is translated "wine" (*oinos*) is a generic term that also refers to nonintoxicating fruit of the vine in several passages of the Septuagint (See Gn 40:11; Nm 6:4; 18:12; Dt 32:14; Jg 9:13; Is 65:8; 62:9; Jl 2:24). It was the normal custom at other feasts that the participants would drink freely until they were intoxicated. After the guests were intoxicated, then the inferior wine would be brought for the guests. However, at this feast the guests were not

drunk. If the wine they drank was intoxicating, they did not drink in order to become drunk. Neither Jesus, His mother, nor the disciples would be a part of a drunken feast as was characteristic of the feasts of the unbelieving world in which they lived. This is not a case where Jesus is justifying drunkenness or even the drinking of alcoholic beverages. One would certainly be using this event out of context if he used it in order to justify drinking alcohol in a manner to become intoxicated. Though drinking of wine was common in Jesus' day, the wine that was drunk was certainly not the high alcohol content of wines that are manufactured today for the purpose of producing intoxication. It would certainly be a lack of understanding of the Scriptures to affirm that Jesus here justified drunkenness when such is so sternly denounced in the Bible (See Pv 20:1; 23:31; Is 22:13).

2:11 In working this first miracle, Jesus manifested the hand of God at work in His ministry (3:2; 10:37,38). Since this was Jesus' first miracle, He had not worked any miraculous works in His life until this time. This fact argues against those who claim that Jesus worked miracles in His youth. He did not work miracles before this occasion because such miracles would not have occurred in harmony with the purpose of the miracles of His ministry. The miracles of His ministry were to confirm Him as the Son of God and to confirm the message of the abundant life He preached (3:2; 10:10; 20:30,31; Hb 2:3,4; see 20:30,31; Hb 2:3,4). Therefore, the miracles were to begin when His teach-

ing began. **Signs:** This is one word (*semeion*) that is used to identify the miraculous work of God. A miracle as a sign indicates something that is greater than the miraculous event itself. The miracle manifested that there was Someone behind the event of the miracle who was manifesting Himself through the miracle. Therefore, the miracle signalled to the beholders that God was at work. **His disciples believed:** Herein is the purpose for Jesus' miracles. The miracles confirmed Jesus to be the Prophet of God, and thus, they believed Him to be such (20:30,31; see Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4).

2:12 After the miracle of Cana, Jesus went down in elevation to the city of Capernaum. However, many in the city of Capernaum rejected Him (Mt 11:20-24). **His brothers:** Jesus had other physical brothers and sisters who were children of Mary and Joseph (See comments Mt 12:46; 13:55,56). James and Jude were among Jesus' brothers (See intro. to Js and Jd).

FIRST CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

2:13-17 Recorded here is the first trip that Jesus made to Jerusalem after the beginning of His earthly ministry. It was a requirement that all male Jews offer sacrifices in Jerusalem on the Passover. For those Jews who traveled from great distances, it was more convenient for them to wait and buy the animals for their sacrifices when they arrived in Jerusalem. This developed into commercialism surrounding the offering of the sacrifices. Sacrifices were made avail-

able, but money had to change hands in order to buy the sacrifices. Therefore, the money changers charged an unfair price for the animals, and thus, took advantage of the sincerity of those who came to offer the sacrifices (See comments Mt 21:12 where Jesus cleansed the temple for a second time at the end of His ministry). **A whip of small cords:** This was a scourge. The text does not state that Jesus actually struck anyone. However, the money changers were certainly startled and driven from the temple courtyard by the zeal of Jesus. One could also assume from this incident that Jesus was of a strong stature. His strong physique would have intimidated those who might have sought to stop Him. **House of merchandise:** The sin of these money changers was in the fact that they were taking advantage of the sincerity of those who had come to worship according to God's directions. They used religion as a means for profit. They were using the required religious actions of the sincere in order to make money (Compare Is 56:7; Mt 21:13; Mk 11:17). They cared more for their profit than they did for those who were seeking to make sacrifices to God according to the law. **Zeal for Your House:** The quotation is from Psalm 69:9. The Psalmist prophesied of the zeal of the Messiah for the work of the Father. By the end of the ministry of Jesus, His zeal to do the will of the Father had generated such animosity in the hearts of those who opposed Him, that they took Him to the cross. Jesus' zeal on this particular occasion established a good example for all those who would

seek to do the will of God. One must do that which is right. Jesus here did that which was right, though the consequences of His actions would stir up those who would set themselves against Him.

2:18,19 *What sign:* The sign would be His death, burial and resurrection (vs 21; see 6:30; Mt 12:38ff). Jesus did not come to work signs for those who were curious. Signs proved that He was from God (3:2; 20:30,31; Hb 2:3,4). However, those who opposed Jesus would not be convinced by any sign (See comments At 4:14-16). ***Destroy this temple:*** This was Herod's temple to which Jesus referred. It was an elaborate structure that had become the symbol of Jewish religious pride (See Mt 26:61; 27:40).

2:20-22 Because these Jews were hardened against Jesus, they completely misunderstood the significance of His statement. At this time in the ministry of Jesus, the disciples did not understand what He meant by His resurrection, for they too were looking for a Messiah who would restore the glory of national Israel (See comments At 1:6). ***Temple of His body:*** Jesus was referring to the death of His body (See 1 Co 3:16; 6:19; 2 Co 6:16; Cl 2:9; Hb 8:2). The resurrection of Jesus from the dead would be the foundation upon which millions would believe (Lk 24:46; At 6:14; 10:40; 1 Co 15:4). It would become the foundation of the faith of all Christians. It was not until after the resurrection that the disciples fully understood what Jesus meant by this statement (2:17; 12:16; 14:26; Lk 24:7,8).

2:23 Jesus worked many miracles

during this Passover feast. As a result, many believed on Him (20:30,31). The importance of His work during this Passover feast is seen in the fact that there were in Jerusalem Jews from throughout the Roman Empire (See comments At 2:8-12). This would have been their first contact with Jesus, and thus, they would return to their homelands in the Roman Empire with the experience of their encounter with Jesus. Three years later when these Jews returned to Jerusalem, they would experience something completely different (See Is 2:1-4).

2:24 *He knew all men:* Jesus knew that the Jews were waiting for the Messiah. His disciples had eagerly accepted Him as such in Galilee. He knew that there were many who were in Jerusalem for the Passover/Pentecost feast who were of the nature of His disciples. They would have sought to make Him a king on earth if He would have allowed it. But Jesus would not allow His popularity among a fickle people to detour His destiny to the cross. Likewise, those Christians who understand their destiny in service to God will not allow themselves to be detoured to unproductive works.

2:25 Jesus knew what was in the minds of men (See 1:42,47,48; 4:29; 6:61; 21:17). The Jews were looking for a political and military leader to lead them in freeing their nation from Roman. But it was not the nature of Jesus' kingdom to be an earthly military government (18:36-38). His kingdom would be greater than kings and kingdoms of this world. His messiahship was greater than being the fulfillment of the Jews' expect-

tations of deliverance from foreign occupation. If Jesus were merely a man, then certainly the temptation would have been too great at this time to resist the Jews' desires to make Him their king. He was not of this world. Therefore, He did not allow any desire for power on earth to detour Him from His kingdom reign in heaven (See Lk 1:30-33; Ep 1:20-22). Jesus came to deterritorialize man's wor-

ship and service to God. His disciples would not be limited to some territory as earthly kingdoms, and specifically, the nation of Israel. The disciples would not be directed toward some city as the physical center of reference for His people. The minds of men would be directed toward heaven (Cl 3:1-3). The territory of the kingdom would be the hearts of men in all the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15).

CHAPTER 3

NICODEMUS COMES TO JESUS

3:1 Nicodemus: As a Pharisee, Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin (See 7:45-52; 19:38,39). He was one of the few religious leaders in Jerusalem who believed in the message of John the Baptist, and subsequently, he was looking to Jesus at this time as the possible Messiah of Israel (vs 23). However, he was intimidated by the group of Pharisees who rejected Jesus, and thus, he did not openly confess Jesus, but came to Him in the night (12:42,43).

3:2 Came ... by night: The night certainly offered the best opportunity for Nicodemus and his fellow Jewish friends to have a private discussion with Jesus. However, in view of 12:42,43, their reason for coming at night was because of the intimidation of the unbelieving Pharisees who would cast them out of their fellowship if they accepted Jesus as the Messiah. The meeting that is recorded here, therefore, was a secret meeting where Nicodemus and his friends wanted a private discussion with Jesus in order to receive answers for questions they had concerning His possible messiahship. **We**

know that you are a teacher come from God: In the statement that Nicodemus here makes, the purpose for miracles is set forth. Jesus was confirmed to be a messenger from God because of the confirmation of the miracles that He did (vss 11,23; see comments Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4). Jesus was thus confirmed to be the Son of God with power from on high (9:16,33; 20:30,31; At 2:22). It was true that no man could do the miracles that Jesus did unless God was with him. For this reason, we must not assume that God had allowed Satan to work miracles through those who had given themselves over to his deceptions. If Satan could work confirming miracles through wicked people, then certainly the purpose of the miracles that Nicodemus here affirms would not be true. At least, if Satan worked miracles then there would be all sorts of confusion as to whom we must believe. This would especially be true today. It is affirmed, and rightly so, that the time when God worked to confirm His messengers and message has passed (See comments Mk 16:17-20; 1 Co 13:8-10). However, if Satan is working

miracles today through his messengers, then we should follow after the messengers and message of those today who supposedly work miracles if the purpose of miracles is to confirm the messengers and message. There are those in the religious world who are supposedly performing great wonders. If God has allowed true confirming miracles to occur today as in the 1st century, then all believers should follow after the proclamations of those today who are supposedly working the miracles. The very purpose of miracles in the 1st century was for this purpose. Christians must be cautious about believing the deceptive works that come from the tricks of deceived workers who do not have a love for the truth (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12). One must keep in mind that miracles and the message went together. If one claimed to work miracles, and at the same time, taught a message that was contrary to the word of God, then it could be known that the so-called miraculous works were false. One cannot work miracles and at the same time preach doctrines that contradict the Bible.

3:3 Jesus does not get into a discussion concerning the signs. This would come later in His ministry (5:31-47; 8,9). He goes to the point of what will be necessary for inclusion of the kingdom reign of Jesus in the hearts of men, and thus, one's participation in the community of God. **Unless:** Some translations read, "except." The word emphasizes the fact that a condition is being given here for becoming a part of the kingdom reign of Jesus. **Born again:** This is the new birth, the birth of the spirit by being regener-

ated by the power of God (See 1:13; Gl 6:15; Ti 3:5; Js 1:18; 1 Pt 1:23; 1 Jn 3:9). In this one statement of Jesus a condition is established for one's participation with Him in the kingdom of God. He is not establishing a commandment as a work of merit or a condition that will put God in debt to save one. The condition will be the manifestation of one's response to all that God has done in order to bring one into a covenant relationship with Him.

3:4 How: Nicodemus' first question here was certainly for the purpose of generating further explanation by Jesus concerning what He said about a new birth. Nicodemus' second question may have been an innocent rebuttal. We must keep in mind that Nicodemus, as well as most Jews, were seeking a Messiah who would reign on earth with the restoration of national Israel to her former glory. In conjunction with this, Nicodemus was born into a covenant relationship with God at his birth as a circumcised Jew (See Jr 31:31-34). From this understanding, he questioned Jesus. But in the kingdom of God to come, this would be changed. One would have to be spiritually born again in order to come into a covenant relationship with God (See comments Hb 8:8-10; 10:16,17).

3:5 Born of water and of the Spirit: Jesus now explains what He revealed in one statement in verse 3. One must be born of the water of baptism, at which point, one is renewed by the Holy Spirit. What Jesus is saying is that unless one truly repents because of obedient faith, and is immersed into Christ, he cannot

participate with Jesus in the kingdom of God (See comments Mk 16:16; At 2:38; 22:16; Rm 6:3-6; Gl 3:26,27; 2 Tm 2:10). Jesus' statement here is so emphatic that a host of religionists have tried to take baptism out of this passage by all sorts of hermeneutical gymnastics. But the passage states the same thing that was stated by Peter in At 2:38. "*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*" There needs to be no interpretation of such declarative and imperative statements. Jesus declared the truth. Peter made it an imperative command. One is thus born anew in baptism by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. "Born of the water" is the response of the individual to the grace of God. "Born of the Spirit" is the work of God in a realm we do not fully understand. We are simply told that it is the Spirit who does His work to bring us forth from the grave of baptism pure of sin because we have relinquished to obedience to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

3:6 Jesus wants Nicodemus to fully understand the difference between the results of physical birth and a spiritual birth through baptism. He states that the fleshly part of man is born as a result of the union between a father and mother. However, that which is born of the Spirit does not refer to the physical birth of man. When one is born of the Spirit, he is spiritually rejuvenated by the Holy Spirit through the sacrificial blood of Jesus (Ep 1:7).

3:7,8 Jesus did not want Nicodemus to be puzzled concerning the new birth.

In order to be saved, Nicodemus and all men must realize that one must be spiritually regenerated in order to be reconciled to God. **The wind:** The wind cannot be seen by the physical eyes of men, and so is the work of the Spirit in regeneration. The Spirit does His work in the regeneration of the soul of man at the point of immersion. In the new birth, the Spirit does His work of sanctification without the perception of men.

3:9,10 *How can these things be:* Nicodemus is still hindered in this thinking by his background. He knew that one was physically born into a covenant relationship with God as a Jew. But he fails to understand Jesus' statements concerning one's being spiritually born anew when born of the water and Spirit. Thus Jesus gives him a gentle rebuke because he did not understand those things that pertain to the spiritual realm. As a teacher of Israel, he should understand these things, especially in reference to those things taught in passages as Jeremiah 31:31-34 (See comments Hb 8:7-12).

3:11 *We speak:* Not only did Jesus speak the things that bore witness to the truth, but the disciples of Jesus had now accepted and spoken many of the things that were revealed to them by Jesus. Nicodemus was yet to receive these things, and thus, understand the nature of the spiritual birth. He at this time did not accept the teaching of Jesus concerning these spiritual things. He did not at this time accept the testimony of Jesus (vs 32).

3:12 Jesus had used the illustration of the wind, and yet, Nicodemus could

not understand the spiritual things Jesus was discussing by use of earthly illustrations. If Nicodemus could not understand these things, then certainly he could not understand those things that were beyond explanation by use of metaphors and illustrations of this world. Nicodemus would have to take his mind off that which is of this world in order to concentrate on that which was above. His difficulty to understand spiritual things is often the problem of many today whose minds are confined to this world. Nicodemus was confined by earthly religiosity to the point he could not understand those things that were above this world.

3:13 *No one has ascended to heaven:* At the time Jesus made this statement, no one had ascended to heaven (6:33,38; Dt 30:12; Pv 30:4; At 2:34; Rm 10:6; 1 Co 15:47; Ep 4:9). At death one goes to be with Jesus (2 Co 5:8; Ph 1:23). However, he does not go to his final place of rest. The final rest of Christians will be realized when Jesus comes again (1 Th 4:13-18). Until that time, the saints who have died rest in a disembodied state with Jesus (See Lk 23:43). At the time of His final coming, the dead in Christ will be embodied for heavenly dwelling (5:28,29; see comments 2 Co 5:1-8; 1 Jn 3:2).

3:14,15 *Lifted up the serpent:* When Israel sinned against God, God instructed that Moses lift up a serpent before Israel on which the people were commanded to look in order to be healed (Nm 21:4-9). Jesus is the antitype of Moses' action in that He would be lifted up on the

cross for the spiritual healing of all those who would believe on Him (8:28; 12:32; Mt 27:35; Mk 15:24; Lk 23:33).

3:16 In this statement Jesus continues the preceding thoughts. He announces here the result of God's grace for all men. When Jesus is lifted up, all those who believe in Him will not perish. As the people of Israel obediently looked on the serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness, so those who obediently look unto Jesus will be spiritually healed. ***So loved:*** God's action toward man was the result of love (See comments Rm 5:8,9; Ep 2:4; 2 Th 2:16). Therefore, "*We love Him because He first loved us*" (1 Jn 4:19). ***Only begotten:*** See comments 1:14. ***Should not perish:*** This is the subjunctive mood. A condition is thus expressed. It is not that one must exercise a simple belief in Jesus. God's grace on the cross through Jesus must stimulate an obedient faith response (Compare 2 Co 4:15). The faith response is the condition. "*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*" (Hb 11:6; see Mt 7:21; Js 2:17-26). Those who do not respond to God's grace by obedient faith will perish from the presence of God (2 Th 1:7-9). But those who do believe and respond, will have life because they will remain in the presence of God throughout eternity.

3:17 *Condemn the world:* The Jews' belief concerning the Messiah was that He would come in order to bring judgment upon those who oppressed the

Israelite nation. This thinking was in the minds of the disciples of Jesus (At 1:6), and certainly, in the mind of Nicodemus. However, God never intended the Messiah to be such a king over the community of God (See comments Jn 8:36-38). Jesus, therefore, did not come to militarily suppress the oppressors of national Israel. He came to deliver men from a world of sin. He came to save the world through His sacrificial offering for the sins of all those who would believe on Him (See 5:45; 8:15; 12:47; 1 Jn 4:14). What many of the Jews failed to understand from the prophets was that the coming of the Messiah would be the consummation of national Israel. When national Israel had completed her reason for being called out of Egypt to fulfill the promises to the fathers (See Gn 12:1-3), she was to be terminated as a nation.

3:18 *Condemned already:* All men are under the curse of sin, which is spiritual death. They are under this curse because all men cannot so live as to justify themselves before God through perfect law-keeping or meritorious deeds (Rm 3:9,10,23; 6:23; see comments Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16). Without the sacrificial blood of Jesus, therefore, no man can be justified before God because all have sinned against God. However, through faith in Jesus one responds to the grace of God by immersion into Christ, wherein one is not under a sentence of condemnation (Rm 6:3-6; Gl 3:26,27; see comments Rm 8:1). Those who do not respond to the grace of God will not obey, and thus, will remain in a state of condemnation (See 5:24; 6:40,47; 20:31).

3:19 Jesus was the light that came into the world for the salvation of all men (1:4,9-11; 8:12; see 1 Jn 1:6-10). ***Men loved darkness:*** The condemnation of the world is in the fact that men always reject God's solution for sin. They continue in life without heeding God's appeal to be saved. The grace of God has no appeal because men have committed themselves to a life of sin (Compare Ep 2:1-3). When the light of Jesus came into the world, the sin of those who loved darkness was exposed as sin (15:22-24; Gl 5:19).

3:20 Those who have given themselves over to walk contrary to the will of God are intimidated by truth. Because they have created moral laws after their own fleshly desires, they reject any condemnation of their life-style. When societies as a whole morally digress, they reject any moral standards that are affirmed to originate from God. They reject God by rejecting God's moral standards of living.

3:21 In contrast to those who love the ways of worldly living, there are those who love the truth. They seek moral guidance from that which is above because they know that they cannot form their own behavioral standards. Worldly minded people seek to establish their own moral standards. Godly minded people seek standards of behavior that are above men. They are thus identified to be of the truth because they seek God's direction as opposed to establishing their own (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12).

3:22 *Judea:* Jerusalem was the center of religious and political activity that

took place in Judea at the time of Jesus' ministry. Therefore, when Jesus' ministry extended into Judea, it was in and around Jerusalem that He did much teaching (Mt 26:6; Lk 13:34,35). **Baptized:** Both Jesus and John the Baptist were baptizing for the same reason. This was the baptism of repentance for remission of sins (Mk 1:4). Immersion in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins was not established until after Jesus had died for our sins and His kingdom reign announced on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 (At 2:38). It is mentioned here that Jesus baptized. However, we must understand that He was not doing the actual baptizing. His disciples did the actual immersing of the people (4:1,2).

3:23 Much water there: It takes much water to perform the action of immersion. The meaning of *baptizo* is to dip, plunge or immerse. Therefore, there must be a large quantity of water in order to immerse one completely in water.

3:24 This historical note reveals that there was a period of time between the temptation of Jesus and the time of John's imprisonment. Therefore, the ministry of Jesus overlapped the ministry of John (7:19-28; Lk 3:19; Mt 14:3-12; Mk 6:20).

JOHN'S TESTIMONY

3:25,26 Both Jesus and John were teaching and immersing people for the same reason (Mk 1:4). However, there seems to be some questioning going on among the disciples and the Jews concerning the status of Jesus and John. At least, the disciples of John had entered into some dispute with the Jews concern-

ing the subject of purification. **All are coming to Him:** The reason for the complaint that is here offered to John seems to manifest some pride on the part of John's disciples. Even at this early time in the ministry of Jesus, there was a great flow of people to hear Jesus, and thus, He was gaining popularity among the people. Though nothing is said here about the miracles of Jesus, this certainly played a key role in attracting people to Him. John worked no miracles, and thus, people were going to the One to whom He had already told them to go.

3:27 A man can receive nothing: John reassured his disciples that what Jesus had received He had received it from heaven. Therefore, according to John, Jesus could not be receiving such popularity except as a result of what God was doing through Him (3:2). John told his disciples that they must accept the fact that the decrease of his popularity in reference to Jesus at this time was also from God.

3:28 John had previously told his disciples what was taking place at this time during the last of his ministry (1:20,27). Nevertheless, their loyalty to him made it hard for them to accept the fact that his ministry was coming to an end. **Sent before Him:** John reminded his disciples that they must not accept him as the Messiah. They must understand that he was only the messenger who was sent to prepare the way for the Messiah (1:6-8; Mt 3:1; Mk 1:2; Lk 1:17). The way had now been prepared and it was time for his ministry to come to an end.

3:29,30 This joy of mine is fulfilled:

The joy of John would be the coming to Jesus of all those who were spiritual sons of Abraham by faith. As John experienced this flow of disciples to Jesus, his heart rejoiced because he saw the purpose of his ministry being fulfilled (See Mt 22:2; 2 Co 11:2; Ep 5:25; Rv 21:9). Witnessing the people going to Jesus, therefore, was a time of rejoicing and not a time of jealousy. **He must increase:** Herein is revealed the humble nature of the preacher in the wilderness who ate locust and wore camel's hair. Because John knew who Jesus was, there could be no competition between him and Jesus. (See Is 9:7). One does not compete in the work of God.

3:31 Because of the difference in the style of writing, many students believe that verses 31-36 are the inspired words of John the writer, and not the words of John the Baptist. **Is above all:** Jesus originated from God, and thus, He must be considered above all (vs 13). Jesus is over all because He is the creator of all that exists (8:32; Cl 1:16). He is thus supreme over all things (1:15;27; Mt 28:18; Rm 9:5; Ep 1:20-22). **Of the earth:** This proclamation affirms that Jesus was more than another prophet of God. No statement is ever made in Scripture that affirms that prophets as Moses or John were from above. Their origin was from the natural procreation of this world. However, Jesus was not from this world. His origin was from above (1:1,2,14).

3:32 What He has seen and heard: Jesus speaks from His own personal ex-

perience of that which is beyond the physical (vs 11; 8:26; 15:15; Is 53:1,2). John and all the Old Testament prophets had to have revealed to them what was beyond this world. Jesus came down from heaven. He came down to bear witness to heavenly things. Nevertheless, there were some who were not receiving Jesus' testimony of heavenly things. Some of John's disciples may have been among this group. **No one receives His testimony:** It was not that Jesus was totally rejected. The fact was that in comparison to the ones who rejected His testimony, few were accepting it.

3:33 Those who accepted the testimony of Jesus confirmed the truthfulness of God in that God was fulfilling His promise of bringing to Israel the blessing that was promised through Abraham (Gn 12:3; see Rm 3:4; 1 Jn 5:10).

3:34 In His incarnate state, Jesus came to do the will of God, and thus, He spoke the word of God (6:38; 7:16). Therefore, if one listens to Jesus he is listening to God. If one rejects Jesus, then he is rejecting God. **Does not give the Spirit by measure:** This statement affirms that there is no such thing as measures of the Spirit. Jesus clearly stated that God does not give the Spirit by measure. After the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus (1:33), Jesus possessed the power of the Spirit in His life. The incarnate Son of God was thus empowered with the authority to unleash the realm of the supernatural. God delivered all things into His hand (13:3; 17:2). While on earth, therefore, Jesus had command of the power of God by the Holy Spirit

working in His life. When we understand this, we can better understand the restraint Jesus exercised before those who rejected Him. Even at the time prior to the crucifixion, He could have delivered Himself, but He did not (Mt 26:53).

3:35,36 *Given all things into His hand:* John wants us to know that Jesus is now in control of all things in reference to His ministry (13:3; 17:2; see 10:16-18; Mt 11:27; 28:18; Hb 2:8). Nothing is out of control. And thus, the flow of disciples to Jesus at this time was in the plan of Jesus. ***He who believes:*** It is because all things have been delivered unto Jesus that He is able to give everlasting life. Those who come unto Jesus are coming unto the source of life. The one who acts upon his belief in Jesus will receive from Jesus that which sustains

life into the heavenly realm. However, those who do not have an active faith, and thus reject Jesus, will not continue in eternal existence in life. They will remain in their state of condemnation, and eventually be eternally separated from the life-sustaining power of God (Mt 25:41; 2 Th 1:7-9). ***The wrath of God abides on him:*** All men are in a state of condemnation because of sin (Rm 3:23; 6:23). They are thus existing in a state of God's wrath (Rm 1:18; Ep 5:6; 1 Th 1:10). They remain in a state of wrath because they are not able to atone for sin by either works of law or good deeds (See comments Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16). It is thus imperative that all men come to Jesus, for only through Him is there reconciliation to the life that Jesus offers (14:6; At 4:12; Rm 8:1).

CHAPTER 4

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

In the context of what happens in this incident in the life of Jesus, Jesus is taking the disciples out of their cultural environment into the land of those who were despised by the Jews. These were the Samaritans, the result of a racial cross between Jews and those who had been transported into Palestine by the Assyrians after the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722/21 B.C. Jesus seeks to take the disciples to the needs of another cultural group. It is early in His ministry and it is time that they start understanding the implications of His mission to all cultural groups of the world (See Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16).

4:1 *The Pharisees had heard that*

Jesus ... baptized more disciples: If the disciples of John were somewhat envious of the accomplishments of Jesus in relation to the work of John, then Jesus perceived that a public confrontation with the Pharisees on this matter would be unproductive. The Pharisees would also perceive the supposed jealousy between the disciples of Jesus and John, and then use the occasion to cause a division between the two groups of disciples. In order to avoid the possible confrontation, Jesus took the twelve out of Judea and toward the land of Samaria.

4:2 *Jesus Himself did not baptize:* In 3:22,26 it is stated that Jesus baptized. However, the explanation is in this text. Jesus did not personally do the action of

baptizing those who believed. Credit is given to Him in 3:22,26 for baptizing because those who came to be baptized were responding to His teaching. The disciples carried out the actual action of the immersing. Jesus did not personally do the immersing for the same reason that Paul gives in 1 Corinthians 1:15. He did not want people taking pride in who immersed them. When one is immersed, emphasis is not on the one who does the immersing, but on the one who is immersed (Rm 6:3-5). The New Testament nowhere teaches the doctrine of "baptismal authority," that is, one's baptism is valid only if someone has supposedly been sanctioned by the church to baptize. It makes no difference who does the baptizing. The validity of one's immersion does not depend on the one who does the immersing. If it did, then one would always be in question concerning the validity of his baptism because he would not know the validity of the baptism of the one who baptized him.

4:3-6 *He needed to go through Samaria:* Jesus had to go through Samaria, not only because it stood between Judea and Galilee, but also for the benefit of the disciples. He could have returned to Galilee on the eastern side of the Jordan, and thus bypassed Samaria. But He did not. We assume that Jesus felt that it was time to teach the disciples what He would later teach them about going into all the world to preach the gospel (Mk 16:15). ***Sychar:*** The Greek word for Sychar means, "the town of the sepulchre." This city is not far from Shechem. Jacob's well was located about a kilometer from

this fork in the road that led to either Capernaum or Nazareth (See Gn 33:18-20; 48:22; Ja 24:32,33). ***Jacob's well:*** This well is still in existence today (See Gn 33:19; 48:22; Ja 24:32). ***Sixth hour:*** This would be 6:00^{AM} according to Roman time, but 12:00 noon Jewish time. If Roman time is indicated, then the woman was performing the usual morning duties of collecting water for use in her household for the day. Such would also mean that Jesus and the disciples had left very early in the morning on the journey and were stopping here for breakfast.

4:7,8 Jesus was alone at the well, for the disciples had gone into the city to find food. ***Give Me a drink:*** Here is a Jew asking a Samaritan for help. This was not culturally appropriate according to the Jews. However, Jesus was breaking through cultural barriers in order to teach a great lesson to the disciples. In asking the question, therefore, Jesus was placing Himself on a cultural parallel with this group of people the Jews considered to be socially and culturally less than themselves. The Jews did not accept the Samaritans because their forefathers had forsaken the will of God to keep the Jewish heritage pure of intermarriage with Gentiles. But this was not the fault of those Samaritans who were living during the ministry of Jesus. They were simply the descendants of those Jews who were left in the land by the Assyrians who intermarried with Gentiles, and thus developed the Samaritan race.

4:9 *Jews have no dealings with Samaritans:* When the northern kingdom of Israel fell to Assyria in 722/21 B.C.,

the land of Palestine was populated with non-Jewish people who later intermarried with the Jews who were left in the land. As a result, the Samaritan race was born (See 2 Kg 17; Lk 9:52,53; At 10:28). In conjunction with the importation of the Gentile people who were brought into Palestine, there came also religious beliefs that were foreign to the Jew's religion. A mixture of religious beliefs led to the Samaritans believing different things concerning the teaching and application of the Sinai law. These beliefs also led to a great difference between the Jews and Samaritans. Samaritans, therefore, were considered as Gentiles by the Jews. The Jews had no social or cultural dealings with them. Because the woman in this context recognized Jesus to be a Jew by His dress, she was startled by His request for water.

4:10 *If you knew the gift of God:* Herein is inferred the gift of God's grace that is poured out for the salvation of all those who would obediently surrender to God in response to His love (Rm 5:15-17; 2 Co 9:15). She did not immediately perceive who Jesus was. However, her knowledge of Jesus would grow with this encounter, and subsequently, lead to her understanding the gift of God. ***Who it is:*** It was the Son of God talking to her. ***Living water:*** All spiritual blessings in reference to one's salvation would soon be flowing from the cross in order to bring redemption to all men (Ep 1:3; 2 Pt 1:3; compare Is 12:3; 44:3 Jr 2:13; Zc 13:1; 14:8). Again, the woman would soon discover the meaning of the metaphor that from Jesus would flow the sal-

vation of God.

4:11,12 *Where then do You get that living water:* At this time in the conversation the woman was still considering the literal water that was in the well. However, the woman did suspect that Jesus was discussing something other than the water of the well. ***Are You greater:*** There was One in her midst who was greater than the fathers of Israel.

4:13,14 *A well of water springing up into everlasting life:* In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus had said, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be filled*" (Mt 5:6). In the context, here is a woman who is "thirsting." Jesus now reveals that the subject of His thoughts is on that which will result in the salvation of those who are searching for the truth of God. Because they are searching, they would find in Him the life that would bring them into dwelling with God, and thus, eternal life (6:35,58; 7:38).

4:15,16 *Give me this water:* The Samaritan woman did not fully comprehend the fullness of Jesus' comments. However, her curiosity moved her to continue to ask in order to learn more. Her question indicated that she was searching, and to some extent, she perceived that Jesus at least had some answers. ***Call your husband:*** The omniscience of Jesus is the foundation for this question because He knew that she had had five husbands in the past. This question would eventually lead to the woman's perception that Jesus was more than a prophet.

4:17,18 *I have no husband:* This woman made an honest confession of her

marital status. In order to reap the benefits of the gift of God one must be honest with the spiritual state of his life. Without such honesty, one will not be hungering and thirsting after the spiritual solutions God has for one's salvation. It is the recognition and confession of one's spiritual weakness that moves him to hunger and thirst after righteousness. **You have had five husbands:** This woman had been married to five previous men and was living in fornication with the sixth man with whom she was not yet married. She had possibly been betrayed by the former husbands, and thus was in fear of making another commitment of marriage to another man. Jesus' concern was with her present situation and not the five previous husbands. He thus took the woman from where she was in her life and continued to explain what she must do in order to enjoy the gift of God.

4:19,20 You are a prophet: The woman perceived the omniscience of Jesus. Her understanding of who Jesus was would lead her to eventually perceive that Jesus was more than a prophet (vs 9; compare 6:14; Lk 7:16; 24:19). **Worshiped on this mountain:** The woman was possibly changing the subject. She was motivated by the presence of who Jesus was to move into a discussion of worship. When one perceives the presence of God, worship is only natural. The mountain to which she referred was Mount Gerizim that was near Bethel (See Jg 9:7). This was the place where Jeroboam led the northern ten tribes of Israel in revolt against Rehoboam. In the rebellion, Jeroboam set up one of two

golden calves as objects of worship (Ja 8:33). The southern two tribes of Israel remained loyal to Rehoboam. They continued to bring their sacrifices to the city of Jerusalem (Dt 12:5-11; 1 Kg 9:3). However, the woman expressed a misconception concerning one's worship of God. God is not located in temples or on mountains. In Him we live and move and have our being (See comments At 17:24-28). Therefore, He is not a God as men conceive in their minds who is limited to locations of worship. He is omnipresent. He is everywhere at all times. God can be worshiped anywhere. It is thus a misconception of man that God is worshiped at a particular location. True worship is spontaneous in the presence of God. And since God is present everywhere, then worship takes place everywhere. Worship that is confined to a particular location becomes ceremonial and located. The more one focuses his worship at a particular location, the less he spontaneously worships wherever he is.

4:21 Though the Jews had established locations for worship, such would change. Jesus introduces us to the fact that worship of God would not be confined to locations. One would be set free to worship God wherever He is. And since God is everywhere, then worship takes place wherever the child of God is. What Jesus introduced into the world was service and worship that was after the nature of God. Since God is omnipresent, then all those who worship and serve Him can do so throughout the world. Christianity, therefore, is not confined to temples. Neither is it confined to nations

or specific cultural groups. The gospel is for all (See comments Mt 28:19,20).

4:22 The Samaritans had been led astray from worship of the one true God. They had mixed their concepts of pagan gods and religious practices with the revelation of the Sinai law. They had thus developed a concept of God that was not according to truth. Though they maintained a concept of God, their concept of God was corrupted. As a result, they worshiped in ignorance (See At 17:23). **Salvation is from the Jews:** From the Jews would come the Messiah (Lk 24:47; Rm 9:4,5). Jesus and the new covenant came to man through the seed of Abraham and the faithful remnant of Israel that returned from the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities (See Rm 3:2; 5:3-9; Gl 3:29; Hb 2:16).

4:23 *The hour is coming:* Jesus here indicates that a new dispensation is coming. It is a dispensation that will come in the lifetime of the immediate disciples (Mk 9:1). It will not be delayed for centuries until He comes again at His final coming. **Worship the Father in spirit and in truth:** As opposed to the worship of the Samaritans who did not know whom they worshiped, and the Jews who worshiped after the traditions of the fathers (Mk 7:1-9), the time was coming when true worshipers would worship God after the spirit and according to a knowledge of the one true God. **In spirit:** Reference is not to the Holy Spirit, or to worship that is generated by the uncontrolled outburst of emotionally misguided people. Jesus is speaking of worship that comes from within the in-

dividual as opposed to the ritualistic or ceremonial worship of the Samaritans and Jews. At the time of this encounter with the Samaritan woman, both the Jews and Samaritans had digressed into a worship that was ceremonial and located. But this would change. Jesus came to reinstitute true worship that did not depend on the location of the worshiper, or the ceremonies through which one went in order to inspire worship. The worship He was bringing would be according to the word of God and from the heart of man. **In ... truth:** The worship would not be the invention of men who created their own worship of a god they had created after their own image. God does not accept worship that is invented after either the traditions of men or the uncontrolled outburst of emotionally hysterical people (See comments Mk 7:1-9; At 17:23; Cl 2:8). The worship about which Jesus is speaking in this context is the worship that is truth directed. It is directed to the God who has revealed Himself through inspired words of revelation. When one comes to a knowledge of this God and His desires through His revealed will, his worship is directed according to the will of God. This worship is opposed to worship that is invented after the emotional desires of men or the ritualistic ceremonies of those who seek a manifestation of worship through performances. What Jesus is saying in this most profound statement is that one must know the word of God in order to worship the God of the word. Ignorance of God's word leads to one worshipping a god who is the creation of one's mind. Such is the

spirit of idolatry.

4:24 *God is spirit:* It is not that God is a spirit. He is spirit (2 Co 3:17). He cannot be seen by mortal eyes. Neither can He be conceived to be a physical being after the form of man. Those who would conceive God to be in the form of a man are seeking to make an idolatrous god with whom they can physically identify. Such is the spirit of idolatry. Since God is spirit, then those who worship Him cannot do so after material means. True worshippers approach God on a spiritual basis. Christians are those "*who worship God in the spirit*" (Ph 3:3). This is one of the greatest arguments against worshipping God through mechanical means, performance of ceremonies, or even the outburst of hysterically misguided emotions. Such things may appeal to the carnal desires of men and manifest a pretense of worship, but such are useless in communicating the worship of one's heart to the God who is above the physical environment of man. The more one concentrates on mechanical or ceremonial performances in worship, the less he is focusing on the heart in his worship of God. The more one focuses on performances of worship, the environment of worship, and ceremonies, the more the worshiper focuses on himself. His worship, therefore, becomes inward focused, and often entertainment that is masked as worship. If one needs the external mechanical or ceremonial to generate inward worship, then the heart is handicapped by external crutches that are used to generate a spirit of worship. We must remember that true worship

originates first with the heart and is directed according to how God has determined that our worship toward Him should be conducted (See comments Mt 15:1-9; At 17:23-28; Cl 2:20-22). We must also remember that the heart is motivated by love. A loving heart worships God because God has stimulated such by His own love (See comments 3:16; Rm 5:8; 1 Jn 4:19).

4:25 The hope of the Samaritans, as well as the Jews, was the coming of the Messiah, or Christ. The Messiah would reveal all truth about which the woman assumes Jesus was talking (see vs 29,39). The Samaritans received their hope for the Messiah from the first five books of the Old Testament (Gn, Ex, Lv, Nm, Dt). They rejected the rest of the Old Testament. Their hope of the Messiah, therefore, came from prophecies of the Sinai law (See Gn 3:15; 49:10; Dt 18:15-18).

4:26 *I ... am He:* The woman had already perceived that Jesus was more than a rabbi of Israel. Because Jesus knew this, He told her that He was the One for whom all Israel and the Samaritans had been waiting.

4:27 *They marvelled that He talked with a woman:* It was not that He was talking to a woman, but that He broke tradition in order to talk with a Samaritan. Their amazement that He was talking to a Samaritan indicates that they had some way to go before they understood that they also would be doing the same in the future. In the commission that Jesus would give them to go into all the world to preach the gospel to every eth-

nig group, the disciples would have to identify with and communicate to all cultural groups (See comments Mt 28:19,20).

4:28-30 *Left her waterpot:* It is interesting to note that all material possessions became of no value when this woman recognized that Jesus was the Messiah. ***Could this be the Christ:*** The woman had accepted the fact that Jesus was the Christ. However, she stimulated interest among the citizens to make their own inquiry. She was evidently not considered one of society who should bear such news. She had been married five times and was living in fornication. She was not one to whom the people would listen concerning religious matters. Nevertheless, her testimony provoked enough interest to cause the people of the city to come and see for themselves.

4:31-34 When the woman had gone into the city, the disciples of Jesus returned with food to eat. Jesus knew that the citizens of the city would soon come, so He opened the door of their minds concerning His ministry that would later be their ministry. ***I have food to eat:*** Jesus' food to eat was to accomplish the will of the Father (See 6:38; 17:4; 19:30; compare Jb 23:12). At this time in His ministry, the disciples did not understand the nature of His mission to this world. ***To finish His work:*** Jesus had come to accomplish what the Samaritans and Jews could not accomplish through their performance of law and good works (Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16). He came to reveal grace and truth by offering Himself on the cross

for the sins of men (1:17; Ti 2:11). This was His work and the will of the Father that they would eventually understand. *"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Lk 19:10).

4:35 There was urgency about the mission of Jesus. The fields were white unto harvest. If the grain was not immediately harvested, it would fall to the ground. ***Lift up your eyes and look on the fields:*** Jesus urged the disciples to focus on the needs of humanity. They knew the nature of a ripe harvest (See Mt 9:36-38; Lk 10:2; 19:10). If the harvest is passed by, the grain drops to the ground and is wasted. Opportunity is lost. Therefore, they must recognize the receptivity of the hearts of those who are searching for the truth He was to reveal and the salvation He was to make available. His ministry, therefore, was a time of harvest. It was a time to lay aside prejudices that hindered their mission to other cultures. It was a time to make all those sacrifices that were necessary in order to get the job of the harvest accomplished (See comments Lk 14:25-35).

4:36-38 *Rejoice together:* Those who sow the seed of the gospel will reap the souls of men. Those who are reaped will rejoice over their salvation as those who have taught them. One of the greatest joys of the faithful Christian is to see the fruit of his teaching. There are those who have sown the seed by the initial preaching of the gospel. Others come and nurture the soil in order to bring forth the harvest. Both the sower and the caretaker work for the same King (See 2 Co

3:6). **Reap that for which you have not labored:** The Old Testament prophets had laid the foundation upon which the disciples would reap during the ministry of Jesus. Also, throughout the ministry of Jesus, He was laying the foundation upon which they would later preach and baptize. The work that He was doing here with the Samaritans would bring forth fruit during their ministry after His ascension to heaven and the establishment of the church in Acts 2 (See comments At 8:4-25).

4:39-42 Believed in Him: Many of those in Samaria believed because of the testimony of the woman. She had given the testimony that Jesus knew her life (vss 16-18). **We have heard Him for ourselves:** When other Samaritans heard the words of Jesus, they also believed. It is not stated that Jesus worked any miracles at this time in Samaria. They may have known of His previous works. The emphasis of John's narrative of the event indicates that they accepted Jesus on the basis of what He said, especially in reference to His omniscience of knowing the marital status of the woman. Nevertheless, after two days of discussions with Jesus, many of the Samaritans believed. After Jesus' visit to Samaria, Philip would later come to the city in Acts 8. It would be revealed then that one Simon the sorcerer had great influence in this area. However, Jesus did not at this time seek a personal confrontation with this well known sorcerer. He left Simon to Philip's ministry (See comments At 8:4-25).

HEALING A NOBLEMAN'S SON

4:43-45 No honor in his own country: See comments Mt 13:57 (Mk 6:4; Lk 4:24). It is difficult to understand why John inserts this statement here, for many of the Samaritans did receive Him. Since Nazareth is on the way to Galilee, it may be that He passed by Nazareth again on His way to Galilee and it was those in Nazareth who did not receive Him. **The Galileans received Him:** Those from Galilee who had gone to the feast in Jerusalem witnessed the great miracles that He did there. As a result, they returned home believing in Him (2:13,23; 3:2).

4:46-48 A certain nobleman: This man was a royal officer under Herod Antipas. Since he supposed that Jesus had to come to his house in order to heal his son, he pleaded with Jesus to come. **Except you see signs and wonders:** Jesus stated a problem here with the faith of many throughout the world today. From the time of His ministry until this present day, there are those who will not believe unless they see a miracle. Thomas had this problem with his faith in reference to the resurrection (See comments 20:29). The cry for a miracle, therefore, is a sign of a weak faith. Jesus also stated here the purpose for signs and wonders. They were worked for the purpose of increasing faith in order that one respond to His message (See 6:30; Rm 15:19; 1 Co 1:22; 2 Co 12:12). Miraculous signs were for the purpose of indicating something that was greater than the miracle itself. A confirming miracle

as a wonder emphasized the reaction of the people who beheld the event.

4:49,50 The nobleman assumed that Jesus had to be present in order to work the wonders of God. However, such was not the case. It was the power of an omnipresent God before whom the nobleman stood that would lead to the healing of the son. God's power was not limited to the personal presence of Jesus. We do not serve a god of location, but One in whom we live and move and have our being (At 17:28).

4:51-53 Credit must be given to the nobleman for trusting in Jesus' statement that his son lived, for he returned to his house. While on his way home, his servants who witnessed the recovery of the son, met him on the road and declared to him the healing of his son. ***He himself believed:*** His belief was based on the deduction that the time Jesus pronounced that his son lived was the same time that the son became well. The result was that his entire household believed on Jesus

(See Mk 9:22-24). The nobleman's belief was based on the testimony of others. He believed before he had visual confirmation that his son was healed. The privilege that we have today is that we have a Bible full of miracles. In believing the inspired report of the Bible, we have faith (20:30,31; See comments Rm 10:17). Those who seek to experience a personal miracle are struggling with their faith in the miracles of the Bible.

4:54 *Second sign:* The first sign of Jesus that John recorded took place in Galilee. This was the turning of water to wine in Cana (ch 2). The healing of the nobleman's son was the second miracle that John recorded in order to accomplish the purpose for which he was writing (20:30,31). However, we must keep in mind that at this time in the ministry of Jesus, He had worked many miracles, especially in Judea when He went there for the Passover feast (2:23; 3:2; 4:45).

CHAPTER 5

HEALING A CRIPPLED MAN

5:1 *Feast of the Jews:* If this particular feast refers to the Passover, then Jesus' ministry would have been three and a half years in length (2:13; 6:4). If it is not the Passover, then His ministry would have been much shorter. In view of the ministry of Jesus as a whole, it would appear that this was the Passover feast, and thus we would affirm that the ministry of Jesus was three and a half years.

5:2 *Sheep:* Some translators add the

word "market" to the text here. Others add the word "gate." It is not definitely known to what reference is here made. This could possibly have been the location where sacrificial animals were kept or bought for the offerings at the feast. ***Pool:*** This pool has been discovered by archaeologists. In some manuscript texts it is referred to as Bethzatha.

5:3,4 The statement about the angel disturbing the water is not present in many of the older manuscripts. There is little manuscript evidence for the inclu-

sion of the material beginning with the word "waiting" in verse 3 and continuing through verse 4. The *Revised Standard Version* and *American Standard Version* have placed these words in a footnote. These words may have been added by a scribe who wished to explain the reason for the superstitious belief that one could be cured by the disturbed waters. At the time, there was a superstitious belief that the waters would actually heal one's infirmities if entered at the time they were stirred.

5:5,6 *Had an infirmity thirty-eight years:* It is significant that John chose to record this miracle. Since this man had been crippled for these many years, there was no doubt concerning his infirmity. Everyone knew who he was and that he had the infirmity. This healing, therefore, could not be passed off as a fake miracle.

5:7 It was evidently the belief that the first one who would be in the water at the time of the stirring of the water was the one who was healed. It was not that there was any miraculous power in the water, or that an angel actually stirred the water. It is not stated that one was actually healed by entering the water when it stirred. What was happening was that people believed that the stirring of the water could heal, and by such strong belief, there was at least psychosomatic power within the human mind to bring some relief to those who were suffering from diseases and infirmities. If one firmly believed that there was miraculous healing power in the stirring of the water, then to some extent his mental atti-

tude would bring some relief, though the actual infirmity would not have actually been healed by the water. There is a difference between psychosomatic relief and a true miracle. It is true that one can through a positive mental attitude affect his physical condition. However, this must not be confused with the true miracles of the Bible. If we did such, then we would downgrade the miracles of the Bible to psychosomatic power of the human mind.

5:8,9 *Immediately the man was made whole:* There was no expression of faith required on the part of the man in order that Jesus heal him. Neither did Jesus go through some ceremonial performance in order to do the deed. He simply commanded the man to rise up. The healing was instantaneous, immediate and complete. Such is the nature of a true miracle. That which one might call a miracle, but does not occur according to the biblical description of true miracles, cannot be defined as a miracle according to the biblical definition of miracles. Those who counterfeit true miracles should take notice of this case of a miracle, as well as the countless others in the Bible. The Bible must be allowed to define a true confirming miracle. We must not allow the excited minds of misguided people who have no knowledge of the Bible to be the dictionary of what a true miracle is. If we do, then we will be led astray from the word of God to follow after the trickery of men, or the invention of our own minds. There is a difference between the healing of God in a non-miraculous manner, and the

instantaneous miracles we read about in cases as this in the Bible.

5:10 *It is the Sabbath:* It was not coincidental that Jesus went to the pool of Bethesda to heal this man on the Sabbath. He may have worked this healing on the Sabbath in order to generate a controversy with the Jewish leaders who had burdened the people with numerous Sabbath laws that were not a part of the Sinai law (See comments Mt 15:1-9; 23:4ff; Mk 7:1-9). ***It is not lawful for you to carry your bed:*** The crippled man was not violating any Sinai law concerning the Sabbath. He was violating the laws of the Jewish religious leaders who had bound religious traditions and interpretations of the law on the people where God had not bound (Compare Jr 17:19-27 with Ne 13:15-22; see Ex 33:13,14; Nm 15:35; see comments in intro. to Gl). This man was not carrying his bed to be sold for financial gain, nor was he carrying it for commercial reasons. He was simply securing his own property as the Pharisees would have done in reference to rescuing one of their animals (Compare Ex 20:10; Ne 13:19; Jr 17:21; see comments Mk 2:23-28). In order to enforce the keeping of the Sabbath, the religious leaders throughout Jewish history had initiated various rules and regulations in reference to the Sabbath. They did this in order that the original law of the Sabbath rest be kept. At the time Jesus came, their emphasis was more on keeping their traditional rules concerning the Sabbath than on the original purpose of the Sabbath. Their fanaticism with their rules and regulations concerning the Sabbath

is here manifested by their lack of concern for the healed man.

5:11-13 The crippled man made a correct assumption here concerning his instruction to take up his bed and go. If Jesus could heal, then certainly He could interpret the law in order to command the man to take up his bed on the Sabbath and go. The healed man thus felt assured that he could do such on the Sabbath without violating any law of God. However, the enemies of Jesus were not concerned with the healing of the crippled man, though they had certainly known him. They were more concerned over the violation of their Sabbath traditions than over the healing of this man who had been crippled for thirty-eight years. ***Did not know who it was:*** When Jesus healed this man, He did not identify Himself to the man. Because of the multitudes, He had left the scene of the healing. Such is certainly in contrast to those today who use religion and fake miracles in order to draw attention to themselves that they are supposedly great men of God (See comments At 8:4-13).

5:14 Jesus wanted a private conversation with the crippled man who had possibly gone to the temple after his healing in order to present himself before the priest. ***Sin no more:*** The tense of the Greek verb here is progressive action. The text would literally read, "do not keep on sinning." Possibly, this infirmity may have been the result of a sinful action the man had committed thirty-eight years before (Compare Gl 5:7-9). However, his life of sin was an ongoing action. ***Worse thing:*** That which would

be worse is either to lose one's life because of a sinful way of life or lose one's soul to eternal hell. Therefore, if one reaps the consequences of sin in life, then certainly he should learn from such and refrain from sin. This man had a second chance. He could learn from his past mistake in order to change his life.

5:15 Jesus finally identified himself to the man. As a result, the man went throughout Jerusalem telling others who had healed him (See comments Lk 8:39). When one receives great blessings from God, it is a natural thing to proclaim one's appreciation for his blessings (2 Co 4:15).

REJECTION BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS

5:16 *The Jews persecuted Jesus:* The healing of the crippled man accomplished what Jesus intended it to accomplish. It stirred up the antagonism of the Jewish religious leaders in order that they begin at this time to scheme a plot to do away with Him. We must keep in mind that throughout Jesus' ministry He had everything under control. He was taking Himself to the cross (10:17,18). He thus controlled the anger of the Jewish religious leaders by the activities of His ministry in order to generate enough jealousy and envy in their hearts that would move them to have Him crucified. There was thus a greater purpose in the miracles He worked than simply benevolent acts toward humanity.

5:17 *My Father is working until now:* Though the work of creation ceased in the beginning (Gn 2:2; Hb 4:4), the Father continued to work in His creation.

The world was not created by a God who left it alone, and then went to the far corners of the universe. Neither the Father, Son nor Holy Spirit have ceased to work among men in order to bring about the plan of redemption. In the context of the Sabbath controversy that was going on here, both the Father and the Son were working. And in the case of the crippled man, the Son was working for the purpose of taking Himself to the cross. In other words, there were greater things working in this case than the healing of a crippled man on the Sabbath. When understanding the miraculous work of God, therefore, we must always understand that something greater than the miracle must be realized. What must be realized is God who is the cause of the miracle. He is the One on whom all our thinking must be focused. He is still working today in order to bring about the reason for which the world was created.

5:18 *Breaking the Sabbath:* Jesus did not break any Sinai laws concerning the Sabbath. He broke the Jews' interpretation of the Sabbath and the numerous laws they had made in conjunction with the Sabbath. But He broke no Sabbath laws. ***Making Himself equal with God:*** The Jewish religious leaders did not misunderstand Jesus (See 1:1,2; 10:30; Ph 2:6). They correctly perceived that Jesus was making Himself equal with God in nature, essence and authority (See comments Mt 9:1-6). Because they did not understand who He was, they considered His claim that God was His Father to be blasphemy (See 7:1,19).

5:19 The statements of this verse

were made to the Jews who were opposing Jesus. Jesus' purpose was to state that He and the Father were working as one in goal and purpose (vs 30; 8:28; 9:4). Though the Son was God incarnate, the Son did not work out of harmony with the will of the Father (5:30; 6:38; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10; Mt 28:18).

5:20 The Pharisees had already witnessed some of the great works of Jesus. In this context they encountered the work of Jesus in healing the crippled man. However, there would yet be in the future greater works of the Father through the Son. Specifically, the Pharisees would witness the undeniable fact of Lazarus being raised from the dead (ch 11). Lazarus' resurrection would prepare people's minds for Jesus' own resurrection that would soon follow. We must also add that the coming of Jesus as the Messiah meant the consummation of national Israel. Jesus would go to the cross for the salvation of those who were sons of Abraham by faith. However, forty years after the cross, God would also send the Son in judgment on national Israel. This great work in A.D. 70 would consummate the purpose for which Israel was called out of Egyptian captivity to be a nation in a special covenant relationship with God.

5:21-23 No one doubted the ability of the Father to raise the dead. However, when they witnessed Jesus raising one from the dead, then they had to confess that the Father was working in Him (8:54; 11:25,43,44; Lk 7:14,15). **Committed all judgment to the Son:** The Son was the creator of all things (Cl 1:16). He is the

One who died for all (1:29; see comments Rv 5). Therefore, it follows that the Son has the right to judge all (3:35; 17:2; Mt 11:27; 28:18; At 17:31; 1 Pt 4:5). **Honor the Son even as they honor the Father:** Since Jesus has all authority to judge all, then all should give to the Son the same honor that is given to the Father (Lk 10:16; 1 Jn 2:23). If one does not honor the Son as deity, then he does not honor the Father.

5:24 In verses 24 through 27 Jesus speaks of a spiritual resurrection as a result of believing on Him. In verses 28 and 29 He speaks of the bodily resurrection at the end of time. **Hears My word and believes in Him:** In order to have the eternal life about which Jesus here speaks, one must continually hear and obey the word of God (3:16-18; 6:40,47; 8:51). These two conditions are representative of all that God would require of men to respond to His grace that is here revealed through Jesus (1:17; Ti 2:11). One's hearing and believing, therefore, include repentance (Lk 13:3) and obedience to the gospel through immersion for remission of sins (See comments 3:3-5; At 2:38; 22:16; Rm 6:3-6). Jesus is not talking about a simple affirmation that one believes in Him. He is talking about a faith that is obedient to the will of God (See comments Js 2:14-26). **Passed from death into life:** When one obeys the gospel, by the grace of God he passes out of a state of condemnation into a state of salvation (Mk 16:16; Rm 8:1; see comments Ep 2:1-10). He thus has eternal life in Christ because of the grace of God (Rm 2:4-7; 2 Tm 2:10; Ti

1:2; 1 Jn 2:25; 3:14; 5:11). Those who have been immersed into Christ, therefore, have come into Christ (Rm 6:3; Gl 3:26,27) where they have been delivered from condemnation (Rm 8:1; Cl 1:13).

5:25-27 *The dead will hear:* The spiritually dead who heard and believed Jesus, would be buried and resurrected from the grave of baptism in order to walk in newness of life (Rm 6:3-6). In reference to the final bodily resurrection about which Jesus will speak in verses 28,29, this first resurrection is spiritual in the sense that one's immersion and resurrection from the grave of water results in his spiritual regeneration by the blood of Jesus (Ep 2:1,5; 5:14; Cl 2:13). The second resurrection is physical (See comments Rv 20:1-6). In this context Jesus was announcing what would begin in Acts 2 with the first official announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus who would have authority over all things. Men would submit to His kingdom reign by being buried and resurrected from the tomb of baptism in order to walk in newness of life (See At 2:38,41; Ep 2:1-4). Because the Son has the authority of life (Mt 28:18), He can give life to those who obey Him.

5:28 At this time in the discussion, Jesus changed from the spiritual resurrection as a result of obedience to the gospel by baptism, to the resurrection that will take place at the end of time. In proclaiming His deity to the religious leaders in this context, He affirmed His authority and power to raise the dead (1 Co 15:52). ***All who are in the graves:*** Though the body decays away to the dust

of the earth, the One who created man from the dust of the earth in the beginning is able also to bring again to life those who have died (See comments 1 Co 15; 2 Co 5:1-8; 1 Th 4:13-18). ***Hear His voice:*** It will be the voice of Jesus who calls all from their graves. He will return with the spirits of those who have died in Christ (1 Th 3:13; 4:14). They will then be embodied for eternal dwelling in the new heavens and earth (2 Pt 3:13).

5:29 *The resurrection of life:* Those who have lived by faith in God and have been obedient to His will at any one time in history will be raised to an inheritance that does not fade away (Dn 12:2; Mt 25:32,33,46; At 24:15; 1 Pt 1:3-5). ***The resurrection of condemnation:*** Those who have not lived by faith in God will be raised to face condemnation. The Greek word here translated "condemnation" is "judgment." Their judgment will be condemnation to destruction from the presence of God (Mt 10:28; 2 Th 1:7-9). When the word "judgment" is used in reference to the wicked, reference is to their condemnation. They are raised to condemnation because they are already in a state of condemnation (See Rm 8:1). It is only the righteous who are given hope in the New Testament of a resurrection to eternal existence. The unrighteous are assigned the destiny of an eternal destruction (2 Th 1:6-9).

WITNESSES OF JESUS

In this context, Jesus is still in a discourse with those who have set themselves against Him, and thus, against

God. He now gives five witnesses to prove His sonship. These witnesses are (1) Himself (vs 31), (2) John the Baptist (vs 33), (3) His miraculous works (vs 36), (4) the Father (vs 37), and (5) the Old Testament Scriptures (vs 39).

5:30 *I can of My own self do nothing:* What the religious leaders did not understand is what many today do not understand concerning the nature of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. No one manifestation of God acts separate from the others. They do not because they are all the one true God. Therefore, Jesus does not judge on His own. His judgment is the judgment of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He was not seeking to do His own will while on earth. He did not act separate from the Godhead of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (See Ph 2:6-8). In all that He did, therefore, Jesus wanted all to know that He worked in harmony with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (vs 19; 4:34; 6:38; Mt 26:39).

5:31,32 Jesus was not expecting His enemies to accept His own witness, though He could bear witness of Himself (8:14; Rv 3:14). His true character as a good man was a witness that He was not evil. However, in order for His witness to be true according to Sinai law, He had to have the Father also bear witness to Him (3:2). ***He witnesses of Me:*** Under the Sinai law it was required that two or more witnesses bear witness to another (Nm 35:30; Dt 19:15). God the Father bore witness to Jesus that He was His Son (8:18; see 3:2; Mt 3:17; 17:5; 1 Jn 5:6).

5:33 Those to whom Jesus was talk-

ing had sent a delegation to John the Baptist (1:19-35; 3:23-36). John "*came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light*" (1:7). John bore witness to the truth, and thus, he bore witness that Jesus was the One for whom Israel had been waiting.

5:34 The witness that Jesus received was beyond that of human origin. Though John bore witness to Jesus, the witness that he gave was above himself, for John received his message from God. The true witness of Jesus, therefore, originated from God (3:2). ***That you may be saved:*** It was for this purpose that Jesus came into the world (Lk 19:10). All witness that was given to Jesus that He was the redeemer of the world was given for this purpose. It was given that men might believe on Him (See comments Hb 4:12).

5:35 At the time John came, Israel was in hope of deliverance from Roman occupation. The faithful of Israel were searching for deliverance from their problem of sin. When John came, they eagerly went out to him because he offered them hope in the coming of the Messiah. Some even believed that He might possibly be the Deliverer of Israel (1:19-28; Mt 13:20; Mk 6:20). Their desire for deliverance was so great that they would accept the preaching of a man in the wilderness who wore camel's hair for clothing and ate grasshoppers.

5:36 John did not work miracles, and yet, the people went out to him. If John had worked miracles, the people would have had a hard time turning from him to Jesus. ***The works ... bear witness of Me:*** The miraculous deeds of Jesus proved

that He was from the Father, for no one could do such miracles unless God was with him (3:2; 9:16; 10:25,38; 15:24; 20:30,31; Rm 1:4; 1 Jn 5:9). The miraculous works, therefore, were for the purpose of confirming Jesus as God's messenger to man (3:2). Miracles were also given to the early disciples in order that they also be confirmed to be the messengers of God (Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4). The primary purpose of the miracles, therefore, was not for benevolence. They were given to be a witness to the sonship of Jesus and confirmation of the message of the disciples that Jesus sent forth.

5:37 Neither heard His voice ... nor seen His form: Those who were standing before Jesus had never heard the voice of God, nor seen His form (1:18). Jesus was not saying that God who is spirit has the voice of a human or the form of man. God does not have the form of a physical man, for Jesus was incarnate in the form of man and was in their midst as a man. If God were in the form of a man, then there would have been no incarnation. But Jesus had given up existence as spirit in the form of God in order to be incarnate in the physical form of man (1:14; see comments Ph 2:6,7). He was thus in the form of man, that is in the flesh, before those to whom He was bearing witness on this particular occasion (1:14). But His immediate audience could not accept Him as having been sent from the Father, for if He were sent from the Father, then they would have to accept Him as the Messiah.

5:38 Do not have His word abiding in you: It is here that Jesus explains why

they did not accept Him. The fact that they did not receive Him as the Prophet from God was evidence that they had not allowed the word of God to permeate their lives in order to nurture a receptive heart. It is the indwelling word of God that molds the mind and heart to be receptive to the communication of God (At 20:32; Hb 4:12). If one rejects the word of God, He will reject all that God is trying to reveal to him (Dt 18:18; see comments Mt 15:1-9; Mk 7:1-9).

5:39,40 You search the Scriptures: The Jewish religious leaders had diligently read and memorized the Old Testament Scriptures. However, the word that they searched and memorized did not transform their lives. Because they did not allow God's word to change their hearts, they would not receive the One about whom the Scriptures prophesied. In the Old Testament Scriptures that they studied, there were over three hundred prophecies of Jesus and His ministry (See Gn 3:15; Dt 18:18; Is 9:6; 53; Dn 9:26,27; compare Lk 24:44). However, their misguided hearts would not allow their minds to be opened to the fact that the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the Messiah was standing before them in the flesh (1:11; 3:19; 8:12). The questionable respect the religious leaders had for the Old Testament Scriptures is seen in the fact that they felt little apprehension about adding to the Scriptures their own traditions and opinions (Mt 15:1-9; Mk 7:1-9). When one believes that he can add to the law of God by binding on men's consciences that which God has not bound, then he has little respect for

the word of God. And because he has little respect for the word of God, he will not allow it to transform his life. Legalistic religionists who bind their traditions and opinions on the consciences of men are usually not transformed, and thus, carry out in their lives ungodly deeds that are contrary to the word of God. This explains why the religious leaders who confronted Jesus would soon devise a scheme to murder Him. It is often the fallacy of the legalist to be strict about the keeping of his codes of religion, while at the same time he ignores flaws in his own character.

5:41,42 Jesus now turned to discussing the problem of the Jewish religious leaders who would not receive Him. In doing so, He explained why men often reject Him today. In order to receive Jesus as the Son of God, one must first be willing to accept Him for who He is and what He says (1:11; 3:19). ***Do not have the love of God:*** They did not receive Jesus because they were not of the nature of God. The nature of God is love (1 Jn 4:9). If one loves God, then he will love the commandments of God, and thus, obey the commandments of God (14:15; 15:14). If he does not love God, then he will reject the truth (2 Th 2:10-12). And on this occasion where Jesus personally confronted the religious leaders, their lack of love for God was revealed by their rejection of Him.

5:43 ***In My Father's name:*** Jesus came by the Father's authority because the Father had sent Him. Because He was of the loving nature of the Father, He came as a humble servant to human-

ity (Mk 10:45). But the nature of Jesus' coming did not conform to the preconceived ideas of what the religious leaders believed the Messiah should be. They were of the religious establishment of Jerusalem. They assumed that the Messiah would respect their institutionalized religiosity, and thus, work through and with them in liberating Israel from Roman occupation. In other words, if one came with an arrogant religious character that was typical of the religious leaders, then they would have received him.

5:44 They were vainglorious among themselves and obsessed with their own words of flattery (12:42). Jesus affirms that they could not receive one who came with a humble nature. Their very nature of arrogance and pride was contrary to the meek and humble spirit by which He came (See Is 53).

5:45 ***There is one who accuses you:*** These religious leaders trusted in their own works and religious system that they had developed after the traditions of the fathers (Mt 15:1-9; Mk 7:1-9; Gl 1:13,14). They had legalistically followed after their own system of religion in order to justify themselves before God by meritorious law-keeping and good deeds (See comments Rm 2:12; 3:20; 5:20; Gl 2:16; Hb 10:4; see intro. to Gl). However, in the law itself Moses condemned the establishment of one's own religious commandments in an effort to leave the commandments of God (Dt 4:2; Pv 30:6; see comments Mt 23).

5:46,47 Moses prophesied of the Prophet who would come after him and to whom all Israel must respond (Gn

3:15; 12:3; 18:18; 49:10; Dt 18:15-19). Therefore, the fact that they did not receive Jesus was evidence that they did not believe Moses (See Lk 16:29,31). If they had believed Moses, then they would have listened to Jesus. Theirs was a case of religious leaders interpreting the Scriptures according to their own established religious behavior. If the Scrip-

tures spoke in a manner that conflicted with their beliefs and behavior, then they assumed that they did not have a proper understanding of a particular scripture. They thus rejected the word of God in order that they might keep their own traditional religion (See comments Mk 7:1-9).

CHAPTER 6

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

(Mt 14:13-21; Mk 6:30-44; Lk 9:10-17)

6:1-14 See comments Mt 14:13-21. Jesus' feeding of the five thousand is the fourth miraculous sign that John records to prove the deity and sonship of Jesus. This is the only miracle that Jesus worked which was recorded by all four writers of Jesus ministry. This was a miracle of creation, and thus, it was worked by Jesus to prove that the One who created all things was in their midst (1:1,2; see comments Cl 1:16). The leftover food was taken up in order to confirm the creation, and thus, the people made the right deduction from the miracle as stated in verse 14. Jesus was the Prophet about whom Moses had spoken (Dt 18:15-19; see At 3:22; 7:37). Jesus was the antitype of Moses (See 1:21; 4:19,25; 7:40; Mt 11:3; At 3:22,23). Moses portrayed what Jesus would be among the people. However, this miracle of Jesus pictured Him to be greater than Moses. Therefore, Jesus cannot be accepted as simply a good teacher of Israel. He cannot be accepted as just another prophet in a series of prophets. If accepted, He must be accepted as the Son of God, the creator of

all things (1:1-3; Cl 1:16). John's purpose for recording this miracle was to prove the proposition of 20:30,31. Nothing less than accepting Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, will do when believing on Jesus.

6:15 *Take Him by force to make Him a king:* Most of Israel was not in expectation of the type of Messiah Jesus was. They were looking for an earthly king who would deliver them from those who occupied Palestine. In this case, they sought deliverance from the oppression of the Roman Empire. They were looking for a king who would restore Israel to her former glory and independence as in the days of David and Solomon. Even the disciples of Jesus had this belief (See comments At 1:6). But such was not to be because Jesus' kingdom was not of this world (18:36-38). On this particular occasion, it was one of those times when the multitudes were so zealous to have an earthly king that they are here about to force Him into being their political leader to rally Israel together in order to expel the Romans. *He departed:* In order to quiet the multitudes who were about to force Him into earthly kingship,

Jesus went alone into a mountain. He allowed the anxiety of the multitudes to settle down in order that He carry on with the purpose of His ministry, that is, to prepare the people for the cross and His kingdom reign that was to come.

THE STORM AT SEA

(Mt 14:22-33; Mk 6:45-52)

6:16-21 See comments Mt 14:24-33. This fifth miracle that John presents portrays Jesus' power over nature. Such would only be a logical conclusion when we consider that Jesus was the creator of all material things (1:1-3; Cl 1:16). ***They were afraid:*** Fear is the natural reaction of man when he does not comprehend the fullness of what he is seeking to understand (See Lk 8:34,35). At this time in the ministry of Jesus, the disciples have experienced many miraculous works of Jesus. However, this power over the winds and waves shocked their thinking. Jesus was more than a prophet who worked miraculous wonders. The nature of this miracle in conjunction with the feeding of the five thousand they had just experienced, moved them to realize that they were truly in the presence of the Son of God.

JESUS AS THE BREAD OF LIFE

6:22-25 The multitudes wondered how Jesus crossed the sea. John does not record that Jesus answered their inquiries. The miracle at sea was meant for the faith of the disciples. They were the ones whom Jesus was preparing for a ministry that would later be to the multitudes. It was thus a miracle that could

be believed at this time only by those who personally experienced it. The multitudes would later believe in Jesus as the Son of God, and then understand that He had the power to calm the sea. At this time, however, Jesus deals with the spiritual condition of the multitudes.

6:26 Jesus was in the city of Capernaum at this time. He had now gone to the synagogue of Capernaum and spoke the following message to those who had gathered at the synagogue (vs 59). ***You seek Me ... because you ate of the loaves:*** As many today, there were those in the multitudes who sought Jesus because of the material blessings that might come from Him. In this context, they were following for the physical bread, not the spiritual life that would come from Him. They saw in Him the opportunity for either economic or political gain if He became the king of Israel in order to deliver them from Roman oppression.

6:27 *Food that endures to everlasting life:* Regardless of the economic state of any man, one's first concern should be for his spiritual poverty, not his physical poverty. ***"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness ..."*** (Mt 6:33). This is one of the greatest struggles of the poor because of their destitution. Nevertheless, the struggle must be won, for one's salvation is more important than anything this world can offer. The food that Jesus offers will preserve one's soul throughout eternity (4:14; Ep 2:8,9). The food this world provides will endure only until the end of this world. ***Set His seal:*** God has or-

dained that through Jesus all the world should receive spiritual food whereby every man who believes should not perish but have everlasting life (3:16; see Ps 2:7; Is 42:1; Mt 3:17; 14:5; At 2:22; 2 Pt 1:17).

6:28,29 *What should we do:* Coming from their legalistic religious background, the people were asking what meritorious work they might perform in order to please God. There would be no meritorious works in reference to entrance into the kingdom of Jesus. There would be only obedient responses to the love and grace of God that was to be manifested on a cross outside Jerusalem (Ti 2:11). ***That you believe in Him whom He has sent:*** The work that they must do is to believe in Jesus. Jesus is not talking about a mental acceptance that He is the Son of God. They must have an active belief that responds to their recognition that He is the Son of God (See comments Js 2:14-26). In this context, John uses the word "belief" to stand for everything that one must do in order to receive the food that produces everlasting life. Their faith must move them to repentance and obedience of the gospel (Mk 16:16). This is more than a verbal acceptance of Jesus. It is a life commitment.

6:30 *What work will You do:* This multitude had already witnessed many signs. They here betray their hearts. As the religious leaders in Jerusalem, no amount of signs would convince them to move their little faith into action. There are many others who also struggle to believe, and thus, seek for miracles from

God in order to have their weak faith confirmed (See comments 20:26-31; Mt 12:38; 16:1; Mk 8:11; 1 Co 1:22). When one asks for a miracle in order to believe, he is actually ignoring the Bible which is full of miraculous events. Faith comes by listening to the word of God (Rm 10:17). If one is struggling with his faith, then he must study the Bible, the source of faith.

6:31 *Our fathers ate manna:* This multitude still had their minds on selfish gains in reference to following Jesus. They still did not understand that He would not be a king on this earth. Their selfish expectation was that Jesus would provide food for them as Moses provided food for Israel in the wilderness (Ex 16:15; Nm 11:7; Ne 9:15). But such would not happen.

6:32,33 *The true bread from heaven:* The bread that Moses provided satisfied a temporary hunger that returned the following day. In contrast to the physical bread provided by Moses, the bread that comes from the Father in heaven through Jesus will satisfy one's spiritual thirst for eternity. Jesus is the bread of life that was sent from the Father in order to nourish the spiritual poverty of humanity.

6:34 The multitude still had their minds on earthly things. They did not understand the nature of the spiritual bread about which Jesus spoke (See 4:15). They addressed Jesus as "Lord." However, their address of Jesus in this manner was only a matter of respect they had of Him as a teacher, not as the Son of God.

6:35 *I am the bread of life:* This multitude needed a direct statement of Jesus in order to understand that He was talking of Himself. Jesus was both the bread of life and water of life (vss 48,58). The two things that man needs to sustain his physical life are bread and water. The two things that man needs to maintain his spiritual life are the bread and water that flow from Jesus. To the Jews, bread symbolized life that was provided for the nation of Israel when they came out of Egyptian captivity. God provided the manna from heaven, and thus they were able to live. Jesus was the bread of life that would preserve all who came to Him. They would be preserved for eternity.

6:36 *You also have seen Me:* They had personally experienced Jesus and the miraculous signs that He worked in their presence (Compare 20:27-29). By personally experiencing the life of Jesus, they were actually experiencing the greatest miracle of God to humanity. Though they had the blessing of personally experiencing Jesus and His works, they still would not believe.

6:37 *All that the Father gives to Me:* These are not those who have supposedly been predestined to follow Jesus. If such were true, then there would have been no need for Jesus to be on earth in order to go to the cross. If God had individually predestined certain ones to be saved, then He could have surely saved them without the incarnation and cross. The ones that the Father had given to Jesus were those who obediently believed and kept the word of Jesus. These are the ones who have heard and learned, and

thus, have come to Jesus (vs 45). These are those whose faith moves them to be born again (3:3-5; Rm 6:3-6).

6:38 Jesus did not originate from this world. He existed before He came into this world through the flesh of man (1:1,2,14; see comments Ph 2:6,7). Because He came from heaven, He did not come to do His own will. He came to do the will of God by accomplishing the plan of salvation for all men (4:34; 5:30; 12:48,49; Mt 23:39; Lk 22:42).

6:39 *The Father's will:* Those who would respond to the Son by being born anew were those the Father had given to the Son (3:3-5). Those who would respond to the grace of God that was revealed through Jesus, would be in the possession of the Son (Mt 11:28,29; Rv 3:20). ***I should lose nothing:*** The obedient are assured of their salvation, not because of any meritorious obedience on their part, but because of the grace of God. ***The last day:*** Those who maintain faithfulness on the condition of their faith, will be resurrected in the last day of the existence of this world (vss 40,44,54; see comments 5:28,29).

6:40 *This is the will of Him:* The plan that was in the mind of God before the creation of the world was to bring redeemed sons into eternal dwelling through the cross. Jesus was in the world in order to bring about this plan. Therefore, all those who would obediently turn to Jesus, would partake of the eternal purpose of God through Him. This would be those who would eventually be raised from the dead when Jesus comes again. They would be raised up in order to dwell

with God in eternity because they have molded their lives after the will of God.

6:41,42 *The Jews then murmured:*

This particular group of Jews was hostile to the teaching of Jesus. The group was certainly composed of a great number of Jewish religious leaders who could not accept the claims of Jesus that He was sent directly from God. John was writing this letter many years after Jesus made these statements. Even at the time of his writing, the Jews maintained hostility against the church of Christ. At the time of writing, the Jews still could not accept the fact that the Messiah, the Christ, would have come from such a humble setting as Nazareth (See Is 53; 1 Co 1:23). Their disagreement with Jesus' claims on this occasion was in the fact that they accepted Him only as the physical son of earthly parents.

6:43,44 *Except the Father ... draws him:* It is not that God in some way mysteriously moves one to respond to the call of the gospel. God is not a respecter of persons in that He selects certain individuals who will be drawn to Him (At 10:35,36). What Jesus does mean is that it is the responsibility of each individual to have a willing attitude in coming to Jesus. One must be of a disposition to submit to the will of God (See vs 65; 5:40; Mt 23:37). It is God's part to provide the means that draws one to righteousness. It is man's responsibility to have an attitude of being receptive to God's drawing power (See At 16:14). God provided the gospel event in order to draw all men to Him. Individuals must voluntarily respond to the gospel, and

thus be drawn to God.

6:45 *The prophets:* The Old Testament prophets spoke of God teaching us His ways in order that we walk in His paths (See Is 2:1-4; 54:13; Jr 31:31-35; Jl 3:16,17; Mc 4:1,2). ***Heard and has learned:*** In order to be drawn to God today, one must hear and learn from God through His revealed word. The gospel is God's power to draw all men unto Himself because it is through the gospel that one is called (Rm 1:16; 2 Th 2:14). We are called through the appeal of the gospel of grace, for the gospel gives men an answer for their two greatest problems that are spiritual and physical death. Jesus answered our spiritual death problem by dying on the cross for our sins. He answered our physical death problem by giving us hope of resurrection by His own resurrection from the dead (1 Co 15:1-4). However, some are not drawn by the gospel because they are not aware of the seriousness of their problems in relation to God (5:40; see Mt 13:14,15).

6:46,47 *He has seen the Father:* God cannot be seen with physical eyes because He is spirit (4:24). It is Jesus who has revealed the Father to all men. In order to come to the Father one must come through Jesus (See 1:18; At 4:12; Cl 1:15; 1 Tm 6:16; 1 Jn 4:12). ***He who believes:*** This is an active belief (3:16; 5:24; 6:40; see comments Js 2:14-26). It is a faith that continually responds to God. The word "belief" here stands as a synecdoche. In other words, a part is stated for all that is required by God in order to have eternal life. Therefore, one must hear the gospel; he must believe,

repent and obey the gospel in order to have remission of sins (See Lk 13:3; Mt 10:32,33; At 2:38; 22:16; Rm 6:3-6). All this is to be understood by Jesus' use of the word "belief" in this context.

6:48-52 *The bread of life:* As the manna that sustained physical life when Israel was in the wilderness (vs 31,32,58; Ex 16:14-35), Jesus as the bread of life will give and sustain one's spiritual life (At 4:12; 2 Tm 2:10; 1 Jn 5:11). Those Israelites who ate of the manna in the wilderness were sustained by the manna. However, though they ate the manna they still died. But those who eat of the Bread of Life, Jesus, will not die. Jesus would give His incarnate body in order to be a sacrifice for the sins of those who would hear and learn from Him (Hb 10:5). As a result, they would respond to the events of the good news of His death, burial and resurrection (1 Co 15:4,5). Their reconciliation to God through the cross would result in eternal life. ***How can this man:*** The quarrel among the Jews manifested that some among them were still confined to their carnal beliefs concerning sacrifice. They did not yet understand that the physical sacrifices of bulls and goats would soon give way to the sufficient offering of the Lamb of God (See comments Hb 10:1-5).

SOME LEAVE JESUS

6:53 *Except you eat:* This was certainly a strange statement to these Jews whose religion was based on many physical things. They would have literally understood the statement to mean that they would have to eat Jesus' actual flesh.

What Jesus did say was a metaphorical statement that one must partake of Him as the Bread of Life in order to sustain his life throughout eternity. Jesus would give spiritual life that would come from His sacrificial death on the cross (Mt 26:26).

6:54 The statement here refers to those who are eating and drinking the "flesh and blood" of Jesus. These are the ones who have eternal life. Therefore, Christians are actively eating and drinking of the Lord's Supper today that Jesus instituted (See Mt 26:26-28; 1 Co 11:23-34). They eat and drink of the bread and fruit of the vine that represent the body (life) and blood (atoning sacrifice) of Jesus. Therefore, they are the ones who are in possession of eternal life because they have obeyed the gospel in order to come into Christ (Rm 6:3-6; 2 Tm 2:10; 1 Jn 5:11). When Christians partake of the Supper, they are figuratively partaking of the incarnate blood and body of Jesus that was given as an atonement offering for their sins (Rm 3:25).

6:55,56 In contrast to the manna of the wilderness and the physical sacrifices of bulls and goats, Jesus is the true spiritual sacrifice. He is the true sacrifice from which all must eat in order to be saved. When the priests offered the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament, they were allowed to eat of the sacrifice for nourishment. The sacrifices of the Jews, therefore, were a sacrifice for the sins of the people, but also a sustaining nourishment for those who did the work of the sacrificing. Jesus has now been our sac-

rifice for sins. Through the eating of the Supper, Christians spiritually drink and eat of His blood and body because they abide in Him and He in them (See 1 Jn 3:24; 4:15,16). The eating of the sacrifices, therefore, was nothing new to the Jews. However, the drinking and eating of Jesus' blood and body was something that was hard to understand. They were thinking that Jesus was saying they must literally consume His blood and flesh as they ate of the sacrificed animals they offered as sacrifices in Jerusalem.

6:57 In His incarnate state on earth, the Son was sustained by the power of God as everything of this world is sustained (Hb 1:3). Jesus lived because of His obedience to do the will of the Father. In like manner, those who continue to feed on Jesus will continue to be sustained by Jesus who continues throughout eternity. Therefore, the eternality of anyone depends on their feeding on the life that proceeds from Jesus. Those who do not feed on Jesus cannot expect to be sustained throughout eternity (See comments Mt 10:28; 2 Th 1:7-9). Eternal existence, therefore, depends on remaining in the presence of God who is indigenously eternal. Nothing can maintain eternality apart from the presence of God. Only God is eternal, and thus, all who would desire eternal existence must seek to come into a relationship with God.

6:58,59 *This is the bread:* Jesus refers the Jews back to the manna of verses 31-35,49-51. The Israelites ate of manna that was sent from God. However, they died in the wilderness. Those who eat of Jesus, who is the Bread of

Life, will never spiritually die. They will dwell in God's presence without end.

6:60,61 *This is a hard saying:* It was a hard saying because they could not understand the spiritual significance of what Jesus said. *His disciples:* It seems that the disciples were complaining about the difficulty of the teaching because they were also thinking in carnal terms. Such is typical of those who feel that they have an edge on truth, and yet, are faced with a teaching they do not understand. The disciples had been with Jesus for some time and they thought that they understood. However, in reference to this particular teaching of Jesus, He went beyond their comprehension. Therefore, they complained. So it is today among the disciples of Jesus. Those who do not understand the meat of the word often complain about the preacher teaching things that are too difficult to understand (See comments 1 Co 3:1-3; Hb 5:12-14). *Does this offend you:* Jesus' metaphor concerning the drinking and eating of His blood and flesh certainly shocked the disciples. However, they would later understand the spiritual significance of such when they partook of the Lord's Supper. The teaching may have been hard to understand at this time in their lives. However, they would grow to understand.

6:62 This question of Jesus was in preparation for what was yet to come for the disciples to experience. He would be crucified, and subsequently, ascend to the right hand of the Father (Hb 8:1). He prepared them for greater things in the future that would necessitate a great change in their thinking.

6:63 *The Spirit who gives life:* Reference here is to the spirit of man that is within him and is given by God (Gn 3:19; Jb 34:15; Ps 90:3; Ec 3:21; 12:7). The body of flesh does not have life within itself. It is the spirit that brings the body to life (See Js 2:26). ***The words that I speak:*** As the spirit of man gives life to the body of man, so the reception and digesting of Jesus' spiritual teachings give spiritual life when they are obeyed. The word of Jesus, therefore, is the source that will produce life within one insofar as one submits to the word of Jesus. Jesus' teaching is the medium through which men understand what they must do in order to be obedient to God. Therefore, as one's life is conformed to the will of God, God gives him life.

6:64,65 *Some ... do not believe:* Jesus knew that Judas was one among them whose life would not be changed by His teachings. His life would not be changed because he would not allow the teachings of Jesus to permeate his behavior. We must keep in mind that Jesus' knowledge of who would betray Him did not mean that He caused the betrayal to happen. God's foreknowledge of events does not mean that He predetermines that future events should happen. ***Except it has been given:*** God draws men to Himself through the medium of words of preaching and teaching (See vss 44,45). He calls all people today through the words of those who preach and teach the gospel (2 Th 2:14). In this way, He calls men unto salvation without respect of persons (At 10:34,35).

6:66 *Many of His disciples went*

back: Those whose thinking was confined to this world could not accept the "hard teaching" that Jesus had just given. They thus turned away from Jesus because they could not accept those teachings that they could not understand. Their pride in the fact that they thought that they knew all truth would not allow them to learn something new, or at least, be patient until they received further teaching. When men determine that they have received all necessary teaching to sustain their religious thinking, they will often have difficulty accepting any new Bible teaching that is contrary to the orthodoxy of their present beliefs. In the case of what happened here, those who turned back manifested their religious arrogance. They were not good students of the word of God. Though they turned away, Jesus did not run after them in order to turn them back. He did not compromise what He knew to be the truth. He did not hold back teaching what He knew would be hard for them to understand. He did not refrain from teaching that which must be taught in order to spare the intellectual ignorance or arrogance of those who were not receptive to new truth. He taught what needed to be taught, while knowing that His teaching would turn some of His disciples away. Such is the character of a great Bible teacher. Teachers must be directed by the word of God, which word they must teach, whether men receive it or not.

6:67 *Will you also go away:* Jesus allowed the disciples to exercise their free-moral agency. They could stay or they could leave. If they stayed, they

would manifest the character of their hearts. Therefore, the difference between those disciples who deserted Jesus and those who stayed is seen in the fact that those who stayed had a desire to learn more (Compare At 17:11). Though they considered Jesus' statements hard to understand, they stayed in order that they might understand. They had open minds in order to continue, though they at this time, did not understand all that Jesus said. We must also keep in mind that Jesus was at this time, sifting the disciples in order to determine the hearts of the true disciples (See comments Lk 14:25-35). The "hard sayings" were given in order to determine those who had a receptive mind to learn more. He wanted to know those who were true, though they did not understand everything that He was teaching.

6:68,69 *To whom will we go:* There is no one else other than Jesus who can bring to us the words of life (1:49; 6:60; 11:27; Lk 9:62). Once one has discovered truth, he understands that anything that conflicts with truth is the deception of Satan. *The Holy One of God:* On this occasion Peter proclaimed what the remaining disciples believed concerning Jesus. As long as they accepted Jesus as

the Christ and Son of God, they would assume that He would reveal things that were difficult to understand. Their commitment to Him as the Christ and Son of God would carry them through the difficult times when Jesus revealed things they did not understand.

6:70,71 When Jesus chose the disciples, all of them had the free-moral choice to respond to His life and teachings in a positive manner (Lk 6:13). However, one of the disciples did not choose to so respond to Jesus. *One of you is a devil:* It was not that Judas was a demon from Satan. He chose to exercise the will of Satan to betray Jesus, and thus, he was here classified with all those demons that had given themselves over to follow after Satan. *Judas Iscariot:* Jesus knew that Judas would not respond as the other disciples (See 12:4; 13:2,26). We must assume that Judas was chosen, therefore, in order to be the one who would betray Jesus, and thus fulfill prophecy (Mt 26:14-16). The betrayal was not something that was unexpected and unplanned by God. God knew the heart of Judas, and thus, he was chosen to fulfill the prophecy that one would betray Jesus.

CHAPTER 7

7:1 Jesus continued His ministry in Galilee in order to avoid confrontation with the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem, for it was not yet time for the crucifixion. Much teaching had to be done before He stimulated antagonism in their minds concerning who He was (5:18; 7:19,25;

8:37,40; Mt 21:38; 26:4). Once the teaching had been accomplished in Galilee, He would go to Jerusalem. About six months transpired after the events of chapter 6 before the events of what is recorded here in chapter 7. Many great events took place in the lives of the disciples that are

not recorded by John (20:30). The great confession of Peter had taken place by the time we come to the feast of Tabernacles recorded here (Mt 16:13-20). The feeding of the 4,000 had also taken place (Mt 15:29-38). Jesus had been transfigured (Mt 17:1-8). Because of the great popularity of Jesus, the Jews now sought to kill Him. In the following context, therefore, Jesus relinquished to the requests of His physical brothers and went to Jerusalem. In chapters 7-10 John records the confrontation Jesus had with the religious leaders in Jerusalem. We must always keep in mind that He was in control of His ministry and the destiny of His crucifixion (10:17,18).

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

7:2 *Feast of Tabernacles:* This feast of the Jews commemorated the wilderness wanderings of Israel after they came out of Egyptian captivity. The feast took place on the 15th of Tishri (See Lv 23:34-36,39-44; Dt 16:13-15).

7:3 *His brothers:* These were the fleshly brothers of Jesus, the children who were born to Mary and Joseph after Jesus was born (See comments Mt 12:46; 13:55). These were James, Joseph, Simon and Judas. Jesus also had at least two sisters. The brothers at this time did not believe Jesus to be the Son of God (vs 5). Their desire for Him to go to Jerusalem was possibly based on the fact that they believed that He might be the Messiah of a physical kingdom reign for which the disciples and all Israel had hoped. Though the brothers did not at this time accept Jesus to be the Son of

God, they later believed (At 1:14). Bible students believe that the probable writers of the New Testament letters of James and Jude were the brothers James and Jude (See intro. to Js and Jd).

7:4,5 What the brothers seem to be expressing here was that their brother Jesus should gain a following in Jerusalem. If anyone were to become a great leader of Israel, they must be accepted by the religious leadership in Jerusalem. Everyone looked to Jerusalem for leadership in religious and political matters. However, in reference to Jesus, they would have to look to the insignificant villages of Bethlehem and Nazareth. Those who were the accepted religious leaders of Israel in Jerusalem would actually reject Jesus as their King and Messiah. They would reject Him because He did not fit into their preconceived idea of what and who the Messiah of Israel should be.

7:6,7 *My time has not yet come:* The brothers of Jesus could go to Jerusalem at any time without causing a disturbance among the people. However, Jesus' purpose for going to Jerusalem would not simply be to keep the feast of Tabernacles, but to lead Himself to the cross. His time of crucifixion would be during the feast of Passover, for He would be the final Passover lamb for Israel (2:4; 8:20). ***The world ... hates Me:*** Those who thought after the ways of the world hated Jesus because He brought to their conscience the fact that all men must give account for their actions. The religious leaders of Israel hated Him because their minds were focused on their positions

(5:18; 15:19). Because they were carnally minded, they schemed to kill Him, which scheme they finally accomplished.

7:8,9 *I am not going up:* This is the present tense in the Greek language, and thus, Jesus was saying to them that He was not going up at the time they made the request. Jesus waited three to four days after they had departed before He made the trip to Jerusalem. It was not His desire to go to Jerusalem in their company. Their reasons for Jesus' going were not in agreement with His purpose. Also, Jesus wanted to go up in secret, but the brothers wanted to make His arrival in Jerusalem known to all (vs 10). Jesus would eventually enter Jerusalem with the presentation of a king, but the time to do so was not according to the timing of His brothers.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING JESUS

7:10-13 *Secret:* Jesus did not want a public confrontation with the Pharisees and scribes who were the accepted religious leaders of Israel. If He had such a confrontation on this trip, such would spark premature actions on the religious leaders' part to have Him killed. Therefore, He did not go to Jerusalem with the multitudes that went out of Galilee. He went privately with the twelve disciples. ***The Jews sought Him:*** During this religious feast, the religious leaders in Jerusalem knew that Jesus would be present. The talk of Jesus' work and teachings had permeated Israel, and thus, the religious leaders here sought to find Him in order to refute His teachings.

They possibly also sought Him in order to carry out suggestions that had already been made among them that He be killed (9:22; 12:42; 19:38). ***For fear of the Jews:*** When John refers to the Jews, reference is to the religious leaders of Israel. According to the accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke, specific reference would be to the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees. In this statement of John, the religious leaders had intimidated the people to fear their leadership in religious matters (9:22; 12:42; 19:38). The common people who knew Jesus would not reveal His presence. They did not because they had accepted Him as they did John the Baptist.

7:14,15 In the middle of the feast, after everyone had settled down in Jerusalem for the feast, Jesus publicly went to the temple to teach. ***Having never been educated:*** Jesus had never sat at the feet of any rabbi of Israel in order to be instructed in the religion of Judaism (See comments Gl 1:13,14). He did not have a rabbinical education. These religious leaders, therefore, could not determine where Jesus acquired His great knowledge of things that were known only by those who had completed such schools. The religious leaders felt that one must be a graduate of one of their schools before he could be qualified to teach. But such is not the case when teaching the word of God. Anyone can study directly from God's word in order to teach God's word. The only qualification for being a teacher of God's word is that one know the word of God well enough to know the God beyond the

word. God requires no diplomas from schools to teach His word. He only requires that one love His word to the point of being driven to give himself diligently to the study and proclamation of it (See Ps 1:1,2; At 17:11; 2 Tm 2:15).

7:16,17 *My teaching is not Mine:* Jesus affirmed that His teaching did not originate with Himself (3:11; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10). This claim of inspiration infuriated the religious leaders to whom He was speaking. ***To do His will:*** One must be of a willing heart to hear the will of God. He must exercise his free-moral choice to do the will of God. Before one can know the truth, therefore, he must have a desire to know what God would have him do to be saved. He must have a love for the truth (See 3:19-21; 2 Th 2:10-12).

7:18 *Speaks from himself:* The religious leaders based their authority on the traditions of the fathers (Mk 7:1-9). Those who spoke from their own authority sought their own glory. However, Jesus did not seek His own glory. He sought to glorify the Father (5:41; 8:50). Those who are true disciples will also seek to glorify God and not themselves (See Cl 3:17).

7:19 The Sinai law came through Moses (Ex 24:3; Dt 33:4). ***None of you keeps the law:*** They had determined to kill Jesus. Their envy and jealousy of Jesus had moved them to hypocritically work against what Moses had commanded in the law. However, their evil motives had blinded them to their inconsistencies in reference to the Sinai law.

7:20 *You have a demon:* One of the

first reactions of those who cannot refute or deal with truth is that they accuse the one speaking the truth not to be a credible witness. They attack the character of the one who is proclaiming the truth. Therefore, one's inability to deal with truth is manifested in his attack on the character of his opposition in some way to discredit him. In this case, those who opposed Jesus accused Him of having a demon (8:48,52). Actually, it was the religious leaders who were seeking to kill Jesus, though initially the multitudes were unaware of their plot (5:18).

7:21-23 *Moses ... gave you circumcision:* Circumcision was first given to Abraham (Gn 17:9-14). It was later given to the nation of Israel through Moses as a sign of the covenant that God established with Israel (Lv 12:3). Therefore, with the Sinai law and circumcision came the law of the Sabbath. Jesus here refers to the law of circumcision in reference to Moses, not Abraham, for the Sabbath law came through Moses and not Abraham. Jesus manifested the inconsistent thinking of the religious leaders in reference to their accusation that He violated the Sabbath, when at the same time they were doing the same with reference to circumcision on the Sabbath. They correctly reasoned that when there was a conflict between the necessity of circumcising on the eighth day after birth—the time when the male infant was to be circumcised according to the law of Moses—there would be no “violating” of the law of the Sabbath. They were correct. (It is also interesting to note that Jesus did not here refer to any supposed

violation of the Sabbath before Moses. Therefore, the Sabbath was not a law for man to keep before the giving of the Sinai law.) In this context, the legalistic nature of Judaism and the thinking of the religious leaders is clearly manifested. They in reality were practicing the principle that some laws of God were weightier than others (See comments Mt 23:23). However, they could not see their inconsistency in accusing Jesus of healing the crippled man on the Sabbath when they would circumcise on the Sabbath. They would supposedly "violate" the Sabbath if the eighth day of circumcision after birth fell on the Sabbath, indicating in their own thinking that they considered the law of circumcision weightier than the law of the Sabbath rest. However, here they accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath by healing on the Sabbath. Jesus' argument was that it is not consistent for them to say that His healing on the Sabbath was sinful when they would perform the rite of circumcision if it fell on the Sabbath, thus supposedly violating the Sabbath.

7:24 Do not judge according to appearance: What was important to the legalistic practice of Judaism was the outward performance of law. If one did not perform according to what was expected, then he was judged. But Jesus' works of mercy and salvation refer to the heart, and thus, such works always take precedence over the Sabbath because the Sabbath referred to rest from labors (See 8:15; Dt 1:16; Pv 24:23; Js 2:1). The religious leaders knew this. However, they failed to apply such thinking to Jesus be-

cause of their envy of Him. Their judgment, therefore, was inaccurate, inconsistent and hypocritical.

7:25-27 Whom they seek to kill: The plot to murder Jesus had now been leaked to the public in Jerusalem (5:18; 8:37,40; Mt 21:38; 26:4; Lk 22:2). **Do the rulers really know ... this is truly the Christ:** Possibly, some of the religious leaders began to reconsider the fact that Jesus may be the Messiah of Israel (3:1-2; compare Mt 21:23). Though they possibly considered Him to be the Messiah, He still did not conform to their idea of who the Messiah would be. They certainly did not consider Jesus to be what He claimed to be, that is, the Son of God. **No one knows where He is from:** They knew that Jesus was from Nazareth (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3; Lk 4:22). However, they misunderstood Isaiah 53:8 which spoke of the virgin birth of Jesus, not His residential origin. Their misunderstanding of Isaiah 53:8 led them to believe that when the Messiah came, no one would know His birth place on earth. But such was not true. God had revealed that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Mc 5:2).

7:28 Whom you do not know: Those who were at this time rejecting Jesus, intellectually had a knowledge of God's existence. However, they did not know Him in their hearts (1:18; 8:55). God is love, but those who do not love do not know God (1 Jn 4:8). In other words, those who do not manifest in their lives the character of God cannot know God. Our knowledge of God, therefore, must be more than an intellectual aware-

ness of His existence. Our lives must conform to His character in order for us to know Him.

7:29 *I know Him:* Jesus here reaffirms His origin. His incarnation happened in Bethlehem and He grew up in Nazareth. But these were not the places from which He actually originated. He came directly from God (1:1,2,14; 3:17; 6:46; 17:25; Mt 11:27).

ATTEMPT TO ARREST JESUS

7:30 *They sought to take Him:* The frustration of the religious leaders against Jesus had risen to the point that now they wanted to murder Him in order to remove His influence from the multitudes (Mk 11:18; Lk 19:47). They could not answer His arguments. They could not counter His influence on the people. Therefore, their only way to stop Him as an obstacle to their own influence over the people was to kill Him. We must keep in mind that it was the religious leadership of Israel that was scheming this murderous plot. Such indicates the extent to which the leaders of legalistic systems of religion will go in their efforts to lead their adherents to eliminate their opposition (See intro. to G1). ***His hour had not yet come:*** God would not allow any secret murder plot to be carried out against Jesus. We must not lose sight of the fact that Jesus had all things under control during His ministry. He had things under control because He had received authority from the Father to lay down His life on the cross (10:17:18). Therefore, He would lay down His own life. It would not be taken from Him.

7:31 The common people of Israel accepted Jesus as the Messiah (Mt 12:23). They questioned the religious leaders concerning the marvelous works of Jesus. If another Messiah would come, they asked if He could possibly work more miracles than Jesus (Is 35:5,6). The confrontation here between the common people and the religious leaders indicates that the religious leaders were not interested in the miraculous works of Jesus. They were simply antagonistic against Jesus because the truth that He spoke was contrary to their behavior of life.

7:32-34 *Pharisees ... chief priests:* John now identifies the ones who were trying to kill Jesus. It was these religious leaders who recognized that the multitudes were about to make Jesus the Messiah. Their envious attitudes moved them to devise a murderous scheme. ***A little while longer:*** The time of this encounter was October. Jesus would be crucified the following April at the feast of Passover. Since Jesus knew that the crucifixion was not far in the future, His ministry would soon change to focus on the cross (13:33; 16:16). ***Go to Him who sent Me:*** Jesus was sent into the world by God. It was time now for Him to return to the heavenly existence in which He dwelt before coming into this world (See Mk 16:19; Lk 24:51; At 1:9; Hb 9:24; 1 Pt 3:22). ***You will seek Me:*** They would continue to search for the Messiah when Jesus had left. The Jews rejected God's true Messiah, and thus, have continued throughout their history to seek for another messiah (See Mt 3:14,15; 24:5,23,24; 2 Co 3:16). Because they

continually reject Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, they cannot enter into heaven where Jesus now dwells.

7:35,36 *The Dispersion among the Gentiles:* The Dispersion was the scattering of the Jews throughout the nations of the world. This resulted primarily from the Assyrian (722/21 B.C.) and Babylonian (586 B.C.) captivities of Israel (Ps 147:2; Is 11;12; Zp 3:10; Js 1:1; 1 Pt 1:1). Jesus would not go among the Dispersion as they were assuming. About forty years from the time the religious leaders made this mocking comment, Israel would again suffer the calamity of destruction and dispersion when over one million Jews would die in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and the rest would be sold into slavery (See comments Mt 24). The disciples of Jesus would in the following year from the time of this statement be teaching disciples to go into all the world to preach the gospel among those Jews who were of the Jewish Diaspora (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16; At 8:4; 13:44-52). The gospel message would go into all the world through the disciples of Jesus.

7:37-39 On the last day of the feast of Tabernacles, Jesus made this open invitation. ***Come to Me and drink:*** Jesus is the living water from which spiritually thirsty men must drink in order to live (See Ps 36:8,9; Is 55:1; 58:11; Zc 14:8). One must obediently come to Jesus. Those who would drink of the living water must take the initiative to act on their belief that they can drink of the water. ***He spoke of the Spirit:*** Verse 39 here explains what Jesus meant in verse

38. Reference is to the reception of the Holy Spirit that was prophesied in Joel 2:28 (See Is 44:3). The promise of the Holy Spirit was to "all flesh" (See comments At 2:38,39). Those who believed and were baptized would become a part of the group who would receive the blessing of the Holy Spirit that was promised by Joel (See comments Mk 16:14-20). The initial blessing of the Holy Spirit was in the miraculous outpouring of the Spirit on the apostles in Acts 2:1-4. The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit went unto "all flesh" by the laying on of the apostles' hands (At 8:18; 19:1-6; Rm 1:11). Therefore, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the apostles blessed the early Christians and us today because we reap from this initial outpouring. Through the continued indwelling of the Spirit in the lives of those who have believed and allowed the Spirit-inspired word to permeate their lives, the work of the Spirit continues. The fruit of the Spirit continues today in the lives of those who have given themselves in submission to the lordship of Jesus (Gl 5:22,23).

7:40-42 *This is certainly the Prophet:* Those of the multitude who made this deduction from what Jesus said, were right. Jesus was the Prophet about whom Moses spoke (Dt 18:15-19; At 3:22,23). ***This is the Christ:*** Those in the multitude who made this deduction, were also right. Jesus was the Messiah (Christ). He was both the Prophet and the Messiah. ***Out of Galilee:*** Jesus resided in Galilee after His parents came out of Egypt. However, He was born in Bethlehem. If those in the audience who

doubted Jesus' origins wanted to investigate from where He actually came, they could have searched the Roman records of births as to where and when Jesus was born. Caesar Augustus had mandated an enrollment of birth at the time Jesus was born (See Lk 2:1ff; compare Mc 5:2). Those in the multitudes who did not want to accept Jesus as the Prophet and Christ allowed their prejudices to blind their eyes, and thus, they would not discover the true origin of Jesus (See Ps 89:19-29; 132:11; Is 9:6,7; 11:1-5; Jr 23:5,6).

7:43-45 *There was a division:* If anyone tried to take Jesus by force in order to eliminate Him from the scene, there would certainly have been a riot. Many in the multitudes accepted Jesus as the Prophet and Christ, and thus, the multitudes were at this time divided concerning who Jesus was.

7:46,47 *Never has a man spoken:* The authority by which Jesus spoke, and the personality that He manifested, was enough evidence for many to consider the fact that He might be the Prophet and Christ. These were officers, not the common people, who were making this statement. Therefore, the personal testimony of the presence of Jesus was enough to stimulate people to consider who He really was. *Are you also deceived:* When men are blinded by jealousy, envy and pride, their prejudices will cloud their objectivity. Therefore, the person of Jesus was not strong enough to convince these evil-hearted religious leaders.

7:48,49 These Pharisees sought to use peer pressure to bring into conformity to their religious rules those who

were at this time reconsidering who Jesus was. This tactic is often used by those who seek to either have their own way in religious matters or who are blinded from seeing the truth. Since traditional and legal oriented religions cannot use the Bible as their source of authority, the leaders of such religions resort to bringing subjects into line by intimidating them to conform to what has been traditionally believed and practiced.

7:50,51 *Nicodemus:* John again mentions this Pharisee in order to remind us that not all the religious leaders were without objectivity in reference to Jesus (3:1ff). Nicodemus and others maintained their objectivity in considering Jesus to be one sent from God, and thus, the Messiah. Nicodemus here reminded the religious leaders that the Sinai law taught that one must be fair and just in such matters as they were discussing in reference to Jesus (See Dt 1:16,17; 19:15; Ex 23:1). However, those among the religious leaders who were driven by jealousy, envy and pride were not willing to deal fairly in their judgment of Jesus.

7:52,53 The multitudes from Galilee had in great number accepted the messiahship of Jesus. Nicodemus' fellow religious leaders here mocked Jesus because He was from the humble region of Galilee. *Out of Galilee no prophet:* They were wrong on this point. Jonah (2 Kg 14:25), Nahum (Nh 1:1) and possibly Elijah (1 Kg 17:1), were from Galilee. However, on this point they could have investigated and discovered that Jesus was actually from Bethlehem, and thus, the fulfillment of the prophecy of

Micah 5:2. However, they were not interested in investigating the facts concerning Jesus. They had already decided

that Jesus must be removed because He had endangered their religious positions among the people.

CHAPTER 8

The last verse of chapter 7 should actually be read in connection with what is stated here. John's emphasis that everyone went to his own house may emphasize the fact that everyone went to consider seriously what Jesus had said in the previous discourse. Jesus went to the Mount of Olives where He often stayed in the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

JESUS SHOWS MERCY AND FORGIVENESS

This is one of those occasions in the ministry of Jesus where those who opposed Him manifested the inconsistencies of the religion they had constructed in order to serve their own desires. This was a situation where religious leaders manifested their lack of concern for the people. They were more interested in attacking Jesus whom they considered to be their opposition.

8:1,2 While in the area of Jerusalem, Jesus stayed in the house of Lazarus, Mary and Martha that was east of Jerusalem. It was only a short distance from Jerusalem on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. During the day, He went into the city of Jerusalem in order to teach in the temple (Mt 26:55).

8:3,4 *A woman caught in adultery:* These religious leaders sought for someone to use for their own means in order to trap Jesus. They found this married

woman who was caught in the very act of sexual immorality with someone other than her husband. The man with whom the woman committed the adultery was not brought before Jesus, though under the Sinai law he was also guilty.

8:5,6 *But what do You say:* Under the Sinai law both the man and woman who were caught in adultery were to be stoned (Lv 20:10; Dt 22:22ff). The scribes and Pharisees were not concerned with what the law said. They were seeking an occasion to accuse Jesus. They thus schemed a supposed theological trap for Jesus. According to Roman law, under which the Jews lived because Palestine was a possession of the Roman Empire, capital punishment could not be exercised in cases as adultery. However, the Sinai law taught capital punishment for adultery. The scribes and Pharisees presented Jesus with a dilemma. If He said stone her according to the Sinai law, then they would accuse Him of violating Roman law. If He said she was not to be stoned, then they would accuse Him of violating Sinai law. The very fact that they presented such a dilemma to Jesus with this case indicates that they had little concern for either the Sinai law or the law of the Romans. Their attack was against Jesus. They would use any twisting of law in order to accomplish their evil end. *Testing Him:* The religious leaders had no concern for the woman

they had thrown into the midst of the gathered crowd. Their concern was to trap Jesus. Such is the behavior of those who do not understand the weightier matters of the law (See Mt 23:23). **Wrote on the ground:** Some would have been swift to answer these antagonistic religious leaders. Jesus exercised both restraint and patience (Js 1:19). He delayed His answer in order to allow His antagonists to think. They were about to be ensnared in their own trap, and thus, the waiting allowed them the opportunity to settle down in order to reconsider what they had just proposed.

8:7 Continued asking: The present participle of the Greek verb that John used here manifests their persistence in demanding an answer from Jesus. They kept on asking Him to make a decision. **He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to cast a stone at her:** Under the Sinai law, those who were the actual witnesses to the crime must step forward and cast the first stones (Dt 17:6,7). In this case, Jesus was asking those who brought the woman to Him to cast the first stones according to the Sinai law.

8:8,9 Again, Jesus allowed them the opportunity to think before they acted. They had to be given the opportunity to realize the trap they had set for themselves. They had come to Him with the woman because of ulterior motives to trap Him in an argument. They needed time to realize their own trap because it was their responsibility according to the Sinai law to begin personally the stoning of the woman. If they did not, then they

were caught in their own trap. **Went out one by one:** They now realized their dilemma. The law demanded that they cast the first stones. But if they did, they would be in violation of Roman law. If they did not, they were in violation of Sinai law. **Beginning with the oldest:** It is the older generation who is more honest in realizing the hypocrisy of their own religious beliefs. In this situation, they had embarrassed themselves, and thus, they left the scene. Their concern for the woman vanished as the situation focused on their hypocrisy instead of her adultery.

8:10 One can only imagine the tension in the woman as she stood before the One everyone had asked to condemn her through stoning. Jesus had made no judgment. However, she knew she was guilty. She was caught in the very act of violating the sanctity of her marriage contract by immoral behavior with another man.

8:11 Neither do I condemn you: And so is manifested the loving grace of God. All of us from the oldest to the least deserve the wrath and condemnation of God because of sin. Law says that sin must receive just punishment. Mercy sets aside law for the moment in order to manifest the grace of God. God here forgives. It is not that God ignores the sin. It is that we who deserve His wrath are forgiven in spite of ourselves. Paul said, *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Rm 5:8). The woman had sinned. Nevertheless, she received the forgiveness of a God who

extends grace. **Sin no more:** The motivation of Christianity is based on grace (See 1 Co 15:10; 2 Co 4:15). God has extended great mercy toward us (Ep 2:1-10). It is only our natural response, therefore, to manifest mercy toward others. The behavior of our lives as Christians is motivated by the realization that we have been forgiven so much. We must keep in mind that those who show no mercy to others do not understand the nature of their wretchedness while in sin (See Mt 18:21-35; Js 2:13).

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

8:12 *I am the light of the world:*

Jesus is the One who has come to enlighten the world concerning salvation (1:17). He is the One through whom the abundant life can be attained, and through whom one can find his way to God (14:6). By obedience to the teachings of Jesus, one can thus walk in the light and be in fellowship with God (1:4,5,9; 12:35,36,46; 1 Jn 1:3,6-9). Therefore, if one will obey Jesus, he will have light in a world of darkness by which to guide his way unto eternal salvation (See Is 49:6; 42:6; Mt 4:2). In every way, therefore, Jesus is the light of the world.

8:13,14 *Your witness is not true:*

The Pharisees are here speaking in relation to the requirement of the Sinai law. The Sinai law required the testimony of two or more witnesses in order to establish a claim. The character and nature of Jesus as the light bore witness that He was the true light. The fact that He came directly from God qualified Him to bear witness to Himself. In conjunction with

this, the Father was the second witness to Jesus. **My witness is true:** When Jesus stated that He could not bear witness of Himself in the statement of 5:31, many miracles had been worked at the time of the statement. At the time of this statement, many more miracles had now been worked wherein God had fully confirmed Him to be from God (Hb 2:3,4). Therefore, He was at this time in His ministry fully confirmed to be the Son of God. The people to whom Jesus spoke personally experienced His miraculous works. John affirms that the seven miracles that are recorded in his record are sufficient to move us to believe that Jesus is the Christ and Son of God (3:2; 20:30,31). Since we have only these seven miracles, God assumes that we can believe on the testimony of the inspired word of the book of John (See Rm 10:17). **I know from where I came:** Jesus' self-witness is valid in the fact that He knew the realm from which He came (7:28; 9:29). In this sense, He was the only one who could bear witness of Himself, for He was the only one who had descended from heaven.

8:15 *You judge after the flesh:* They were making judgments in reference to Jesus' performance of their traditional code of conduct. Their judgment was limited to the fallibility of human reasoning and performance of a legal religion (See 7:24; 1 Sm 16:7). **I judge no one:** Jesus did not judge others by their outward appearances or performances as did the Pharisees (3:17; 12:47; 18:36).

8:16-18 *My judgment is true:* Jesus stated that His oneness with the Father

(16:32) made His judgment true because His judgment was based on the will of God. It was not based on the humanly devised standards that are fabricated after the will of man. **Your law:** Jesus here referred to the religious legal code the Jews had created after their own traditions (See comments Mk 7:1-9; Gl 1:13,14). It was their law, not the law of God. The Sinai law required the witness of two or more witnesses (Gn 17:6; 19:15; Nm 35:30; see Mt 18:16; 2 Co 13:1). However, the religious leaders had added their own interpretations to these requirements. Jesus here affirmed that He and the Father were the two witnesses required to verify His claim to be the Son of God. He has the witness of Himself because He was the Son of God. In conjunction with this witness, He had the witness of the Father who had worked miracles through Him (3:2; 5:37; Mt 3:16,17; Hb 2:3,4; 1 Jn 5:9). A true interpretation of the Sinai law affirms that one could be a witness unto Himself. But this was not the religious leaders' interpretation. Nevertheless, Jesus affirmed that His witness of Himself was true because of the demeanor of His life in reference to the will of God.

8:19 *Where is Your Father:* If the Pharisees were asking where Jesus' earthly father was, then they knew the answer. If they assumed that Jesus was claiming that He was talking of the heavenly Father, they were wrong. God is not located somewhere, "*for in Him we live and move and have our being*" (At 17:28). He is not the God who dwells in Jerusalem or in some other city or temple

(See comments 4:21). These Pharisees had created a god after their own understanding, and thus, they did not know the God who had sent Jesus into the world (See 14:7; 16:3). The proof that they did not know God is in the fact that they did not accept Jesus who was sent from God. And so it is today. Those religious groups of the world that do not accept Jesus as the Son of God are false because they do not accept Him as one who was sent from God. They do not know the God of heaven because they do not accept the One sent from heaven.

8:20 *Treasury:* This area of the temple was also called the court of women. It was near the place where the Sanhedrin regularly met. ***His hour had not yet come:*** Jesus was in control of His destiny while on earth (10:17,18). When the time of His crucifixion would come, He would allow Himself to be placed into the hands of those who would nail Him to the cross. But until that time, He would not be taken, neither would He allow them to make him a king on this earth, nor be secretly murdered by those who schemed to eliminate Him from this earth (2:4; 7:8,30).

JESUS EXPOSES HIS ENEMIES

8:21 *Die in your sins:* By the time the Pharisees realized that Jesus was who He claimed to be, it would be too late. Jesus would ascend to the right hand of the Father in heavenly places (Ep 1:20-22; Hb 8:1). Those who accepted His testimony and obeyed the gospel, would see Him there in His presence after they died (2 Co 5:8; Ph 1:23). However, those

who reject Jesus in this life will not be in His presence when they die. They will be in anguish because they will eventually recognize who He is. They will have died in their sins because they did not recognize Him in life to be the Savior of the world (7:34; 13:33; Lk 13:3).

8:22-24 The Jewish religious leaders first made here a sneering and scornful reply to what Jesus had just said. **You are from below:** Jesus replied to their mockery by stating that such identifies the origin of their thinking and heart (3:31; 15:19). Because their heart was carnal, and their thinking of this world, they could not understand those spiritual things about which Jesus was speaking. Carnal minds cannot understand spiritual things (1 Co 3:1-3). **If you do not believe that I am He:** The pronoun "he" is not in the Greek text, and thus, Jesus was referring to Himself as "I am." He was affirming that they had to believe that He was the great "I am." His claim to deity must be believed by those who would come to God (See Ex 3:14). He was both the Messiah and Prophet. However, He was more than the Messiah and Prophet. He was the Son of God, and thus, God on earth among men (1:1,2,14; Ph 2:6-8). **Die in your sins:** Unless one believes in Jesus to be the Son of God, he cannot be saved. In Luke 13:3,5 Jesus said that unless one repents, he cannot be saved. In Mark 16:16 He said that unless one is baptized, he cannot be saved (See 3:3-5). Therefore, unless one believes, repents and is baptized in obedience to the gospel he cannot be saved (See comments Rm 6:3-6). When study-

ing the Scriptures in order to understand all that God requires that one do to be saved, all statements that are made in reference to man's part in responding to the grace of God must be obeyed. The Holy Spirit assumes that the honest and obedient student of the Bible will do this. For this reason, all that is required for salvation is not mentioned in every text wherein salvation is under discussion. As in this context, the word "believe" is used to stand for all that is necessary to be saved. It thus includes the fact that one must repent and be immersed for remission of sins.

8:25 Who are You: This reply by the Pharisees was possibly made in a manner that manifested their frustration and indignation toward Jesus (See 10:24,25). Throughout this discourse that Jesus was having with these religious leaders, He emotionally led them to frustration and indignation in order that He testify concerning who He really was. The skill of Jesus to control the emotions of His opposition is seen throughout His ministry. Specifically, it is manifested in situations as this where He was in confrontation with His enemies. **What I have been saying:** Jesus was not affirming anything new to this group of Pharisees (4:26). Conformity to their own system of religious thought, and the pride by which they held their positions, had clouded their understanding. As long as they rejected who Jesus claimed to be, they would never understand what He said of Himself.

8:26 Things to say and to judge concerning you: In order to take Himself to

the cross by controlling the attitudes and responses of those who would nail Him there, Jesus stated here that there were many things to come that He would say to them. What He would yet say would generate great hostility in their hearts toward Him (See comments Mt 23). This hostility would drive them to cry out for His crucifixion. Therefore, when the time was right, Jesus would say these things in order to take Himself to the cross (See 10:17,18).

8:27,28 Their traditional religious behavior and thought, combined with their pride, hindered these religious leaders from understanding what Jesus was saying. These thoughts would later be understood by those who would accept Jesus when He was crucified. **When you have lifted up the Son of Man:** After the crucifixion and resurrection (3:14; 12:32; 19:18; Mt 27:35), the great miraculous events surrounding these happenings would convince many of these religious leaders that Jesus was indeed the Son of God (See At 6:7; Rm 1:4). **Nothing of Myself:** The fact of Jesus' resurrection was proof that an outside force worked in order to raise Him from the dead. The Father raised Him up, and thus, Jesus here affirms that His resurrection would prove that the Father was at the time of His ministry, working through Him (5:19,20; see Ep 1:20).

8:29,30 The Father was with Jesus throughout the earthly ministry (8:16; 14:10; 16:32). The Father bore witness to the Son (3:2; Hb 2:3,4). It was the work of the Son to do the will of the Father (4:34; 5:30; 6:38; Lk 22:42). **Many**

believed: As a result of what Jesus had taught and worked at this time in His ministry, many believed on Him (7:31; 10:41; 11:45). However, there were also those in the multitudes who believed, but their belief would not move them to confess Jesus before others (12:42). Their belief would not move them into action, and thus, their faith was dead (See comments Js 2:14-26).

TRUE SONS OF ABRAHAM

8:31,32 **Continue in My word:** The belief that is acceptable to God is the belief inspires obedience to the word of God (14:15,23; 15:14; Js 2:14-26). True disciples of Jesus are manifested by their obedience to the Teacher (Compare comments Hb 3:7-19). **The truth will make you free:** Grace and truth were revealed through Jesus (1:17; Ti 2:11). Obedience to the truth about which Jesus spoke would liberate one from the confines of sin and death. The religious leaders of Israel had bound on the Jews a legal system of religion that demanded flawless living in reference to law in order to be justified before God (See At 15:10). However, the problem with such a system of religion was that no man could keep law perfectly in order to justify himself, for all have sinned (Rm 3:9,10,23). The result of sin is spiritual separation from God, and thus, spiritual death (Is 59:1,2; Rm 6:23). The truth that Jesus brought was justification by grace and faith (See comments Rm 1:17). Since no man could be justified before God by meritorious law-keeping and atoning good deeds, Jesus came as the atoning

sacrifice by which all men can be cleansed by His blood (Ep 1:7). This is the truth that Jesus revealed. It is this truth that will set one free from the curse of sin and death (Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16). Therefore, obedience in response to the grace of God sets one free from the condemnation that law brings (See intro. to Gl).

8:33 *We are Abraham's seed:* The Jews thought that their physical lineage from Abraham gave them a special salvation relationship with God (Mt 3:9; Lk 3:8). They confused their covenant relationship with God with their need for the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God. ***Never in bondage:*** They were wrong. They had been in the physical bondage of both Assyria and Babylonia. They were at the time Jesus spoke under the bondage of the Roman Empire. But Jesus was not talking about physical bondage. He was talking about the bondage they had brought themselves into in reference to law (See At 15:10; Gl 5:1). As long as they trusted in their own performance of law, and lineage from Abraham, as the means by which they would justify themselves, they were in bondage. However, their spirit of self-righteousness would not allow them to understand that they were in bondage to sin, and thus, needed the free gift of God's grace, which grace was manifested before them through Jesus (Ti 2:11).

8:34-36 *Bondservant of sin:* Jesus' thought here is the same as James 2:10. "For whoever will keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he has become guilty of all." One sin makes a sin-

ner, and thus, dead in sin (See comments Gl 3:10-14). With sin comes death because sin separates one from God (Is 59:1,2; Rm 6:23). Therefore, when one thinks of sin, he must always think of separation from God, which separation brings spiritual death. The law that the Pharisees used as their means to salvation, therefore, actually brought them into the bondage of sin. It brought them into bondage because no one can keep law perfectly in order to stand justified before God (See comments Gl 3). Jesus says, therefore, that those who are slaves of sin cannot abide in the house of God forever. Their sin will lead to their casting out. Those who are sons of Abraham by faith, however, will abide forever. ***You will be free indeed:*** This is one of those beautiful passages of all Scripture that refers to the deliverance of man from sin and death. Jesus was the revelation of God's grace to all men (Ti 2:11). When one comes to God through Jesus, he is free from the necessity of perfect law-keeping in order to be justified before God. He is truly free, therefore, because he trusts in God for justification, and not his own performance of law and good works. The Pharisees thought that they were free from sin and death because they had physically descended from Abraham. However, only when one comes to God through Jesus is he truly free from the curse of law, sin and death (See comments Gl 3:5-14). But there is more to this freedom than simply freedom from the necessity of perfect law-keeping. When one comes to Jesus he is free from the religious laws that he would bind on

himself in order to be pleasing to God. Whether written laws of God, or man-made traditional laws, the freedom is applicable to both. When we come to Jesus. We are set free from the necessity of keeping law perfectly in order to be saved. We are set free from trying to atone for our sins with atoning works of merit.

8:37,38 They were of the physical lineage of Abraham. However, the fact that they plotted to kill Jesus (7:19) was evidence that they were not descendants of Abraham by faith. Jesus came to speak those things that were from the Father (3:32; 5:10,30; 14:10,24). Because the religious leaders were plotting to kill Him, they were speaking those things that they had heard from their father, the devil.

8:39 The religious leaders here argued that Abraham was their father (vs 37; Mt 3:9). They assumed a special relationship with God because of their physical lineage from Abraham. **The works of Abraham:** Jesus spoke of being a son of Abraham by faith. If they were such, then their faith would move them to accept Him as the Son of God and the One given by God through whom they would be set free from sin and death. If they were sons of Abraham by faith, their faith would move them to do the obedient works of Abraham in response to the grace of God (See Js 2:14-26).

8:40 *You seek to kill Me:* This was all the evidence that was needed to prove that they were not the spiritual descendants of Abraham. In the context of this discussion, the religious leaders did not understand that Jesus was talking con-

cerning spiritual lineage from Abraham. They did not understand this because they sought to kill Jesus. The fact that Abraham would never have done what they were planning to do was evidence that they were not of Abraham. They had constructed a religious world view after their own desires, and thus, lived by their own code of values.

8:41 *The deeds of your father:* Jesus was leading these religious leaders to the conclusion of verse 44. Because they were doing the work of Satan, Satan was their father, not Abraham. Abraham would never treacherously conspire to kill someone as they were conspiring. **We have one Father:** The religious leaders now perceived that Jesus was speaking of spiritual fatherhood in reference to Abraham. Therefore, they claimed God as their Father (See Dt 32:6; Is 63:16; Mt 1:6).

8:42 *If God were your Father:* If God were their Father as they claimed, then they would not conspire to kill another man. If God were truly their Father, then they would love and accept Jesus because He came from the Father (16:27; 17:8,25). Jesus' point was clear and should be a lesson to all religious leaders. One cannot claim to have God as his Father if he does not accept the work of God through the Son. Those who reject the preaching of the gospel of the Son, therefore, are not of God.

8:43 *Why do you not understand:* They chose not to listen because of the evil intentions of their hearts. Their religious prejudices against Jesus blinded their understanding of what Jesus was

saying (See 7:17; Mt 13:14,15).

8:44 *Your father the devil:* This statement of Jesus should be understood in view of what John recorded in verse 31. There were those who believed on Jesus as the Messiah, but they would not confess Him to be the Son of God. Their faith was thus dead (See comments Js 2:14-26). ***Desires of your father:*** When one sets himself to do the work of Satan, then Satan is his father. Those who would set themselves against the preaching of the gospel have claimed Satan as their father (See Mt 13:38; 1 Jn 3:8). Because these religious leaders were plotting to kill Jesus, they identified themselves to be of the same nature as Satan who introduced death into the world by deceiving Adam and Eve into eating of the forbidden fruit. ***A liar and its father:*** Deception is the force by which Satan has captivated the hearts of those who do not have a love for the truth (2 Th 2:10-12). Those who do not seek the truth, therefore, have given themselves over to follow after the lies of Satan. Satan has thus become their father.

8:45 Jesus was stating here that which was true. But because the religious leaders were of their father the devil, they could not accept what Jesus was saying. The fact that they could not accept what He said manifested that they were not honest in their hearts.

8:46 The person of Jesus was evidence that He was from the Father. They could not find fault in His life. If they could have found sin in His life, then they would have had just reason to condemn Him. But the fact that they could not find

fault in His life was evidence that their motives were evil.

8:47 *You are not of God:* The character of those who are of God is in the fact that they have a willing mind to listen to the word of God (10:26; Lk 8:15; At 17:11; 1 Jn 4:6; see Jn 14:15; 15:14; Mt 7:21). Those who reject the preaching of the word of God have identified that they are not of God.

8:48 *You are a Samaritan:* This was a derogatory statement they made in reference to Jesus. In order to discredit Jesus, they made this statement because they could not refute His reasoning. Such is the tactic of those who cannot refute the truth. They resort to slanderous and sneering statements about their opposition. They try to destroy the character of their opponents. Therefore, in the religious leaders' frustration to win their arguments with Jesus, they resorted to vilifying Him before the multitudes (See 7:20; 10:20).

8:49-51 Because they did not honor Jesus, they dishonored God (5:41). They dishonored God because they rejected the One God sent into the world. Jesus did not react to their slanderous statements by slandering them as they did Him. What He had said of them was true. They were of their father the devil. What Jesus did do was state that God will judge them. This judgment did come in time with the destruction of the Jewish State in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). ***Will never see death:*** The religious leaders who rejected Jesus would remain in their spiritual death, and subsequently, would physically die without hope. However,

those who accepted Jesus would live forever (5:24; 11:26). The condition for gaining eternal life would be obedience to the word of Jesus (5:24; 11:26; 12:48; 14:15; 15:14; Mt 7:21).

8:52-54 These religious leaders were still thinking carnally. They did not understand that Jesus was talking about spiritual death. They knew that all men must physically die, and thus, they assumed that Jesus was talking about physical death (Hb 9:27). Abraham and all the prophets physically died. But here they say Jesus has a demon because they did not understand what He was saying concerning spiritual death. **Who do you make yourself to be:** It was to this point of frustration that Jesus had moved the antagonistic religious leaders. It was from this point on that He openly affirmed that He was one with God. **It is My Father who honors Me:** If Jesus had honored Himself, then such self-honor would have been presumptuous and carnal if He were a mere man. He was not as the self-righteous religious leaders. On the contrary, the honor that Jesus received was given to Him by the Father (3:2; 5:31,32,41; 16:14; 20:30,31; At 3:13).

8:55 You have not known Him: The Greek word used here refers to intellectual knowledge through study and observation. These Jews did not truly have an intellectual knowledge of God, even though they knew what the Old Testament Scriptures taught concerning God. Jesus' point was that one does not have a true intellectual knowledge of God if he does not walk according to the character of God (See comments 1 Jn 4:8). The

Jews to whom Jesus made this address professed to love and obey God. However, they had a hypocritical love and obedience of God after the religion they had created according to their own traditions and desires. If they truly knew God, then they would obey His will as Jesus did (15:10; Hb 5:9).

8:56 Abraham ... saw it: Abraham saw the day of Jesus because he was fully assured that what God had promised He was able also to perform. What God had promised was that all nations would be blessed through Abraham's seed (Gn 12:3; 15:4-6; 22:16-18). Therefore, this good news was delivered to Abraham. He believed that God would bring about all that He had promised (See comments Gl 3:8; see Mt 13:17; Hb 11:13).

8:57,58 What they did not understand was the fact that Jesus had seen Abraham because He was in existence at the time Abraham lived. **Before Abraham was, I Am:** Jesus not only saw Abraham, He saw even the first man Adam. Jesus' use of the Greek present tense here to express His eternity was certainly linked to the statement of God before Moses on Mount Sinai (Ex 3:14). What Jesus here claimed was that He not only saw Abraham, He existed before Abraham was born (See 1:1,2). The Greek tense here is present continuous action. Jesus was in existence in eternity when this world was created with all its characters of history, including Abraham (See comments Ph 2:6-8; Cl 1:16). Jesus thus claimed to be Deity in this statement, which claim makes Him greater than any prophet of God. One

cannot accept Jesus simply as a good teacher of Palestine, or as one of a series of prophets of God. He is one with God the Father and Holy Spirit. At the time He spoke these words to the religious leaders, He was the manifestation of God as the Son on earth.

8:59 Jesus accomplished His goal of this discourse with these religious leaders. They were infuriated in their inability to answer His arguments. They now understood that He claimed equality with God. But it was not the time for His death. Therefore, He left this encounter with the religious leaders in order to allow them to continue their scheme to

kill Him. There were enough people in the audience to detour their threat to stone Him at this time because they would also have to stone the disciples who were with Him. Therefore, their taking up of the stones was surely meant to be only a threat. Their actual stoning of Jesus would have caused chaos in the midst of many in the multitudes who had accepted Jesus to be the Messiah. In a few months, however, there would be a time when Jesus would allow them to vent their fury as He would relinquish to their schemes of death in a garden outside Jerusalem. He would allow them to take Him to the cross.

CHAPTER 9

HEALING OF A MAN BORN BLIND

9:1,2 *Who sinned:* It was a common belief among the Jews that one's sins led directly to physical infirmity (See 9:34; Lk 13:1-4; At 28:4). Such would be true in the general sense that one would reap the consequences of his own sin if the sin in some way affected one's physical body (See comments Gl 6:7,8). In other words, one who would continually become drunk would eventually harm his body. However, such would not be true in the direct sense for all have sinned (Rm 3:9,10,23). And since all have sinned, then all would suffer from physical infirmities if physical infirmity were the direct result of sin. In the incident recorded here by John, the disciples were simply expressing their beliefs concerning sin and physical infirmity.

9:3 In reply to the statement of the disciples, Jesus simply stated that this man's blindness was not the result of some sin in either his life or the life of his parents. *The works of God:* We live in a physical environment that is governed by physical laws. However, when the physical laws are set aside for the manifestation of the supernatural laws of God, this is what is called a miracle. In the circumstances in this context, the opportunity had been established by the blindness of the man in order for the supernatural laws of God to set aside the laws of nature, and thus, manifest the glory and power of God. The miracle was to occur, therefore, "*for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it*" (11:4). This physical infirmity, as well as all such infirmities at the time Jesus lived and with which He

came into contact, presented the opportunity for Him to be proved to be the Son of God (3:2; At 2:22; Hb 2:3,4). In being proved to be the Son of God, He was proved to be from the realm of God's glory, that is, the supernatural realm of God's eternal dwelling (See 1:14).

9:4,5 *The night is coming:* From this time in Jesus' ministry it was only a few months until His earthly ministry was ended by His going to the cross. Therefore, He spoke with urgency here in view of the cross. ***I am the light:*** Jesus was the light of God that came into the world to give men hope of a world that is beyond this world (1:5,9; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35,36). But the time was soon coming when the light that was in the world would go out of the world.

9:6,7 *Made clay of spittle:* In doing this to the blind man, Jesus presented the opportunity for the man to choose to obey His command to go wash. There was no medical power in the clay. But there was power in the One who made the clay. ***He came back seeing:*** This man did not argue with Jesus. He immediately obeyed, and thus, he gave a testimony of how our obedience should be in reference to Jesus' commands (Compare 2 Kg 5). If he had not followed the instructions of Jesus, then he would not have been healed. If we do not follow the instructions of Jesus, then we will not be healed of our spiritual sickness.

9:8-10 Everyone knew the identity of the blind beggar, though some were reluctant to admit that he could now see. Their reluctance may be explained in the fact that the healing was so surreal to

them because he was blind for so many years. Whatever the case, the testimony of the neighbors confirmed the fact that the man was actually blind, but now could see.

9:11 *A man ... called Jesus:* The blind man here gave his testimony of the healing. His healing was immediate. It was complete. He identified the one who healed him, though the healing was meant for a greater purpose than to identify Jesus as the man. The healing would identify Jesus as a prophet (vs 17) and one who was sent from God (vs 33; 3:2). It would identify Him as the Son of God (vss 35-38).

9:12-15 *Brought to the Pharisees:* The story of the healing had certainly come to the ears of the Pharisees, to whom the man was now brought in order to convince them that he was healed.

9:16 These two claims of the Pharisees revealed their hearts. ***He does not keep the Sabbath:*** Jesus did not break any Sabbath laws. He only broke the additions the Pharisees had made to the original Sabbath law. Regardless of what laws were broken, they were more concerned over the keeping of their self-imposed Sabbath traditions than the healing of the blind man. Such is the nature of those who are in bondage to a legal system of religion. They affirm that man is made for the Sabbath and not the Sabbath for man. The keeping of their rigid Sabbath laws which God never bound, was to be honored above even the healing of a blind man. Even in this case, the purpose for the healing of the blind man superseded the Sabbath rest of the origi-

nal Sabbath law (See comments Mt 23:23). ***A man that is a sinner:*** They judged Jesus to be a sinner because He had not obeyed their traditional laws concerning the Sabbath (See comments Mt 15:1-9; Mk 7:1-9). They were thus wrong on both accounts. Doing good on the Sabbath was not sin against God's law. And secondly, it was not sin to go against their restrictions that they had bound on people in reference to the Sabbath. One does not sin when he goes against religious traditions. He sins when he transgresses the law of God.

9:17 *He is a prophet:* This is certainly not what the Pharisees wanted to hear. However, it was exactly what this miracle and all others were to accomplish in the minds of the people (See 3:2; 4:19; 6:14; Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4). The Samaritan woman made this confession on the basis of realizing that Jesus knew her life (4:19). This man made the confession on the basis that Jesus had healed him.

9:18,19 *Until they called the parents:* The miracle of the healing was so great that the Pharisees could not accept it until they talked to the parents. But after they talked to the parents, they were convinced that a miracle had taken place. Though the Pharisees eventually believed in the miracle, they still rejected Jesus. John wants us to understand that a true miracle had here taken place. It was a historical happening with which one must deal if he does not accept Jesus for who He said He was. What this case of healing does manifest concerning the hearts of men is the fact that one's prejudices

can have greater power over the heart than the empirical facts he may encounter. The Pharisees had all the facts before them, but their prejudices against Jesus were so great that they ignored the facts. They saw the miracles, but the miracles did not have a positive effect on their hearts.

9:20-23 The parents avoided a direct testimony concerning the healing. ***They feared the Jews:*** The trial scene here manifested the tremendous religious intimidation the religious leaders had over the people (7:13; 12:42; 19:38; At 5:13). The religious leaders had already agreed to excommunicate from the synagogue any who would give testimony to Jesus. Therefore, these overjoyed parents were intimidated by fear because some religious leaders in the community had no concern over the facts about Jesus' miraculous works. The religious leaders were more concerned about their positions and power than the truth Jesus was bringing to the people. Nothing has changed today in societies where religious leaders hold whole communities captive by the deception of man-made religions (See comments At 8:9,10). Such leaders are often more concerned over their religious traditions and power in the community than study of the word of God.

9:24 *Give God the glory:* The Pharisees had to admit that the miracle took place. However, they wanted no glory to go to Jesus. Therefore, they commanded the blind man to give God all the glory (See Ja 7:19; 1 Sm 6:5; Rv 11:13). What the religious leaders did

not understand was the fact that giving God the glory was exactly what the man was doing. God was in their midst through the manifestation of Jesus, but they could not accept this fact.

9:25 Without making a direct statement concerning the miraculous works of Jesus, this man gave a testimony that he had been healed. The conclusion would be that Jesus was not a sinner as the Pharisees erroneously affirmed (See 3:2; 20:30,31). No sinner could work the works of God as Jesus did. This is a very powerful argument against anyone other than a messenger of God working miracles. God has never allowed those who teach error to work miracles. Therefore, in order to determine if a supposed miracle is a true miracle, we must first consider the teaching of the one who supposedly works the miracle. If one teaches error, then certainly he is not working any miracles. It is imperative, therefore, that the teaching of the miracle worker must first be considered before considering his supposed miracles.

9:26 Their resorting to cross-examination was an effort to find some contradiction in the testimony of the man. However, when a true miracle occurred, there could be no contradictions in what happened. The miracle spoke for itself. It did not need the explanation of men. True miracles need no doctor's report in order to affirm that they have occurred. True miracles were manifested in a manner that could be perceived through the five senses of men.

9:27,28 *Will you also become His disciples:* This statement affirms that the

healed man had already become the disciple of Jesus because of the healing. Because of the denials of the Pharisees in view of such strong evidence against their case, the boldness of the healed man was increased to the point of making this sarcastic statement to them. *They reviled him:* And such is the normal reaction of those who, contrary to the weight of all evidence, totally refuse to accept the truth. They will unleash their venom on those who give testimony to the truth. They seek to discredit those who give the testimony in order to discredit their witness to the truth. *We are Moses' disciples:* In reality they were not Moses' disciples because Moses would never have done what they were doing. They were rejecting the very Prophet about whom Moses prophesied (Dt 18:15-18). They were scheming to murder an innocent man. They were not the disciples of Moses, neither were they sons of Abraham by faith. The Bible student must remind himself that these were religious leaders of a system of religion that would allow such hardness of heart to prevail over the direct evidence of the presence of the Son of God. Church leaders today would do well to earnestly take heed to the nature of these leaders lest they become the same in reference to their leadership of the church. It is also imperative that students of the Bible examine the nature of the religion that was promoted by these religious leaders. One must discover this system of religious thought and behavior in order not to live or promote the same.

9:29 *We do not know where He is*

from: However, this would contradict their claim in 7:27. What we could conclude from the statements of the religious leaders here is that they were speaking irrationally in the face of such strong evidence that the miracle had actually occurred.

9:30-33 The healed man sensed the inability of the religious leaders to cope with the undeniable proof of the miracle. He was thus made more bold to make this profound testimony of Jesus and the purpose of miracles. The supernatural realm of God was here manifested in the life of Jesus, thus proving that He was from the realm of God (3:2,10; 20:30,31; see Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4). The miraculous manifestation of the environment of Deity through Jesus proved that He was of God. The religious leaders' rejection of the miraculous evidence proved that they were not from God. **God does not hear sinners:** The word "hear" is used in reference to God's working in response to the pleas of sinners (See 1 Sm 8:18; Jb 35:12; Ps 34:15,16; 66:18; Pv 1:28; 15:29; 28:9; Is 1:15; 59:2; Ez 8:18; Mc 3:4). God does not respond to the specific pleas of the wicked person because the wicked do not worship the one true God. They do not live according to His will (1 Jn 5:14). Therefore, He does not respond to their pleas in order to bless them because they are walking contrary to His will. The argument of the healed man in this context is that if Jesus were a sinner, then certainly God would not be working through Him. **It has never been heard:** No one had ever made a blind person see. There was no record of such

ever occurring in all the recorded history of Israel. Therefore, since the healing of the blind man had never occurred in history, then the healed man argued that this unique event must prove Jesus to be more than just another man (3:2). He must be greater than a prophet, which claim the blind man had already made (vs 17). **He could do nothing:** Though this statement was made by the healed man, it is still true. John here records it as a true statement, and thus, an affirmation that Satan is not out in the world working miracles as Jesus did. It was the purpose of miracles to accomplish what has been stated in this context with reference to the healing of the blind man. If Satan were also working miracles, then the testimony of the miracles that Jesus and the disciples worked would be nullified. If Satan worked miracles through his messengers we would not know who to believe. Therefore, this statement of the blind man is true. Those who are not from God cannot work miracles. Satan has never worked a miracle in order to substantiate his work. God would not allow such to happen for the very purpose of what miracles were to accomplish in the first place, that is, to be a testimony that the message of God's messengers was from God (See comments Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4).

9:34 They cast him out: Those who cannot with reason and Scripture refute those who are teaching the truth, will respond with rage. Their inability to deal with truth is unleashed on those who give witness to the truth. In this particular case, they simply threw the man out.

DEALING WITH REJECTION**9:35-38** *When He had found him:*

The news of the healed man's triumph in his debate with the religious leaders went out to all Jerusalem, and eventually, came to the ears of Jesus. This is one case where Jesus went looking for one who was, according to what information we have, the first to stand before the religious leaders of Jerusalem in order to testify concerning Jesus (Compare Lk 8:39). ***That I may believe:*** The healed man believed that Jesus was a prophet (vs 17). But Jesus was to move his belief beyond acceptance of Him only as a prophet. Because the confirmation through miracles had already taken place, all that Jesus needed to do was to make the affirmation that He was the Son of God. For this reason, the healed man willingly accepted what Jesus said. The natural response of those who recognize the presence of God, is to worship. And so, the healed man worshiped Jesus (20:28; Mt 8:2). By accepting his worship, Jesus was proclaiming Himself to be more than a prophet because only God is worthy of worship.

9:39 Judgment: The judgment that Jesus brought into the world was the occasion for men to decide who He was, and thus, make a response. Jesus was the occasion for men to judge themselves. Those as the Pharisees who rejected Jesus, judged themselves (3:17; 5:22ff; 12:47,48). They judged themselves by rejecting Jesus who was sent by God. ***Those who do not see may see:*** The ones who truly see are those who are of a humble heart, and thus, not prejudiced

or restricted by the religious traditions of men. When Jesus came, they willingly accepted him. ***Those who see may be made blind:*** These are those who thought they saw God. They had constructed a religion after their own desires according to the traditions of the fathers (See comments Mk 7:1-9). They blindly viewed God through the practice of their own traditional religion. However, in their self-made religiosity, they turned away from God. *"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God"* (Rm 10:3; see Is 6:9,10; Mt 13:13; comments in intro. to G1). The point that Jesus here makes is the fact that one cannot see the true and living God through his own devised religiosity. One can understand God only through His revealed word. Any religious group that does not approach God through Jesus and the Bible, therefore, cannot understand the one true God.

9:40,41 Your sin remains: If God had not given them law by which to direct their behavior, then they would have been without sin. *"For until law, sin was in the world, but sin is not credited when there is no law"* (Rm 5:13; see 1 Jn 3:4). The religious leaders were without excuse (See comments Rm 2:17-24). They were blind because they had the law, but could not see the God beyond the law. They stumbled over their legal use of the law and religious traditions, and thus, they failed to see the Son of God who came to fulfill the law (See Mt 5:17,18). Their religious self-righteousness and

spiritual arrogance blinded them to the fact that with humility and meekness they must accept the carpenter's Son who came out of Nazareth.

CHAPTER 10

JESUS AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Jesus now moves into a discussion concerning the nature of those who would be leaders of the flock of God. He has in mind the nature of the religious leaders He had just confronted. In this encounter, He contrasted the spirit of His leadership of the flock with the leadership of the blind guides of the scribes, priests and Pharisees of Israel. The background prophecy of what Jesus here states is Ezekiel 34 where God promised to send good shepherds to Israel because of the bad shepherds who had led them to spiritual ruin.

10:1-6 Jesus' parable here is based on the custom of the Jewish sheep herders who herded all their sheep together into one pen during the night in order to protect them. In the mornings, each shepherd would call his own sheep. The sheep would then follow their own shepherd. **The door:** In this metaphorical story of Jesus, He identifies Himself as the good shepherd. He will later identify Himself as the door to the flock of God (vs 7). **Thief and a robber:** The religious leaders were the thieves and robbers of the sheep. They had stolen the sheep of God by submitting them to a religious atmosphere of intimidation in binding on their consciences their own religious rules and regulations (See comments Mt 23; Mk 7:1-9; Gl 1:13,14). The religious rulers of Jesus' day had captured

the religious consciences of the people, and thus, they held them in bondage for their own political and economic means. They maintained their positions and power by unholy and unscrupulous means. They were thus thieves and robbers who had stolen the sheep of God (See comments Mt 21:33-46; 3 Jn 9,10). **Enters in by the door:** The good shepherd enters in by the proper entry. He does so in order to call His sheep unto himself. **They know his voice:** The sheep recognize the tone of the shepherd's voice. Because they are of the nature of the shepherd, they will follow him. When Jesus came into Israel, those who were of a humble nature received Him because they were of a humble heart. **They will never follow a stranger:** Jesus' presence among the people manifested the people's rejection of the religious leaders. The religious leaders could not take Jesus at any time because of many in the multitudes who accepted Him as the Messiah, or at least a great teacher in Israel. The people thus recognized the good shepherd in Jesus and rejected the scribes, priests and Pharisees as thieves and robbers. **They did not understand:** The Pharisees who were in the audience did not at this time fully understand what Jesus was saying. They did not understand that Jesus was speaking of their inability to lead Israel spiritually as shepherds.

JESUS AS THE DOOR

10:7-9 *I am the door:* Jesus here metaphorically referred to Himself as the door through whom all must enter into the sheepfold of God. "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*" (14:6). "*For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father*" (Ep 2:18). **Did not hear them:** The impression is that the true sons of Abraham by faith did not agree with the religious leaders at the time of Jesus. They were intimidated to conform to the regulations of the Jews' religion (9:22). However, they realized that there was a flaw in the religious system the leaders were promoting. The common people evidently saw in the life-style of the religious leaders behavior that was contrary to the will of God. The leaders thus upheld the system because the system sustained their life-styles. It was a religious culture ripe for change. And change it did through the humble ministry of the Son of God.

10:9 *He will be saved:* In this statement, Jesus affirmed that it was only through Him that there was salvation. "*And there is salvation in no other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*" (At 4:12).

10:10 The religious leaders of Israel had stolen the sheep of God. They stole the sheep by intimidating the flock to submit to their interpretations of the law and religious politics. The reason they had stolen the flock was to support their positions and purse. ***That they may have life ... have it more abundantly:*** In this

statement, Jesus affirms that one is not only saved if he enters through Him as the door, but such a person will also comprehend and enjoy the fullness for which life on earth was meant to be. It is only in Christ that one understands, and thus, receives those blessings that enrich and enhance living. "*His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue*" (2 Pt 1:3). In contrast to the life that Jesus offered, the misguided religious leaders of Israel had compounded the burdens of the people by laying on their shoulders religious traditions they could not bear. Their sense of guilt was multiplied by the addition of those things on the consciences of men that God had not bound (Mk 7:1-9; see comments Mt 11:28,29; At 15:10; compare Mt 7:15,23; 23:14; Lk 11:39-52).

10:11-13 *I am the good shepherd:* Jesus is the good shepherd who can lead the flock of God to spiritual growth that will end in eternal life (Mt 20:28; see Ps 23:1; 79:13; 80:1; 95:7; Hb 13:20; 1 Pt 2:25; 5:4). Jesus is thus the fulfillment of God's promise that the good shepherd would lead His people out of spiritual poverty and religious oppression (See Gn 49:24; Is 40:11; Ez 34:23,24; see comments Gl 5:1). ***The hireling ... flees:*** The hireling has his own interests at heart. This type of leader is present only when there is money paid for his services. When the money is gone, he is gone. When danger threatens, he is gone (See Zc 11:16,17). The good shepherd gives himself for the safety of the sheep be-

cause he is committed to them. The hireling is committed only as long as his selfishness is satisfied. Hirelings are identified by their use of the flock for their own agenda. Good shepherds are identified by their sacrificial service for the flock.

10:14,15 *I know My sheep:* Jesus knew those who were of the spiritual Israel. They were the sons of Abraham by faith (6:64; Is 40:10; Nh 1:7; At 13:7; 2 Tm 2:19). These were those who received Him. ***I know the Father:*** The Son knows the Father simply because the Father and Son are one (Mt 11:27). Because the sheep take on the nature of the Son, they are known by the Father and Son. Therefore, the Father and Son know the sheep because they have been transformed into the image of the Son who is known by the Father. ***I lay down My life:*** Of His own will, Jesus laid down His life (See comments 10:17,18; see 15:13; 19:30; Mt 27:40; Mk 14:37; Lk 23:46; 1 Jn 3:16).

10:16 *Other sheep I have:* The other sheep who would be grafted into a covenant relationship with God through Jesus would be the Gentiles (See Is 42:6; 49:6; 56:8; Mc 4:1-5; At 10:45). ***One fold and one shepherd:*** In the near future from the time Jesus made this statement, both Jews and Gentiles would come together into the one body, the church (11:52; 17:20,21; see comments Gl 3:27-29; Ep 2:14-18; compare Ep 4:4-6; 1 Pt 2:25). Jesus is not the shepherd of many flocks. The fact that there is only one shepherd emphasizes the fact that the flock is one because all the sheep follow the one shepherd (See comments

1 Co 1:10; Ph 1:27). The oneness of the flock is based on the fact of the one Shepherd they follow.

10:17,18 *I lay down My life:* Jesus gave Himself as a sacrificial offering for the world of humanity that He created (See Is 53; Ph 2:5-11; Hb 2:9). ***I have power to lay it down:*** We must not conclude that Jesus inadvertently fell into any plot of the Jews, and consequently, was killed on the cross because His kingdom plans had gone wrong. It was always in the plan of God that the incarnate Son voluntarily go to the cross. This is true because the crucifixion of Jesus was in the mind of God before the creation of the world (Rv 13:8). When Jesus died on the cross, He voluntarily gave His spirit to the Father (10:17,18; 19:30). There was nothing that happened outside the plan of God. It was always God's plan that the sacrificial Lamb go to the cross for the salvation of mankind. ***This commandment:*** All that Jesus did and said on earth was in harmony with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Before His incarnation, the plan was set. At the time of these events, the plan of God to save man was in the process of being put into action. Jesus was not changing anything in the plan. The Jews who rejected Jesus could not change anything. Therefore, the commandment had been received, and Jesus was in the process of obeying the will of God (6:38; 15:10; Lk 22:42; At 2:24,32).

10:19-21 The spiritual condition of the hearts of the hearers was what caused the division. There were those in the multitudes who accepted Jesus because

they were of a humble and receptive heart. But there were also those who were of a rebellious heart, and thus, these accused Jesus of having a demon (7:20; 8:48,52). ***Can a demon open the eyes of the blind:*** The answer to the question is absolutely not. God never allowed Satan to work miracles. The work of Satan during the ministry of Jesus was not miraculous. God would never allow Satan to work miraculously as to confuse people, and thus, undo the confirming power of the miracles He worked through His messengers (See comments Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4).

JESUS AT THE FEAST OF DEDICATION

10:22,23 There were possibly three months between the events that concluded in the preceding verses and what takes place here. ***Feast of Dedication:*** This Jewish feast was started by Judas Maccabaeus in 164 B.C. It was started three years after the temple and altar were defiled by Antiochus Epiphanes. The time of the feast was in the winter, and here, Jesus possibly took shelter from the cold weather in the colonnade called Solomon's porch that was on the east side of the temple.

10:24 John used the term "Jews" to refer to the religious leaders, whereas Matthew, Mark and Luke identify these Jews as the scribes, priests and Pharisees. On this occasion they surrounded Jesus and demanded a straightforward answer from Him concerning the claims that He had already made, that is, that He was the Christ.

10:25 Jesus had already made the claim that He was the Christ. The miracles that He worked bore testimony to the fact that He was from God (3:2; 5:36; 10:38; 20:30,31). But the religious leaders refused to accept the evidence of the miracles, though they could not deny that such miracles had occurred (9:18). Their questions on this occasion, therefore, were not for the purpose of having Jesus restate His claim or to have Him work another miracle. They were wanting Him to make statements in Jerusalem whereby they might trap Him in a sin of blasphemy (See Mk 14:62ff).

10:26-29 ***You do not believe:*** They did not believe because they were not of the nature of the true sheep of God. The fact that they did not believe was evidence that they were not of the sheep of God. However, those who are of an honest and sincere heart, and had an open mind, would listen and believe. They would walk in the commandments of Jesus because they accepted Him as the Son of God (Compare 12:39,40; Mt 13:14,15; 2 Th 2:10-12). ***I give to them eternal life:*** Once one obeys the gospel, he is given eternal life (3:16; Ti 1:2). ***"And this is the testimony, that God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son"*** (1 Jn 5:11). The giving of the life is a onetime event. However, the results of the giving last without end. Disciples of Jesus have life in this time, though the reality of the life will be experienced when He comes again. Therefore, we are ***"in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began"*** (Ti 1:2). ***Neither will anyone snatch***

them out: There is no force outside the free-moral agency of the children of God that can subjectively take them away from Jesus. Though the Christian can voluntarily turn away from Jesus (Gl 5:4-6; 2 Tm 2:16-18; Hb 6:4-6), there is no one who can separate us from the love of God. *“For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life ... nor any other creature, will be able to separate us from the love of God ...”* (See comments Rm 8:38,39).

10:30 The statement in this verse reassures the disciples. The reassurance is based on the fact that Jesus and the Father are one in character, purpose, nature and work. This is the security upon which the faith of the believer is based.

JEWISH HOSTILITY

10:31,32 According to the Sinai law, if one blasphemed, the punishment was death by stoning (Lv 24:16). However, such a punishment was to be meted out only after a fair trial and conviction. In the case mentioned here, these religious leaders were simply driven to rage because of their inability to cope with the truth and works of Jesus. They knew that Jesus had worked miracles, which miracles they could not deny (9:18; see At 4:14-16).

10:33 They could not connect the works of Jesus with His claim to be one with God. However, Nicodemus made this connection. Early in the ministry of Jesus, he said, *“Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him”* (3:2). But the prejudices of those religious leaders who were hard-

ened against Jesus could not deal with the fact that Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God. **Make Yourself God:** Their deductions were correct. They did understand that Jesus claimed to be God by saying that He was one with God (vs 30; Mt 9:3).

10:34 You are gods: Psalm 82:1,2,6 refers to judges and civil authorities as gods in Israel for they represented the judgment of God on earth among men. Jesus applied this concept to Himself in reference to the accusations of the Jews who said that He was only a man. They could not see Him giving the judgment of God to them as the judges and civil authorities of Israel.

10:35,36 Jesus asks that if the law referred to those through whom God spoke as gods, then why would it be blasphemy for Him to refer to Himself as the Son of God. **Sanctified:** Jesus was sanctified in the sense that He was separated by God to accomplish the work that He was doing. He was set apart from the Godhead and sent into the world to accomplish the work of redemption (Ph 2:6-8).

10:37-39 The unity and oneness of the Father and Son were manifested in the miraculous works that the Son did (3:2; 20:30,31). Since miracles came only from the realm of the supernatural, then the fact that Jesus worked the miracles proved that He was from the supernatural. If the religious leaders did not accept what Jesus did, then they at least had to accept the works that they could not deny (5:36; 9:18), which works manifested that He was from God. Be-

cause this group of close-minded religionists could not refute the truth that Jesus spoke, they here sought again to take Him by force and dispose of Him (See vs 31; 7:30,44; 8:59).

10:40-42 After this hostile confrontation with the religious leaders in Jerusalem, Jesus retreated to the wilderness area where John the Baptist had preached (1:28). In this environment only those

who were of a willing heart would come to Him. And so they did. They understood the prophecies of John the Baptist who had spoken of Jesus. Though John worked no miracles, all the miraculous works that he said the coming Messiah would work were happening at the command of Jesus. As a result of Jesus fulfilling these prophecies of John, many believed on Jesus.

CHAPTER 11

THE DEATH OF LAZARUS

11:1,2 *Lazarus of Bethany:* Lazarus was the brother of Mary and Martha. They lived on the slope of the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem (See Mk 14:3-9; Lk 10:38-42). ***Mary who anointed:*** John identified this Mary as the one who anointed Jesus' feet (12:1-8). He identified her in this way for those who would read this book many years later and many kilometers away from the event. What she did on this occasion has been an example to Christians for centuries, and thus, the Holy Spirit wanted her action to be known to all as an action of servitude and worship.

11:3,4 After the sisters informed Jesus that Lazarus was seriously sick, Jesus responded that the sickness would not lead to his permanent death. Lazarus did die. However, Jesus knew that He would raise him from the dead because He was nearing the end of His ministry. He thus needed to work this great miracle in order to agitate the Jewish religious leaders. Jesus would be glorified through the miracle of Lazarus' resurrection. This would be the final miracle to stir the reli-

gious leaders to great jealousy, and thus, they would take Him to the cross.

11:5-7 *He stayed two days longer:* John wants us to know that Jesus loved the two sisters and their brother in order that we do not misinterpret why He stayed two more days. He waited until He knew that Lazarus would be dead. The miracle He was going to work was to be a miracle of resurrection and not a miracle of healing. If He arrived before Lazarus died, the friends and family would have compelled Him to heal him.

11:8 *Seeking to stone You:* The disciples reminded Jesus of the death threats that waited for Him in Jerusalem (8:59; 10:31). They were concerned for His safety, but they did not understand that this was His last trip to Jerusalem. He was headed for the cross.

11:9,10 *If anyone walks in the day:* Jesus was walking in the day, and thus, He knew what was about to happen. He was laying down His own life (10:17,18). He was walking His destiny and the allotted time of His earthly ministry in order to accomplish the will of the Father. The miracle He was about to work would

be a final miracle that would set the religious leaders against Him, and thus, move them to take Him to the cross. But such would accomplish the reason for which He was sent into the world (See vs 47,48,53).

11:11-13 *Lazarus sleeps:* From the viewpoint of God, death is but a sleep from which all saints will awake (Dt 31:16; Jr 51:57; Jb 14:12; Dn 12:2; Mt 9:24; 27:52; At 7:60; 1 Co 7:39; 15:18,51; 1 Th 4:12-18). From what the disciples state here, they did not understand what was going on in reference to what Jesus was saying or what would happen. They thought that Lazarus was simply sleeping because of his illness, from which sleep he would arise. But such was not to be the case.

11:14,15 *Lazarus is dead:* Though the principal purpose for the resurrection of Lazarus was not for their belief, it would result in such. They were about to experience a glorious breakthrough into the world of natural laws by the prevailing supernatural law of the realm of God. We now see why Jesus waited for two more days. If He had been in the presence of Lazarus while he was still sick, He would have had to heal him because of the pleas of the friends and family. But now his death would work as a testimony to the glory of God as revealed through Jesus.

11:16 *That we may die:* This would be the person all would eventually refer to as "doubting Thomas." However, his true character is manifested here. He was one at least who was willing to die with Jesus in order to defend Him as the Mes-

siah of Israel. The disciples thus sensed that Jesus was headed for some final confrontation with the Jewish religious leaders. Though they misunderstood the nature of the kingdom (At 1:6), they were willing to die for the cause. We would thus commend Thomas for his total commitment to Jesus, regardless of his misunderstanding at this time concerning the final end of Jesus' mission.

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS

11:17-19 *Bethany ... about two miles away:* Bethany was about fifteen *stadia* (Gr.), which is about three kilometers, east of Jerusalem. John identifies its location for those who are reading this book because they are unacquainted with the geography of Jerusalem and the area. ***Four days:*** It was a superstition of some Jews that the spirit hovered around the dead for three days after death. Jesus here wanted everyone to be assured that Lazarus was indeed dead. There would be no thoughts about Lazarus possibly resuscitating in the tomb, and thus, give reason to question the miracle. ***Many of the Jews:*** It was a Jewish custom to join in mourning with the family in the death of a loved one. Because there were many Jews present, there would be many witnesses to the resurrection event, as well as confirmation that Lazarus was actually dead.

11:20-24 *If You had been here:* This would be a complaint of Martha to Jesus concerning His late arrival. But we must not assume that she did not have faith in the power of Jesus. ***But I know that even***

now: Martha here expressed her faith in what she believed Jesus could do. She knew that Jesus could call on the power of God to raise her dead brother. **The resurrection at the last day:** Martha was a good student. On many occasions she had heard Jesus' teaching concerning the resurrection that would occur on the last day of time (See comments 5:28,29; 6:44). But here Jesus speaks of a resurrection that will help them to understand better the resurrection to come.

11:25-27 The resurrection and the life: Jesus is the one who brings us from spiritual death into spiritual life (5:21; 6:38,40,44; 8:51). One may suffer from physical death (Hb 9:27), but he will never suffer the second death that is separation from God for eternity (See comments 2 Th 1:7-9). **Whoever lives and believes:** These are conditions upon which Jesus established the abundant life (10:10). Godly behavior that is motivated by an active faith will generate a life of confidence in the power of God to preserve one throughout eternity. Knowing this will bring peace of mind that surpasses all understanding (Ph 4:7). **Yes, Lord, I believe:** She did believe that Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God. But she did not answer the question concerning the resurrection. **Son of God who comes:** She expressed this in the present tense, thus affirming that Jesus was the fulfillment of all prophecies concerning the expected Messiah (See Lk 24:44).

11:28-31 Martha had met Jesus on the road before He came to the house of Mary and Martha where the mourners were in the company of Mary. Jesus sent

Martha back to get Mary because He did not want to talk to her in the company of the mourners. However, the Jews saw Mary leave. They thought that she was going to the tomb. But these unsuspecting Jewish mourners were going to witness something they had never seen before.

11:32-35 She fell down at His feet: On an occasion as this, Mary even expressed her worship of the One she believed could have prevented such sorrow. She also expressed belief that Jesus could heal. But her belief in Him had to grow to the point of realizing that Jesus was God who could bring the spirit of a dead man back into his body in order to bring him again to life (See comments Js 2:26). **He groaned in the spirit:** Jesus sorrowed when He saw the great grief that physical death brought into the lives of the living. Physical death originated because of Adam's sin and subsequent separation from the tree of life (Gn 3:22-24; 1 Co 15:20-23). Jesus was on earth to rectify the problem of physical death, and thus, give hope for of a resurrection after which we would never die again (5:28,29; 11:25,26; Hb 2:14,15; see comments 1 Th 4:13-18). **Jesus wept:** This one verse expresses the extent to which the incarnation of God went in Jesus who gave up being on an equality with God (See comments Ph 2:6-8). Herein is the humanity of Jesus that was manifested in His identity with those He had created after the image of God (See Cl 1:16; Hb 5:7; compare Lk 19:41-44). We serve a God who is touched by the struggles of this physical world.

11:36,37 The surroundings of the grieving friends and family of Lazarus manifested Jesus' identity with them in emotion and love. Through Jesus' outward expression of emotion, the Jews perceived the great love that Jesus had toward Lazarus. ***Opened the eyes of the blind man:*** Jesus' miracle on the blind man who was known in Jerusalem caused a great stir and wonder concerning who He was (ch 9). Those who had experienced that healing now wondered if He could have possibly kept Lazarus from dying. They too were yet to experience in this situation a miracle that would increase their faith as it would all the disciples.

11:38,39 ***Take away the stone:*** The gravestone could have weighed as much as 1,000 kilograms (about 2,200 pounds). As the Master of heaven and earth, Jesus could have commanded, and thus, disintegrated the stone to a pile of dust. But God does not do for man what man can do for himself. The miracle of the resurrection was not to be in competition with a miracle of disintegrating a stone. ***By this time there will be a stench:*** The stench of death would in this case confirm the fact that a true miracle of resurrection was worked by the power of God in Jesus. All the witnesses thus knew that Lazarus had been dead and in the tomb long enough to be decaying to the dust of the earth.

11:40 ***See the glory of God:*** When they saw the miracles of God, they were seeing the glory of God. Therefore, when we study the miracles of God as they are recorded in the Scriptures, we are study-

ing a record of the glory of God as such was manifested in the realm of the physical world (See 20:30,31). This also helps us understand what the Bible means when reference is made to the glory of God. God dwells in the realm of what we call the supernatural. Our senses confine us to the natural world where we are subject to natural laws that control our world. However, God is of another realm of being and existence. It is a realm of glory in comparison to this natural world. It is from this glorious realm of the supernatural that Jesus came in order to reveal the glory of the supernatural God (See 1:14).

11:41,42 ***Because of the people:*** It was for this purpose that all miracles of God took place. They were meant to increase faith in the minds of those who were receptive to the teachings of Jesus (12:30; 17:21; see Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4). Miracles were benevolent in that they brought healing to the sick. However, their primary purpose was to cause a reaction from the people who either experienced or beheld them. Those who were of a receptive heart, responded to the miracles with belief. However, the miracles stirred up animosity against Jesus by those who were hardened of heart.

11:43,44 ***Lazarus, come forth:*** The shout of the command connected Jesus with the miraculous event that followed. Jesus was not speaking to Lazarus. He was speaking to the multitudes who were present. ***He who was dead came forth:*** When Lazarus came forth from the tomb, he was still wrapped in the clothes with which the dead were wrapped for burial.

Only one who was present would mention this fact, verifying the fact that John, the writer, was there. The event surely struck fear and awe in the hearts and minds of the beholders, for it was an event that was almost incomprehensible. We can only imagine how the people stood in awe when Lazarus walked out of the tomb.

REACTION TO LAZARUS' RESURRECTION

11:45 There were two reactions to the event of Lazarus' resurrection. The positive reaction of those who were receptive is explained here. Their reaction was positive because they believed on Jesus (2:23; 10:42; 12:11,18).

11:46-48 The reaction of hardened hearts was negative. They went to report to the religious leaders what had happened. Instead of investigating the event, or even talking to Lazarus, the chief priests and Pharisees plotted to do away with Jesus (vs 53). *This man works many signs:* They did not deny the signs. True miracles cannot be denied even by unbelievers (See At 4:14-16). The hardness of their hearts is here manifested in their lack of concern for what the miracles of Jesus proved (See comments 3:2; Hb 2:3,4). They were more interested in maintaining their religious positions in the community than in considering the significance of the signs of Jesus. (We often sit in awe at the hardness of heart of the religious leaders of Palestine at the time of Jesus' ministry. To better understand their character, the Bible student should study the character of the

false prophets in the Old Testament who worked against the prophets of God.) *The Romans will come:* This statement of the religious leaders is based on their misconception of who they believed the Messiah would be. They thought that the Messiah would be a national leader to restore militarily Israel to her former national glory. If Jesus were to act in such a manner, then the Romans would come and destroy them. The irony of history in relation to what they stated is that the Romans did come because the Jews did not accept Jesus as their Messiah. Instead of accepting Jesus as the Messiah who would reign from heaven in the hearts of men (Lk 17:20,21), insurrectionist movements were started within Israel by false messiahs who sought to restore national Israel. These insurrectionist movements agitated Rome to the point that Rome decided to do away with the "Jewish problem." The Roman armies subsequently came and destroyed national Israel and Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24).

11:49,50 *One man should die for the people:* Caiaphas was high priest from A.D. 18 to A.D. 36. He made this statement from the viewpoint of Jesus' being established as a king on this earth over national Israel. Such would bring the Romans to put down an insurrection He might lead. Therefore, Caiaphas reasoned that it was best to kill Jesus in order that the people not make Him a king on this earth. If Jesus came in order to establish an earthly kingdom, then certainly Caiaphas' reasoning was correct. However, Jesus did not come to estab-

lish an earthly kingdom reign. He said, *"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would fight so that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But as it is, My kingdom is not from here"* (18:36; see comments Lk 17:20,21).

11:51,52 Caiaphas unknowingly prophesied on this occasion. In the spiritual realm, Jesus did die, not only for the nation of Israel, but for all the world. The fulfillment of this unintentional prophecy on the part of Caiaphas led to the salvation of all men as Jesus died for the sins of all men. ***Gather together into one:*** As a result of Jesus' death, all obedient believers are gathered together into the one church of God throughout the world (10:16; Ep 1:19-23; 2:1-8,14-17).

11:53 ***From that day:*** The resurrection of Lazarus accomplished its true purpose. Because of the confirming strength of the miracle, belief in Jesus was increased greatly among the people. He was thus accepted on a broader basis by the people to be the Messiah of Israel. This belief by the multitudes, however, intimidated the religious leaders of Jerusalem. Jesus threatened their positions and power over the people because He did not conform to their system of religion. He was thus leading the people away from the influence of the religious leaders (See comments Gl 1:13,14). Therefore, from this time on they made definite plans as to how they would put Him to death in order to erase His influence from the people (5:16; Mt 26:4; Lk 6:11; 19:47; 22:2). They schemed not only to kill Jesus, but also Lazarus who

lived as a testimony to the power of God working through Jesus (12:9-11).

11:54 Jesus had finished His last appeal to the religious leaders of Jerusalem. He had motivated within them their hate to work on a plot to kill Him. In order that a murder plot come about, He withdrew so that they might make their plans to kill Him. At the same time, He withdrew in order to prepare the disciples for the tragedy that was about to happen in their lives.

11:55 All Jewish males were to be present in Jerusalem for the Passover (See Ex 23:14-17). Therefore, on this occasion many have gone to purify themselves before eating the Passover meal. This was the appointed time for Jesus to go to the cross. He would be the final Passover Lamb for those who were sons of Abraham by faith. The greater part of Israel's religious leaders would be present, and thus, this would be the time that all must experience the sacrificial offering of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (See 1:29).

11:56,57 ***The chief priests and Pharisees:*** It seems almost incredible that religious leaders as these would plot to murder another man because of envy and jealousy. But such is the power of religious deception in the minds of those who maintain positions and power in the realms of man-made religions of this world. One must never underestimate the deceptive power of Satan to use religious people to carry out his greatest works. He will work in order to put into religious positions those people who are inclined to pride, pomp and selfish ambi-

tion. He would then use them to suppress the preaching of the gospel by humble evangelists (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12). Those who are religiously

motivated by the deceptions of false religion are always the most vehement against the preaching of the truth.

CHAPTER 12

ANOINTING OF JESUS AT BETHANY

(Mt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9)

12:1-8 See comments Mt 26:6-13. This was a different anointing than the one that took place in Simon's house that is recorded in Luke 7:36-50. In this case, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed Jesus because of her great respect for Him, and because she knew that something was about to happen. Judas was here hypocritical. He cared little for the poor. He was a thief at heart. Jesus knew this, but called him for a special purpose, which purpose was about to be revealed. ***The poor you always have with you:*** This is not a statement by which Jesus was setting the poor aside as another class of people. It is a statement that manifests worship that must be of the Son of God. There is no comparison between the needs of the poor and one's need to worship God. This was a time, therefore, that homage must be paid to the One who had come from heaven and eternity for the salvation of all men. Once the events of the next few days were carried out in the history, then the gospel could go to the poor.

12:9-11 The resurrection of Lazarus was a testimony to Jesus that God was working through Him. People thronged to see Lazarus in order to confirm the rumors of his resurrection. They came

to see for themselves, and seeing, they believed. As a result, the religious leaders did not have to do away with Jesus only, they also had to do away with the testimony that the resurrected Lazarus gave to Jesus' power. Lazarus had to die. This was a sad day in the history of the religious leadership of Israel.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

(Mt 21:1-17; Mk 11:1-11; Lk 19:29-44)

12:12-19 See comments Mt 21:1-17; Lk 19:29-44. ***His disciples did not at first understand:*** At the time this event took place during the ministry of Jesus, the disciples did not fully understand what was happening. In the context of this event, therefore, they seem to be carried along with the excitement over the acceptance of Jesus by the multitudes who were ready to crown Him as their king. After Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension, however, they understood all that took place. In looking back, they would understand after the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, that though the excitement was for the wrong purpose in that the multitudes were thinking of a physical king on this earth, Jesus allowed such to happen. He allowed it to happen because He was about to ascend to the right hand of the Father in the heavenly places. He would then reign over all things as King of kings

and Lord of lords (See comments Ep 1:20-23; 1 Tm 6:15; Hb 8:1; 1 Pt 3:22). **Look, the world has gone after Him:** And so it would be. However, at this time, the religious leaders felt greatly intimidated by the popularity of Jesus. They knew that their positions among the people were in danger. If what was happening continued, they would lose their power and influence over the people. They could not do what John the Baptist did, that is, decrease in order that Jesus increase.

REQUESTS OF SOME GREEKS

12:20,21 Certain Greeks: These were proselyte Greeks who had been converted to Judaism. They had come to worship during the Passover feast. They had possibly come from a great distance, and thus, had previously heard only rumors about Jesus. **Sir, we wish to see Jesus:** Because of the influence that Jesus had at this time, they sought to understand more about who He was. They approached Philip possibly because Philip had a Greek name. They may have supposed that He too was a Gentile who had been converted to Judaism.

12:22-26 The hour has come: The time had come for the Son of God to go to the cross (See 7:6,30; 8:20). The significance of the hour was certainly unknown to all who were present. All creation had been groaning in the misery of sin until this time (See comments Rm 8:18-25). The moment around which all redemption was planned was now about to happen. **If it dies, it brings forth much fruit:** Jesus was speaking of His death.

The cross would be the drawing power of God (vs 32). Jesus would draw all to Himself who sought a solution for sin. In this way His death would draw out of the world those who would believe on Him. **He who loves his life will lose it:** This is a general statement that if any would seek first the satisfaction of earthly desires in order not to glorify God in this life, he would perish in eternity. If one does not give His life to Jesus, then he will not receive that which will preserve his life into eternity (6:51; Mt 10:39; Mk 8:35; Lk 9:24). **If anyone serves Me:** Those whose faith is moved into action in order to obediently keep the commandments of Jesus will reap eternal life (14:1-6; 15:14). Jesus' emphasis in this statement on serving and following teaches that one must give himself in obedience to Jesus. The Father will give honor to those who serve. Without service, there is no honor.

12:27 My soul is troubled: The incarnation brought with it the ability of Jesus to identify with those for whom He would die. *"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin"* (Hb 4:15; see Mt 26:38,39; Mk 14:34; Hb 5:7-9). His death on the cross was now at hand. Because the disciples did not fully understand what was happening at this time, nor did they understand the purpose for which Jesus came, Jesus asked them if He should turn from His destiny. If they fully understood what His destiny was, then they would have answered that He should not ask the Father to save Him-

self from saving man. **For this purpose:** Jesus came to earth with the destiny of fulfilling the eternal redemptive purpose of God (18:37).

12:28-30 Father, glorify Your name: The Father had glorified His name through Jesus in that He had worked miraculously through Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus would also glorify His name. **A voice from heaven:** The voice did not communicate in order to be understood by those standing with Jesus (See Mt 3:17; 17:5; Mk 1:11; 9:7; Lk 3:22; 9:35). Though many of the people thought that it thundered, others deducted that something supernatural had happened. They thought an angel spoke to Jesus. **For your sakes:** The voice from God was not meant to comfort Jesus at this time in His great anxiety. It was meant for those who were present. It was an evidence to those present that the Father was with Jesus in these final hours (20:30,31). It was at this time that the disciples would need to be reassured that God was close during the turmoil that was about to happen when the religious leaders took Jesus and crucified Him.

12:31 The judgment of this world: Jesus was now to become the occasion for people to make a decision concerning obedience to God. He is the only One through whom salvation can come (At 4:12). Therefore, those who reject Him have judged themselves (12:48). **The ruler ... cast out:** The prophecy of Genesis 3:15 was now to be fulfilled. Satan would be crushed under the feet of Jesus by His sacrificial death on the cross. Jesus came “so that through death He

might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hb 2:14,15). “And he laid hold of the dragon, that old serpent who is the Devil and Satan. And he bound him for a thousand years. Then he cast him into the abyss and shut him up, and set a seal on him so that he should not deceive the nations anymore until the thousand years were finished” (Rv 20:2,3; see Mt 12:29; Lk 10:18; At 26:18; 2 Co 4:4).

12:32,33 Draw all men to Me: Jesus was on the earth because God so loved the world (3:16). “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 Jn 4:10). Therefore, “we love Him because He first loved us” (1 Jn 4:19). The love that was manifested on the cross draws men to Jesus. Jesus went to the cross because of our inability to save ourselves from our own sin. While we were dead in our trespasses and sins, God provided the opportunity for all men to be made alive in Christ (Rm 5:8; Ep 2:4-8). Those who recognize their inability to justify themselves before God through keeping of law or meritorious deeds are driven to the cross for the justification that comes freely through Jesus (See comments Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16).

12:34 We have heard: What they heard was a misunderstanding in reference to the physical presence of the Messiah. They thought that the Old Testament prophets taught that the Messiah would continue on earth in order to reign over a physical kingdom of this world.

They misinterpreted the great messianic prophecies of the Old Testament (See the prophecies of Ps 89:36; 110:4; Is 9:6,7; 53; Ez 37:25; Dn 7:13,14). They had just understood that Jesus said He would die, therefore, they concluded that He could not be the Messiah, the Son of Man. But what the prophets foretold was that the coming of the Messiah would mark the consummation of national Israel (See Dn & Ez).

12:35,36 Jesus' answer to their preceding question was that He was the light of the world that was walking in their midst (1:9; 7:33; 8:12; 9:5). What was now more important than the fact of His messiahship was the fact of His mediation with God on behalf of man. He was the light who would direct the way out of man's problem of sin and death. **Concealed Himself:** At this point in these final events, Jesus essentially ended His public ministry to the multitudes. There would be no more discussions, addresses or public confrontations with the religious leaders or multitudes in general. The remainder of the book of John is a record of Jesus' discussions with the disciples. His statements to others outside the circle of the twelve disciples would be as a prisoner headed for the cross.

BELIEF AND CONFESSION

12:37,38 *They did not believe:* Because of the hardness of heart on the part of many of the religious leaders of Israel, they would not believe in Jesus as the Son of God. Regardless of the number of miraculous signs that proved that He was from God, they refused to accept

Him as the Messiah (11:47). These religious leaders had gone beyond the point of where even miracles could not turn them back from their hardness of heart (See Lk 16:31). Even the raising of Lazarus from the dead would not change them. **Lord, who has believed:** Isaiah prophesied concerning the hardness of heart of those who had created their own religion after their traditions (Is 53:1). At the time Isaiah spoke these words, Israel was headed into captivity because they had turned from God. The same was happening at the time of Jesus' ministry. The religious leaders had turned away from the word of God (Mk 7:1-9). They were so structured in their own institutional religiosity that they were blinded to the miraculous revelation that Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God. The final result of their apostasy would be the consummation of national Israel in A.D. 70.

12:39,40 *He has blinded their eyes:* As Isaiah was the occasion for the religious leaders of Israel during his ministry to harden their hearts against God, so Jesus was the occasion for men to reject God, and thus, bring judgment upon themselves (Is 6:10; see Mt 13:14,15). Jesus became the occasion for men to harden their hearts even further against God (See comments Rm 9:17,18). If they had not hardened their hearts against Jesus, then they would have been forgiven for they would have submitted to the gospel.

12:41,42 These prophecies of Isaiah foretold the reaction of men to the coming of the Messiah (Is 9:6; 53). However, those who rejected Jesus could not

see themselves in the prophecies. **Among the chief rulers also many believed:** This statement of John reveals the tremendous intimidation the Pharisees had developed in the religious environment of Jerusalem. They intimidated the religious rulers to conform to their legalistic religion of Judaism in order to exercise their power over the consciences of the people. Their control of the temple fellowship gave them power to excommunicate all who would not conform to the regimentation of their rules and regulations. However, there were many among the religious rulers who did believe, but according to Matthew 10:32,33 and Romans 10:9,10, these rulers could not be saved on the basis of their belief, for the weak faith that they had would not move them to confess Jesus. They needed to live the confessed life of being a disciple of Jesus in order to reap the blessings of discipleship. They were thus "lost in belief" because they would not confess Jesus to be the Messiah and Son of God. Their belief without works would not deliver them from the darkness in which they chose to continue to walk (vss 35,36; see Js 2:17-26).

12:43 Loved the praise of men: They loved their positions more than they loved the truth (5:41,44; 2 Th 2:10-12). They loved all that came with the religious social life of Jerusalem. They loved the honors of being the guest speakers, the commendations of fellow urbanite Pharisees, their brotherhood hierarchy of honored speakers, diplomas on their walls, and notices that their names appeared in some paper or list of lecturers

on the theologies of Judaism at some meeting of intellectuals with a string of degrees after every name. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. All such theological arrogance kept them from knowing the carpenter's Son of Nazareth who had not a foxhole in which to sleep or an extra garment to wear. And besides that, He was introduced to the world by a man who ate grasshoppers and wore camel's hair for clothing.

12:44-47 Believes ... sees: Those who believe on Jesus, and thus, see Him by obedience to His will, believe and see the God beyond the incarnate manifestation of God (See 5:23; 7:16; 10:30; 8:42; 13:20; 14:1). In other words, the one who responds to Jesus in order to mold his life around the behavior of Jesus is the one who knows the God beyond the curtain of the physical world. **Light into the world:** Jesus came as a beam of hope to those who were lost in a world of sin (1:4,5; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35,36). Those who walk in the teachings of Jesus walk in the light (3:20,21; 1 Jn 1:6-9). Those who would not walk in the light of Jesus, are in darkness. **I do not judge him:** Jesus does not judge him because he has judged himself. Jesus has only become the occasion for one to make a decision concerning obedience to God (See comments 3:17-19). Those who reject Jesus judge themselves to be condemned by the sin for which they have no atoning sacrifice.

12:48 The word ... will judge him: The Christian will be judged according to the word of Christ, not by any doctrines and traditions of men that may be

written in creed books and catechisms. One need not worry about standing before God to face any human religious tradition he may have broken because such will not be the standard by which we will be judged. Christians have responded to Jesus and His word, and thus, they can have boldness in judgment because of their stand within the grace of God. **The last day:** See comments 5:28,29; 6:38-54.

12:49,50 The reason why we will be judged by the word of Christ is because His word did not originate from Him as a man, but from God (8:38). Jesus was the messenger of God by which God sent the standard of judgment into the world (3:17-19; 5:30; 7:16-28; 8:26-38; see Dt 18:18). Those who obey the commandments of Jesus, thus obey the command of God. From their obedience they will reap everlasting life (1 Jn 5:17).

CHAPTER 13

Personal Ministry Of the Son Of God

(13:1 – 17:26)

Outline: (1) Servanthood leadership (13:1-20), (2) Jesus identifies Judas (13:21-30), (3) The new commandment of love (13:31-38), (4) Encouragement for the disciples (14:1-14), (5) The Spirit promised to the apostles (14:15-31), (6) The vine and the branches (15:1-17), (7) Rejection by the world (15:18-27), (8) Persecution prophesied (16:1-4), (9) The Spirit and the apostles (16:5-15), (10) The death and resurrection (16:16-24), (11) Overcoming the world (16:25-33), (12) Prayer for Himself (17:1-5), (13) Prayer for the disciples (17:6-19), (14) Prayer for all believers (17:20-26)

SERVANTHOOD LEADERSHIP

In studying the context that begins here and continues through the end of chapter 17, Bible students must note that Jesus is with the twelve apostles. He is making specific promises to them that do not have application to all Christians. Only when Jesus extends the application of the promises outside the twelve should we apply the promises to all Christians.

It is imperative, therefore, that we study this material in the context of His personal meeting with the twelve, for the hour had come for Him to depart from them.

13:1 Before the Feast of the Passover: We are not told how long before the actual Passover meal the following events took place. Some Bible students affirm that the following event took place on Thursday evening before the actual Passover meal was traditionally eaten. Jesus possibly ate the Passover meal before the actual Passover because He wanted to be the Passover lamb on the cross during the actual Passover. **Having loved His own:** Reference here is to the twelve whom He had called to be His special apostles (Lk 6:13; see Jn 15:9).

13:2 During supper: We must keep in mind that the following events took place during the full meal of the Passover that Jesus ate with His disciples. If these events took place on Thursday evening, then Jesus ate a pre-Passover meal with the disciples wherein He in-

stituted His memorial supper, Himself being the Passover Lamb who would be on the cross at the time the actual Passover meal was eaten by the general multitude. **Put into the heart of Judas:** Judas schemed to betray Jesus, though the origin of all deception is accredited to Satan because he is the father of all evil (8:44). When men as Judas give themselves over to carry out the schemes of Satan, then it is Satan working in them. It is not that Satan actually dwells in them. We must not miss the metaphor. It is that they have put themselves into the work of Satan, and thus, Satan's work permeates their lives in order to carry out his schemes (See Lk 22:3).

13:3 All things into His hands: In these final hours with His twelve disciples, Jesus, who was the creator of all things (Cl 1:16), carried out the behavior of a servant. He did these things while knowing that all authority had been given into His hands to reign over all things (See 3:35; 17:2; Mt 11:27; 28:18; At 2:36; 1 Co 15:27; Hb 2:8). **Going back to God:** In about six weeks from this meal, Jesus was going to ascend to the Father in the heavenly realm of Deity from which He came (8:42; 16:28; 17:11; 20:17).

13:4,5 It was on this very occasion that Luke recorded that all was not well with the disciples' attitude toward one another. On this occasion "*there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest*" (Lk 22:24; see comments Mk 10:35-45; Lk 22:24-27). As Jesus went through the actions of what is here briefly described, the disciples said nothing. They had ac-

cepted Him as the Christ and Son of God. However, they still had worldly kingdom concepts in their aspirations (See comments At 1:6). They were thinking that He would be their king on earth and reign in Jerusalem. But such would not be the nature of the kingdom about which He had talked to them on many occasions (See comments 18:36-38). It is in this context that they see what leadership would be in the kingdom that was to come. **He ... began to wash the disciples' feet:** According to their thinking, this was not what kings should do. This was the work of servants and slaves, not kings. They were surely astonished by the actions of Jesus on this occasion, and thus, they kept silent as He proceeded on His knees from one foot to another.

13:6,7 Then He came to Simon Peter: Peter here behaves after his impetuous nature. His mouth is running before his brain is in gear. The One he considered to be their King was washing feet. This was not what kings were supposed to do. This was too much for Peter to keep silent. **You do not know now:** They did understand the Jewish custom of washing feet. This was the normal procedure of hospitality among Jews when visiting a Jewish home. Peter had his feet washed hundreds of times. He had washed others' feet. Therefore, the disciples did understand the practice of washing feet. But Jesus was not here instituting the practice of footwashing among the disciples. He was using the Jewish custom of washing feet to institute something far greater than the hospitable custom of Jewish footwashing.

What Jesus was instituting would not be understood at this time by the disciples, but they would understand later.

13:8 *You will never wash my feet:* In the Greek text, Peter uses a double negative for emphasis. In other words, he was saying, "You will never, never wash my feet." ***You have no part with Me:*** Jesus' reply to Peter's refusal that He wash his feet cut to the heart of Peter. The very nature of the kingdom reign of Jesus in the hearts of men and women would be exemplified in their lives by what Jesus was here illustrating. The disciples would be known for their love of one another (vss 34,35). This love would be more than emotions. It would be expressed in servanthood for one another (Ep 5:21). Therefore, if one did not understand the nature of servanthood, he would not understand the nature of Christianity. One can have no part with Jesus in the kingdom if he does not know how to serve.

13:9 Keep in mind that Peter was thinking about a physical kingdom reign. At the time, he did not understand what Jesus was illustrating. He did not understand the nature of servanthood in the kingdom. However, he did understand that he wanted to be a part of the kingdom of Jesus. Therefore, anything that Jesus would require to become a part of the kingdom, he was willing to do. His impetuous nature, therefore, moved him to make this seemingly ridiculous statement concerning Jesus washing everything necessary in order that he be counted in as a part of the kingdom. He wanted to be a part of what Jesus was

going to do, even though he did not at this time understand. He wanted Jesus to count him in.

13:10,11 *You are clean:* They were clean because they had submitted to Jesus' word. "*You are clean through of the word that I have spoken to you*" (15:3; see 6:63; 17:17). ***But not all of you:*** Judas was not clean because he did not have a spirit of submission to the words of Jesus. From the time Jesus had called Judas into discipleship, He knew that Judas would betray Him (6:64; 18:4). Nevertheless, on this occasion Jesus washed his feet.

13:12 *Do you understand:* Jesus now explained the lesson of the illustration. They understood the custom of washing feet. Jesus was not, therefore, instituting footwashing as a practice to be kept among His disciples. What He was illustrating, however, must be understood among the disciples for it would explain the very nature of the godly behavior He brought into the world (See vss 34,35).

13:13,14 *Teacher:* The disciples had exalted Jesus to be their leader because such was the position of teachers in the culture. ***Lord:*** They had exalted Jesus beyond the position of Teacher. They affirmed that He was their Lord, thus making themselves His servants. ***You also ought to:*** If the one they exalted to such a high position washed their feet, then Jesus assumed that they could understand that they should serve one another. If the Teacher and Lord bowed to serve them, then they as the students and servants should not think themselves too proud to

do the same to one another. Our knowledge of who Jesus is astonishes us when we consider what He did on this occasion. He is the creator of all things (Cl 1:16). He is God, and yet, He bowed to His knees to wash the dirty feet of those whom He had created. He is the God who would wash the feet of those for whom He died. Men do not create such religions after their own imaginations. Only God would be the origin of such beliefs, and thus, in recording this event in the ministry of Jesus, John wants us to understand that this Jesus about whom he writes, was not the invention of men. He was not a fable or myth that was imagined by religious zealots who were over excited about wanting a Messiah to deliver them from Roman occupation. Christianity is based on the God who washed the feet of those whom He created. If any man would be Christian, therefore, he must be willing to do the same. There will be no one in heaven who does not have a dirty towel from the washing of the feet of men.

13:15 *I have given you an example:* The example was not the Jewish custom of washing feet. The example was to bow down to the spiritual and physical needs of one's brother in Christ and serve. *"Whoever desires to become great among you will be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first will be slave of all"* (Mk 10:43,44; see Gl 6:10).

13:16,17 *A bondservant:* This is Jesus' point. He is the Master who served them. They have no reason to consider themselves greater than their Lord who served them. Therefore, they were as His

servants, and thus, obligated to serve. If Jesus would humble Himself to the service of washing their feet, then there is no menial act too humbling that the disciples should not perform for one another. ***If you know these things:*** They did not understand the implications of all that Jesus was stating at this time. However, they were about to discover such, and thus, become the servants of humanity through the preaching of the gospel. ***Happy are you if you do them:*** It is one thing to know that one must serve in order to be happy. It is another thing to do what one knows. Those who know the spirit of servanthood will be blessed with happiness because only in serving others is there true and enduring happiness (See Lk 11:28).

13:18,19 *Scripture might be fulfilled:* Judas Iscariot was chosen for the purpose of fulfilling Scripture (Ps 41:9; see Mt 26:23). Jesus knew what he would do, and thus, for the duration of His ministry He walked with one He knew would betray Him. ***You may believe:*** Jesus gives this prophecy of Himself in order to give evidence of His deity. The disciples would later understand and recognize the prophecy because they would eventually understand its fulfillment (Compare At 1:16-20). After he had performed the betrayal deed, Judas surely realized what Jesus meant in this passage. He possibly saw himself fulfilling this prophecy, and thus, hung himself.

13:20 The disciples of Jesus were inseparably joined to Him in their ministry in this world. They were joined in such a close relationship that whoever

received them, received both Jesus and the Father who sent Jesus (See Mt 10:40; 25:40; Mk 9:37; Lk 9:48; 10:16; Gl 4:14; 1 Jn 1:3).

JESUS IDENTIFIES JUDAS

(Mt 26:21-25; Mk 14:18-21; Lk 22:21-23)

13:21,22 See comments Mt 26:21-25. All for which Jesus had come into the world was now on His shoulders. On top of this was the betrayal scheme of one who had been with Him throughout His ministry. *Perplexed about whom He spoke:* The character and scheme of Judas had been well concealed from the rest of the disciples. His character, that would lend itself to carry out the betrayal deed, had been concealed from them throughout the duration of Jesus' ministry. It may have been that Judas was thinking worldly in that Jesus would be a king on earth. Though we do not know all the details concerning his motive for betraying Jesus, we would assume that his reason for doing so was beyond the thirty pieces of silver that he received.

13:23 *One of His disciples:* Jesus loved all His disciples. However, this disciple was identified as the disciple "whom He loved." This was John, the writer of this book (See 1:35,40; 18:15; 19:27; 21:2,4,8; 21:23).

13:24-26 Peter asked John to ask Jesus about whom He was talking. So here Jesus identified for John and Peter the one who would carry out the betrayal scheme. *He gave it to Judas:* In order to identify Judas for Peter and John, Jesus simply did that which was common during Jewish meals. He dipped bread and

gave it to Judas, and thus, the betrayer was quietly identified for Peter and John.

13:27 *Satan entered into him:* In verse 2 John stated that Satan must be given credit for the betrayal scheme against the Seed of woman. Judas was evidently apprehensive about what he was going to do at this time when Jesus spoke of the betrayal scheme. Therefore, Jesus let it be known to Judas that He knew what was in his heart. Jesus used this figure of speech to let us know that Satan had entered Judas in order to carry out the betrayal scheme that he had conceived in his mind. It was not that Satan literally entered Judas. The metaphorical statement emphasizes the meaning that when one carries out the work of Satan, it is Satan who has permeated one's thinking and actions, and thus, one is behaving as Satan.

13:28-30 The rest of the disciples did not know the meaning of what Jesus was here saying to Judas. They possibly thought that since Judas had the money bag, Jesus was sending him out to purchase food for the feast. *The feast:* The meal that Jesus was eating with them on this occasion was a unique and special meal that He ate with the disciples in preparation for His death. Reference to the feast here probably refers to the six days of the Unleavened Bread that would follow the actual Passover meal.

THE NEW COMMANDMENT OF LOVE

After the preceding events and statements of Jesus in reference to Judas, Judas left the company of the disciples in

order to carry out his betrayal plot. Jesus was now in the company of the eleven. He spoke directly concerning matters He had taught them during His ministry. He also made some special promises to the eleven apostles that He made to no one else. These things took place only a few hours before His arrest, and thus, He prepared them for His crucifixion. The destiny that had been planned before the creation of the world was about to be fulfilled.

13:31,32 *Now is the Son of Man glorified:* Jesus spoke in the past tense for He knew that the destiny for which He was sent into the world was now certain and about to be fulfilled. His crucifixion and resurrection were now at hand. Both the Father and Son would be glorified by the events that were about to be fulfilled (12:23; 14:13; 17:4; At 3:13; 1 Pt 4:11).

13:33 *You cannot come:* Jesus was going to the right hand of the Father to reign over all things. The disciples, as the Jews to whom Jesus had previously said this, could not go to this position. However, the disciples would eventually go to the presence of Jesus in the heavenly realm (See 7:34; 8:21,22; 2 Co 5:8; Ph 1:23).

13:34,35 *A new commandment:* The Sinai law taught that one was to love His neighbor as himself (Lv 19:18). One's love of his neighbor, therefore, was based on his love of himself. However, Jesus emphasizes an intensity of love that is different. It is a love that has no conditions. It is a self-sacrificing love that extends beyond any conditions of one's

environment, and thus, simply acts out of a selfless attitude of appreciation for all that God has done in one's life in reference to salvation. "*We love Him because He first loved us*" (1 Jn 4:19; see 1 Jn 2:7,8). In the time of the new covenant, therefore, the new commandment of how Jesus loved the apostles would be instituted. ***By this all men know:*** The disciples' unconditional love would be the signal that they were the true disciples of Jesus (Compare 1 Jn 2:5). The true sign of discipleship is expressed in the action of love for the brotherhood (See 15:12; 2 Co 4:15; 1 Jn 3:14-19). Jesus meant that love in action would be the identifying characteristic of His disciples that would separate them from the rest of the world. Any faith that cannot be identified by love, is not of God, for God is love.

13:36,37 *You will follow Me later:* Jesus now identified for the apostles that where He was going they would be able to come later (See 13:33; 14:2; 16:5). ***Lay down My life:*** Peter, as well as the rest of the apostles, were still thinking of a physical kingdom reign of Jesus (See At 1:6). He thus gave his allegiance to Jesus, that he would follow Him to death. Peter would certainly remember these hasty words not long from the time they are here spoken. It was also on this occasion that Jesus revealed to Peter that Satan had asked for him (See comments Mt 26:31-35; Mk 14:27-31; Lk 22:31-38).

13:38 See comments Mt 26:31-35. This prophecy is directed toward Peter. However, it was given for the purpose of

Peter's repentance. After his denials of Jesus, Peter would recall what Jesus had said here, and thus, repent. But the prophecy made concerning the actions of Judas, that Jesus had previously made in verse 26, would not lead to Judas' repentance. The reaction of each disciple's re-

membrance of the prophecies that Jesus made concerning them on this occasion would have different effects in the lives of both. Judas would hang himself. Peter would repent. Their response to the words of Jesus and their actions manifested the character of each disciple.

CHAPTER 14

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE DISCIPLES

14:1 The disciples have just heard Jesus speak of His death and departure. Peter and John heard of the betrayal by Judas. And then, Peter was told of his denial of Jesus. In the discussion that follows in this chapter, therefore, Jesus sought to encourage the eleven disciples (vs 27; 16:22-24). **Believe in God:** The more favorable translation here would be after the imperative command, "Believe in God." The disciples must trust in God and in Jesus, though they will not understand what would be happening during the events that were soon to happen. They must understand that all things were working together for good (Rm 8:28). They would have peace of mind only by trusting that God was at work in the events that were about to transpire (Ph 4:7). God had everything under control.

14:2 Dwelling places: A literal translation of the Greek text would be "abiding places." Reference would not be to physical dwellings that are typical of the mansions on this world. The hope of the Christian for the future is not based on physical aspirations. Emphasis is on the fact that there is a place of dwelling that is provided by God. Jesus speaks of

the security of that dwelling which is beyond the confines of this earth. **Prepare a place for you:** There is reserved for them a special place to which they will go when He comes for them (13:33,36; Hb 11:16).

14:3,4 I will come again: In these statements to the disciples, Jesus was looking beyond the event of the crucifixion. He was looking to His ascension to the right hand of the Father (See Dn 7:13,14; Ep 1:20-22). Jesus will come again in His final coming in order to receive all those who have died in Christ (At 1:11; 3:21; 1 Th 4:13-18; 2 Tm 4:7,8). **You know the way:** Because they had known from where Jesus came, they knew the way to where He was going. The way was through Him.

14:5,6 I am the way, the truth, and the life: Jesus is emphatic in this statement. He affirms that He is the only way, truth and life. "And there is salvation in no other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (At 4:12). **Way:** Jesus is the only means through which we can be saved. One cannot devise his own system of religion and expect to be saved on his own conditions. One cannot be saved outside the atonement that has been

provided by Jesus on the cross. **Truth:** Jesus is the revelation of the grace and truth that proceeded from God for the salvation of all men (1:17; Ti 2:11). Salvation, therefore, must be accomplished through the revelation of the mystery of God that was revealed through Jesus (Ep 3:3-5). **Life:** The answer to man's mortality is found only in Jesus (1:11,12; 1 Co 15:57; 1 Jn 5:11,12). One cannot find life outside the sacrificial blood of Jesus (8:12). In order to have life throughout eternity, one must come into a covenant relationship with Jesus (See Ep 1:3). The profound truth that Jesus here states is the fact that the way to salvation is only in Him. Any religion, therefore, that does not focus on Christ as the redeemer, cannot be true. There is no salvation in any religion of man simply because the religions of man do not focus on Jesus as the Savior of the world.

14:7 The only way one can see the character and nature of God is through Jesus (1:14-18; 10:30; Ph 2:5-11; Hb 1:3). One can discover that God exists through the natural revelation of the created world (Rm 1:20). However, one discovers the character of God only through Jesus (See 8:19). Anyone who desires to know God, therefore, must study the life of Jesus as it is recorded in the Bible. Those Jews of Jesus' day who were sons of Abraham by faith were searching and hoping for the coming of one who would deliver them. Many of those throughout the world today who are people of faith, are also searching. Men of faith as James, Peter, John, and the other disciples of Jesus, immediately responded to the call

of Jesus because they were searching. Therefore, those throughout the world today who are searching, must seek Jesus. They must consider Him, and thus find Him in the word of God. If they are not searching, then they will make no effort to at least investigate who He is.

14:8 Show us the Father: Philip was a typical Jew. He wanted to see God in a physical way (See Ex 24:9ff; 33:18-23). However, God cannot be seen, for He is spirit (1:18; 4:23,24; 1 Jn 4:12). When Moses saw God on Mount Sinai, he saw only a manifestation of God. He did not see a spirit because it is impossible for physical eyes to see that which is not physical. Those who have an inclination to create God after their own image should remember that if God is as man, then there would have been no incarnation on the part of Jesus.

14:9,10 This rebuke of Philip indicates that the disciples still did not comprehend the nature of the One who was standing before them. They would later come to understand that He was God in the flesh, the incarnate God whom they handled and touched (1:14; 1 Jn 1:1-3). **The Father who dwells in Me:** The Father and Son were one during the incarnation of the Son because the Son carried out the work of the Father (12:49,50). Though we do not understand all the implications of the nature of God in the Son while He was in the state of incarnation, Jesus left no question here concerning the oneness of the Father and Son in word and work throughout His earthly ministry (3:34; 5:19; 6:62; 10:38).

14:11,12 For the very works: They

could not deny that Jesus was from the Father because of the miraculous works that He did (3:2; 5:36; 10:37,38; 20:30,31). These works should move their thinking to believe His words. **And greater works than these he will do:** This is a parallel statement to the promise that is made in Mark 16:17-20. Jesus did many miraculous works throughout His ministry. However, His ministry was only a little over three years in length. The apostles would do more miraculous works. Those on whom they would lay hands would also have many years of miraculous works to confirm the word of God that they spoke (See At 8:18; Hb 2:3,4). Therefore, the fact that the apostles and disciples on whom they laid their hands would do miraculous works throughout their years of ministry proves that their works would be greater.

14:13,14 Whatever you will ask: This promise to the apostles was to reassure them that they would be granted their requests. Since their requests would come to the Father through the authority of His name, their requests would be answered. Because Jesus knew that He was leaving their presence, they needed the confidence of knowing that their communication with the Father would not be closed.

THE SPIRIT PROMISED TO THE APOSTLES

14:15 The love about which Jesus speaks is the love that motivates one into action (15:14; Gl 5:6; 1 Jn 2:3-5). “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His

commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments” (1 Jn 5:2,3).

14:16 Give you another Helper: “Helper” comes from the Greek word *parakletos* that refers to one who is called along beside for help. The word has been translated “comforter,” “advocate,” or “counselor.” This special promise to the apostles refers to the Holy Spirit being called to aid, counsel and assist the apostles in their unique work for which Jesus personally commissioned them (See vs 16,26; 15:26; 16:7). We must keep in mind that Jesus was making this special promise to the apostles. It was a promise that the Holy Spirit would personally guide them into all truth (vs 26; 16:13; see Ep 3:3-5). Jesus also works as a helper (*parakletos*) (1 Jn 2:1). Jesus’ work as our helper is on behalf of our salvation. The Spirit’s work as a helper of the apostles was in reference to the revelation of truth. The Spirit would be a helper specifically for the purpose of guiding the apostles into all truth and bringing to remembrance all that Jesus had taught them while He was personally with them during His ministry (16:13; see Mt 28:20; compare Mt 10:19ff; Lk 12:11ff). **Abide with you forever:** Jesus was a comforter with the apostles for a short time throughout His ministry. However, the Holy Spirit would be with them throughout their ministries here on earth. They would continue in His presence throughout eternity.

14:17 The world cannot receive: Those who live after the carnal things and thoughts of this world cannot compre-

hend the things of the Spirit if they continue in the character of this world. Though Jesus would be taken from them, the Spirit would continue with them in order to reveal to them all truth and bring to their remembrance all that Jesus had personally instructed them (16:13). **He abides with you:** This is the Greek present tense of progressive action. At the time Jesus spoke these words, the Holy Spirit was with the apostles in the presence of Jesus. The Spirit was working through Jesus who was personally with the apostles. However, in the future the Spirit would be working directly through the apostles in order to reveal all truth to God's people (See 16:7). He would be working through the apostles in order to confirm the word that they spoke (Mk 16:14-20). **Is in you:** The Spirit was with them indirectly through the presence of Jesus at the time Jesus made this statement. After their baptism in the Spirit in Acts 2:1-4, the Spirit would work directly through them as He did through Jesus in order to have all truth revealed and confirmed by the miraculous works of the Spirit (See vs 26; 16:13; Hb 2:3,4).

14:18 Not leave you orphans: Jesus would not desert them because the Holy Spirit would come in His place to carry on with God's plan to reveal all truth to all men. Therefore, Jesus would representatively be with them in the future through the presence of the Spirit who would work directly through them.

14:19,20 The Bible student must keep in mind that Jesus was preparing the eleven apostles for His death. Though

He would die, they would continue to live spiritually because He would be raised from the dead (See Rm 5:10; 1 Co 15:20; 2 Co 4:10). **At that day:** This would be the time after the resurrection, and especially when the Holy Spirit would come upon them on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. It would be then that they would completely understand all things because the Spirit would reveal such to them. **In:** The translation here is from the Greek word *en*. The indwelling of the apostles in Jesus and Jesus, and the Father in them, centered around their obedience to the will of God. Paul explained, *"I have been crucified with Christ. And it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me"* (Gl 2:20). When we live the life of Jesus, then Jesus dwells in us. The Greek word *en*, therefore, is used metaphorically in the sense that when one's life is permeated and controlled by the will of God, Deity dwells in the obedient.

14:21-24 In this statement Jesus goes outside the realm of the apostles. He gives this principle concerning any who would be His disciple. Love of God must motivate one to obey what God says (See comments vs 15; Gl 6:5; 1 Jn 4:19; 5:2,3). **Judas:** At this time in Jesus' discussions with the apostles, Judas Iscariot had already left to carry out his betrayal scheme. **Manifest Yourself to us:** Judas (not Iscariot) was asking Jesus this question on the basis that all the apostles still thought of the kingdom reign of Jesus to be of this world wherein Jesus would

reign from Jerusalem (See comments At 1:6). Therefore, they did not fully understand what Jesus meant when He talked about manifesting Himself. **Keep My word:** Jesus here explained how He and the Father were manifested in the lives of those who love God. God is manifested in the life of the one who has given total allegiance to God by allowing the word of God to control every aspect of his life (See 1 Jn 5:2,3). God indwells when the humble hearted are obedient to the will of God (5:19; 12:48-50; Mt 7:21; see Ep 2:22; 1 Jn 2:24).

14:25,26 Jesus was soon to ascend to the Father. However, the Father would send the Holy Spirit upon the apostles in Acts 2:1-4. When the apostles preached the gospel for the first time in the near future on the day of Pentecost, the church would be established when men and women first submitted to the lordship of Jesus by obedience to the gospel. The apostles would then continue God's eternal plan to establish the disciples by the revelation of all truth through the apostles (See comments vs 16). **Teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance:** This promise was made only to the apostles. It was not made to all disciples. Jesus promised that the Spirit would teach the apostles all things that God desired should be revealed to man (16:13; see 1 Co 2:8-13; Ep 3:3-5; 2 Tm 3:16,17; Hb 2:1-4; 2 Pt 1:3; Jd 6). The Spirit would cause them to remember all His teachings that He had personally given to them throughout His ministry on earth. Only the apostles could receive this promise because they alone

were with Jesus throughout His earthly ministry. For this reason, Matthias replaced Judas Iscariot as an apostle in Acts 1:21-26, for Matthias had been with Jesus from the days of John's baptism to the time of Jesus' ascension.

14:27 My peace I leave with you: The apostles were headed into the most trying time of their lives. Jesus' encouragement to them was that He would continue His spiritual presence with them. However, He would not continue with them in personal presence as He did during His earthly ministry. Through their knowledge of His presence, they would have peace of mind (16:33; 20:19; Cl 3:15; see comments Ph 4:4-7). The world could not give such peace of mind because of the turmoil that is constantly in the world. **Afraid:** The Greek word used here refers to being terrified. The apostles would be terrified in only a few hours from the time Jesus made this statement. During the arrest and trials, they would flee.

14:28 Jesus was going away to the right hand of the Father in order to reign over all things with all authority (14:3,18; 16:16; Ep 1:20-22; Hb 8:1). **Father is greater than I:** This statement was made by Jesus while in His incarnate state. Therefore, at the time Jesus made the statement the Father was greater because Jesus had given up an equality with God in order to be incarnate in the flesh of man (5:18; see comments Ph 2:5-8).

14:29-31 All that Jesus had now spoken to the apostles was meant to prepare them for the coming events in the next few hours and days. These statements

were also prophetic. They would thus function as prophecy to increase the disciples' faith in the future after they were fulfilled (13:19). **Ruler of this world:** Satan is the ruler of this world because the world has given itself over to following after his deceptions (12:31; 16:11; see comments 2 Th 2:10-12). **Nothing in Me:** Satan had no control over what was about to happen in reference to the plan of redemption. Jesus had used the work of Satan in order to instigate the religious leaders to scheme a plot to murder Him. However, He was about to use the work of Satan to have the mobs of Jerusalem crucify Him. What was about to happen was the work of Jesus to lay down His own life for the salvation of all men (10:17,18; see Ph 2:8; Hb 5:8). The work

of Satan in the hearts of those who would carry out the deed of crucifixion was actually God's work to put the Passover Lamb on the cross for the redemption of mankind. The apostles must understand, therefore, that what was about to occur in the life of Jesus was not the direct result of the work of Satan. It was the work of God to bring about the eternal plan of redemption that God had planned before the creation of the world (Rv 13:8). Though Satan was instigating the plan to crucify Jesus, it was God using the evil works of Satan to accomplish the plan of redemption. **Let us go from here:** Jesus at this time concluded His discussions with the apostles in the upper room. They now went to the Mount of Olives.

CHAPTER 15

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

15:1,2 I am the true vine: In contrast to the Israel that fell away (See Jr 2:21), Jesus is the true source from which the true Israel by faith receives spiritual sustenance (Compare Ps 80:8-16; Is 5:1-7; Hs 10:1). **He takes away:** In this context Jesus was referring specifically to the apostles who would find their source for spiritual life and existence in Him (vs 5). They would thus produce fruit if they remained in Him. However, Judas was taken away because he did not produce fruit (See Mt 13:12). But the other disciples as Peter, who allowed God to spiritually cultivate them, would produce more fruit (See Mt 15:13).

15:3 Clean through the word: They were clean because they had humbly ac-

cepted Jesus as Lord and Christ, and thus, submitted to His word because they accepted it as originating from God. They were thus clean because of their obedient attitude to Jesus' commandments (13:10; 17:17; compare Ep 5:26; 1 Pt 1:22). Therefore, God cleanses through the medium of His word when men voluntarily bring their lives into conformity with that which God commands one to do to be saved. It is not knowledge of the word that saves. It is obedience to what the word of God directs one to do to come into contact with the blood of Jesus, and subsequently, remain in the light (See comments 1 Jn 1:7-9; 5:2,3). The word of God saves only when one brings his life into conformity with its directives. *"Therefore, lay aside all*

filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word that is able to save your souls” (Jn 1:21).

15:4,5 *Abide in Me:* In order to bear fruit that is profitable to God and one's spiritual development (See 1 Co 15:58), one must abide in the source from which spiritual life originates. The apostles must abide in Christ by their obedience to what He has commanded. Only in this way would they produce fruit that is profitable (See Ph 1:11; 4:13). By obediently abiding in the commandments of Jesus, they would abide in the Father and Son (Cl 1:23; Gl 2:20; 1 Jn 1:3; 2:6).

15:6 Jesus now takes the analogy outside the realm of the apostles. Anyone who claims to be a disciple of Jesus, and yet, does not abide in the commandments of Jesus, will be taken away and cast into the punishment of Gehenna. *“Not every one who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven” (Mt 7:21).*

15:7,8 *It will be done:* Jesus here states the condition for answered prayer. If the apostles remained obedient to His commandments, then they would abide in Him and He in them (14:20). This mutual abiding, therefore, would be the condition upon which their requests would be answered by Jesus (See 16:23; Js 4:3; 1 Jn 3:22; 5:14). ***Bear much fruit:*** Spiritual fruit is born in one's life by allowing the word of God to permeate every aspect of our behavior. The manifestation of spirituality is realized by our sharing of the hope that is within our

hearts. The abiding of Jesus within our lives is not true unless it is manifested to those who are in our environment. One does not truly abide in Jesus, unless he is willing to share his hope with others (See Mt 5:16; 1 Pt 3:15). Therefore, we cannot be truly sharing with others unless we are abiding in the commandments of Jesus. When the combination of allowing Jesus to permeate our behavior, and allowing our behavior to affect the lives of others, then truly God is glorified on earth among men (Ps 22:23; see Jn 13:31; 17:4; Ph 1:11; 1 Pt 4:11).

15:9,10 *Keep My commandments:* One is saved by the grace of God that resulted from the love of God for all men (3:16; Rm 5:8). However, the love and grace of God must move one to respond to the commandments of God (1 Jn 4:19). If there is no response, then there is no appreciation for the love and grace of God (1 Co 15:10; 2 Co 4:15). Jesus here emphasizes that keeping His commandments is necessary for one to abide in the love and grace of God (14:15; see 8:31; 1 Jn 5:3). One cannot claim to love Jesus without doing what Jesus has commanded us to do. The disciples must be lovingly obedient to Him as He was lovingly obedient to the Father (Hb 5:8).

15:11,12 *Your joy may be full:* Joy results from knowing that one pleases his father by obedience to his father's will. The joy that Jesus received by keeping the Father's word would be transferred to the disciples if they would also keep the will of the Father (See 16:24; 1 Jn 3:11; compare Hb 12:2). ***My commandment:*** The singularity of the command-

ment that Jesus here gave is based on the second great commandment. “*You will love your neighbor as yourself*” (Mt 22:39; Gl 5:14). Christianity is based on love. All human relationships that are true and enduring find their bond in the action of love (See 13:34; 14:24; Gl 5:14; 1 Th 4:9; 1 Pt 4:8; 1 Jn 3:11).

15:13-15 The extent to which Jesus went to give Himself for His friends, the disciples, manifests the extent of the love about which Jesus here speaks. The greatest expression of love that can be made is that one lay down his life for his friend. And such was what Jesus did for all who would obey Him (Compare 3:16; 10:11; Rm 5:7-9; Ep 5:2; 1 Jn 3:16). **If you do:** One qualifies himself as a friend of Jesus if he is obedient to what Jesus says. Therefore, the expression of Jesus’ love was extended toward those who obey His commandments (14:15,21; At 10:42; 1 Jn 3:23,24). **No longer ... bondservants:** The Greek word for “bondservants” here is *doulos*. It is the word for one who is born into slavery. When one obeys the gospel by immersion in water for the remission of sins, he is born into the slavery of Jesus, but exalted to being a son of God. “*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*” (Gl 3:26,27). Though one is a son of God, he works as a *doulos* on behalf of Jesus in his service for others (12:26; 13:13; Rm 1:1; see comments Mk 10:35-45). In this context, Jesus wants the apostles to know that they are now His friends because they know His will and are voluntarily joining with

Him to carry out His will to take the gospel to all the world (See Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15). **Made known to you:** All revelation that God desired that the apostles know during the ministry of Jesus was delivered to the apostles at this time (17:26). The Holy Spirit brought this teaching to their remembrance and revealed additional truth to them when He came upon them in Acts 2 (14:26; 16:13). No more revelation is to come from God for the disciples through any other person (Gl 1:6-9; Jd 3; Rv 22:18,19). All revelation that is necessary to live a godly life in this dispensation has now been revealed (2 Tm 3:16,17; 2 Pt 1:3). It is necessary to understand this point, lest one seek for more than what God promised concerning the revelation of truth to man. All that God would have the church receive has already been revealed and recorded in the New Testament (Compare Dt 29:29). Those who would seek further revelation from God are marginalizing the word of God. Their desire for more truth is a statement that they do not believe the Bible to be sufficient for direction into eternal life.

15:15:16 I have chosen you: John’s apologetic argument is that the apostles did not designate themselves as leaders of a movement that they initiated. Christianity is not based on the self-appointment of men who considered Jesus a great man and teacher, and thus, started a religious movement. Such is the nature of the original leadership of false religions. But with Christianity, the choosing was directly from Jesus. At the be-

ginning of His earthly ministry, “*He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles*” (Lk 6:13). These men were given the Holy Spirit, and thus, they proclaimed what they had seen and heard from Jesus. ***Go and bring forth fruit:*** This is the great commission of Jesus to the apostles (See Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16). They would be obedient to this commission as long as they bore fruit. The fruit did not belong to them, but to God. They were to bear fruit through the preaching of the gospel. ***In My name:*** See 14:13; 16:23,24.

15:17 *Love one another:* Love would be the bond that would keep the apostles united in their work to bear fruit throughout the world (See 13:34,35). Their unity based on love would be a shining light to the world that they had all experienced the same things and had been taught the same things by the Son of God. The ability of God's leaders to work together in unity, therefore, is a signal that they love one another.

REJECTION BY THE WORLD

15:18 Because the world had been deceived by Satan, it rejected Jesus who had come into the world from God. Jesus was sending the apostles into the same world, and thus, they must expect the same rejection from the world (7:7; 1 Jn 3:13). In this context, therefore, Jesus prepared the apostles for the rejection by the world that they would encounter during their ministry to preach the gospel to the world. All the hate and fury that the world had unleashed against Jesus, which

at this time was taking Him to the cross, would be unleashed on them. In Jesus' situation of going to the cross, it was the religious world that rose up against Him. Since Jesus was saying that the world would hate the apostles, then we would assume that the misguided religious world would hate them, and subsequently bring persecution upon them. Their preaching of the truth would bring them into conflict with the establishment of religious leaders who were supported by the people.

15:19,20 *Not of the world:* The apostles were chosen by Jesus (Lk 6:13). They voluntarily obeyed His commandments. Because they did not behave after the manner of the world, but preached the light of the truth to the world, they would be hated by those who loved to walk in darkness (17:14; 1 Jn 4:5). Those in darkness would be those of both the nonreligious and religious world ***Remember:*** In times of great persecution, the apostles must remember how the world treated Jesus. If they would preach the message the world wanted to hear, then they would not be persecuted. But the fact that they would preach the message of Jesus and prick the consciences of the world by the preaching of the truth, the world would seek to stop their preaching. They must not, therefore, think that they would escape the persecution that was being unleashed on Jesus who sent them forth to preach the same message He preached (See 13:6; compare Mt 10:24; Lk 6:40; see comments At 14:22).

15:21 All of the persecution, scourging and mocking inflicted on Jesus by the

world would be heaped on the apostles throughout their ministry (Mt 10:22; 24:9; At 13:42-45; see 1 Th 2:2,14). “*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*” (2 Tm 3:12). “*We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God*” (At 14:22).

15:22 It was not that they were without sin because of ignorance of their sin, for all have sinned (Rm 3:9,10,23). Jesus' point is that they did not want their consciences troubled by the proclamation of the commandments of God to whom all must give account (9:41). They were in sin. But now they could not complain to God for their condemnation in sin because they rejected God's solution for their sin. Those who reject the gospel, therefore, are without excuse (Rm 1:20; Js 4:17). Those who reject the gospel will be lost because they did not obey that which God sent to solve the problem of man's sin, that is, the death of Jesus on the cross for the sins of all men (1 Co 15:3,4; see 2 Th 1:7-9; 2 Pt 2:20-22; see comments Rm 6:3-6).

15:23 These words express the truth concerning the rejection of the world. Those who have created religions after their own desires, or rejected God from their consciences, do not want to have in their lives the direction of God's commandments. Therefore, they reject anyone who would remind them that there is a God before whom they must eventually give account. As the Son of God, Jesus and the Father are one, and thus, to reject Jesus was to reject God (5:23; 10:30; 12:44,45; 13:20; 14:7). Therefore,

one cannot hate Jesus by disobeying His commandments without expressing the same hate toward the Father. He cannot because Jesus' commandments came from the Father (See 1 Th 4:8).

15:24 If Jesus had not been among them with works that were greater than any other self-proclaimed teacher, then they would not have been made guilty of sin for rejecting Him. But the fact is that Jesus went among them with miraculous works, which works proclaimed that He was sent from God (3:2). Therefore, the miraculous works that proved Him to be sent from God, also condemned them because they rejected Him as the Son of God. They were thus without excuse. This fact also proves that no one other than Jesus and His disciples worked any miraculous works in all of Palestine during the ministry of Jesus. If miraculous works had been worked by others then or now, then the statement Jesus here makes as proof of His miraculous works to confirm Him as One from God would have no validity (See comments Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4).

15:25 *Fulfilled:* The prophecy was made in Psalms, but here Psalms was considered a part of their law. The prophecy was true, and the fulfillment accomplished by their actions on this occasion (See Ps 35:19; 69:4; 109:3-5). ***Written in their law:*** The religious leaders had developed a legal approach to the Sinai law. In order to do so, they even used statements from Scripture outside the Sinai law in order to fabricate a legal system of law. They emphasized the external performance of their law without

concentrating on the heart. They thus interpreted and applied their law for their own convenience, and by such, violated the very spirit of the Sinai law (See comments Mk 7:1-9; Gl 1:13,14). **Their law:** Because they had made their law a legal system, as well as added to God's original Sinai law their own traditions, it became "their" law. It was their law and their religion, and thus Jesus referred to the religious leaders to be of the world. **Without a cause:** Jesus was innocent. He had violated no law of God (See 3:19). Nevertheless, they sought and accomplished His death regardless of His innocence (Ps 35:19; 69:4).

15:26,27 The Counselor: Jesus would be the one who sends the Holy

Spirit to the apostles (See comments 14:16,17,26; 16:7,13). The Holy Spirit would then testify that Jesus was the Son of God by the miraculous works He would work through the apostles (Lk 24:49; At 2:4,33; Hb 2:3,4; 1 Jn 5:6). **Will bear witness:** Jesus had invested His life in the lives of the apostles. Therefore, their lives would be a testimony to others that they had been with the Son of God. Luke would later record that the apostles' lives manifested that they had been with Jesus (At 4:13; compare Lk 24:48; At 1:21; 2:32; 3:15; 4:20,33; 10:39; 13:31). **From the beginning:** They had been with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry (Mt 3:14; Lk 1:2; 1 Jn 1:1; see At 1:21,22).

CHAPTER 16

PERSECUTION PROPHESED

16:1 These things: Jesus prophesied Judas' betrayal, Peter's denial, the apostles' persecution and His own death. He did so in order that they might be prepared for these events. By being emotionally and mentally prepared for these events, they would be guarded against falling away from that for which He commissioned them to do after the events had occurred. They would also be able to look back and understand that Jesus knew what He was doing in taking Himself to the cross. **Kept from stumbling:** The Greek word for "stumble" emphasizes that they would not go astray into apostasy (Compare Mt 11:6; 24:10; 26:31).

16:2 Think that he does God service: The apostles had already experienced the fury of deceived religious lead-

ers who were plotting to murder Jesus, while at the same time, thinking that they were serving God. However, they at this time in their lives did not understand the severe persecution these same leaders would unleash upon them in the near future (See At 4:5ff; 5:17ff; 6:13; 7:54ff; 8:1ff; 9:1ff). The greatest persecution that comes against the saints of God is that which comes from misguided religious people who think that they are serving God. However, the problem is that they are not serving God, but a god they have created after their own imagination and a religion they have manufactured after their own traditions or misguided emotions.

16:3 They have not known the Father nor Me: The fact that religious people persecute the saints of God reveals

the fact that they had created a god after their own understanding. Their view and understanding of Jesus is not according to how the New Testament describes Him (Compare 15:21; Rm 10:2; 1 Co 2:8; 1 Tm 1:13). Because their religion is based on either political ambitions, corrupted cultural practices, misguided religious traditions, or uncontrollable emotional outbursts, they can never come to a knowledge of the Father and Son unless they turn to the Bible. The authority of their beliefs lies in that which is outside the Bible. Therefore, the Bible has little authority in their source of truth in reference to the one true God and His Son Jesus Christ (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12).

16:4 Jesus knew that He would be leaving the personal presence of the disciples. Therefore, He spoke these things in view of their work to carry out His mission to the world without His personal presence (13:19; 14:29).

THE SPIRIT AND THE APOSTLES

16:5 It seems at this point in the meeting of Jesus with the apostles that they were overwhelmed with astonishment concerning what He had just told them. They understood that He was about to leave them, though they did not comprehend the extent of the events that were about to begin in only a few hours from the time of this meeting. It was time that Jesus return to God from where He came into this world (7:33; 13:33; 14:28; 17:5,11; Ph 2:5-11).

16:6,7 Sorrow: They understood enough of what Jesus said to have great

sorrow about His statements concerning His leaving (Compare 13:36; 14:5). It is in this emotional context, therefore, that Jesus promised them the Holy Spirit. **To your advantage that I go away:** The dispensation of the Holy Spirit would begin when Jesus sent the Holy Spirit upon the apostles in Acts 2:1-4. In order for the work of the Spirit to begin in the apostles' lives, Jesus had to return to the Father where He would reign over all things (Mt 28:18; Hb 8:1). **The Counselor:** See comments 14:15,16,26.

16:8-11 Convict the world of sin: The Holy Spirit would convict the world of sin through the truth that He would reveal to the apostles. The truth that would be revealed through the apostles would be the standard by which sin, righteousness and judgment would be determined. The truth would be the words of Jesus by which He would judge the world (12:48). **Of sin:** Those who do not accept the atoning sacrifice of Jesus for their sins will remain in a state of condemnation because of sin (See Rm 3:9,10,23; 6:23; 8:1). **Of righteousness:** Through the preaching of the apostles, the world would be convicted of not doing that which is right in the eyes of God. The apostles would reveal the standard of behavior by which all men must walk in a righteous manner (See 12:48; compare Ps 119:172; At 10:34,35; 2 Tm 3:16,17). **Of judgment:** Through the apostles, the Holy Spirit would reveal that all men must give account of their behavior before God (At 10:34,35; Rm 14:12; 2 Co 5:10; Hb 9:27).

16:12 Many things to say: Because

of what He had told them in the last few hours, their grieved hearts would not allow them to understand greater things that would eventually happen in their lives. They were moving toward the termination of national Israel. Jesus had already prophesied the event (Mt 24; Lk 21). However, they could not comprehend that Jerusalem, the temple and national Israel were coming to an end. Even after the resurrection of Jesus they still asked concerning the restoration of all things (See comments At 1:6). They were still nationalistic in their thinking, and thus, were not at this time prepared to fully accept the fact that a great national tragedy was about to come upon Israel. Over 1,400 years of Israel as a nation was about to come to a close. It would have been too much at this time for the Jewish apostles to comprehend this consummation of the nation, with the added burden of what was about to transpire in only a few hours. After the apostles made it through the crucifixion, Jesus' ministry with them from the resurrection to the ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, they would be prepared to preach the end of national Israel in Christ (See comments Gl 3:26-29).

16:13 One must keep in mind that the promise here was only to the apostles, for Jesus was still in their company (vs 4). It was to them in this context that He was making these promises because of the special work He would give them in order to initiate the dispensation of the church that would begin in Acts 2 (See 14:26; 15:26). When the Holy Spirit came upon them, He would do two

things. He would guide them into all truth that God wanted the disciples to know, and He would tell them of things to come, specifically the fall of national Israel. ***Guide you into all the truth:*** The revelation of all truth that God intended that the disciples receive would be given through the apostles (See 2 Tm 3:16,17; 2 Pt 1:3; Jd 3). Therefore, one must not look outside the truth that was revealed through the apostles for other revelation from God. If one seeks revelation from God other than what has been revealed, then he is marginalizing the word of God. ***Whatever He hears that He will speak:*** As Jesus in His state of incarnation, the Holy Spirit would not as a manifestation of God, speak of His own authority. The three of God speak as one God. They can only speak as one God for there is only one God. Therefore, any so-called "messages" one might presume to be from the Holy Spirit that contradict what God has already revealed through the Bible are not from God (Compare Gl 1:6-9). God speaks to us today through that which has already been revealed, that is, through the Spirit-inspired Scriptures (2 Tm 3:16,17). ***Declare to you things to come:*** To them would be revealed the final coming of Jesus. This would be an end-of-time judgment upon the world (See 1 Co 15; 1 Th 4:13-18). However, to them would also be revealed in-time judgments such as the fall of national Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem (See Js 5:7,8; see comments Mt 24).

16:14 ***He will glorify Me:*** Throughout the dispensation of the Holy Spirit's work, the Spirit would not seek His own

glorification. Any religion that glorifies the Holy Spirit above Jesus is not from God. It is the work of the Spirit to give all glory to Jesus for what He accomplished on the cross (15:26).

16:15 The three of God—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit—all work as one for they are one. In nature and character, God is one. In work and goals, God is one. Any theology that divides God into different personalities is a polytheistic theology, and thus, contrary to the one true God. Throughout history the one God has manifested Himself in many ways. However, in order to accomplish the plan of redemption to bring redeemed people into eternity, He has worked as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He will not work apart from the totality of who He is in order to accomplish His redemption plan for man for God is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION

16:16 Jesus was on His way to the right hand of the Father to reign over all things (13:3; 17:2; Mt 28:18). In a few hours from the time He made these statements, He would be on the cross, and then buried in the tomb. He would then rise from the dead where they would see Him again.

16:17,18 It is important to understand that the disciples did not understand Jesus' teaching concerning His resurrection. John's apologetic evidence here is to affirm that the resurrection was not a scheme that was dreamed up and preached by the disciples. They did not

steal the body of Jesus in order to preach a resurrection, which resurrection they did not understand in this context.

16:19,20 *Sorrow will be turned into joy:* Though they did not understand His teaching concerning His resurrection, their sorrow would be changed to joy when He was raised from the dead (See Lk 24:32,41).

16:21,22 Those who were of a worldly nature rejoiced over Jesus' crucifixion because they saw Him taken away in order that they not be reminded of their wicked nature. The religious leaders rejoiced because they had fabricated a religion after their own traditions. Jesus manifested the hypocrisy of their religious behavior, and thus, His crucifixion relieved them of an obstacle to their power over the consciences of men. However, the disciples were grieved over Jesus' talk of His death because they accepted Him as the Christ and Son of God. Nevertheless, Jesus promised that their sorrow would be turned to joy as a woman's pain in childbirth is turned to joy after the birth of the infant. When they see Jesus again after His resurrection they would forget the sorrow they had at the time of His crucifixion.

16:23,24 After Jesus' resurrection, and the apostles' baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4, they would not need to ask Jesus questions as students. They would then be the teachers because the Holy Spirit would reveal all things to them (vs 13; 14:26). Therefore, they could approach the Father for answers for prayer on the authority of the name of Jesus. *Ask and you will receive:* Jesus

intended that prayers be offered to God through the authority of His mediatorship (See Rm 8:34; 1 Tm 2:5; Hb 7:25; 1 Jn 2:1; see comments Mt 6:9-13). In this statement He wanted to reassure the disciples that He was continually with them through their answered prayers. They simply needed to ask. They must have faith that He would grant their requests. Answered prayer is based on the faith of the one who asks (See comments Js 1:5-7; 5:15). *"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much"* (Js 5:16). Faith is the foundation upon which prayer is answered. Those of faith, therefore, must have confidence that their prayers will be answered.

OVERCOMING THE WORLD

16:25 *Figurative language:* The Greek word here (*paroimiais*) refers to parables or allegories. Jesus referred to His teachings that they did not at this time understand because they could not view them through a knowledge of all truth that would later be revealed to them. However, once the complete mystery of the plan of God to redeem man was revealed, then they would understand all things. All things would be understood in the context of the cross and resurrection.

16:26,27 *On that day:* This is the day wherein the Holy Spirit would come upon them with the revelation of all truth (At 2:1-4). At that time the apostles must pray directly to the Father. They would be heard by the Father because they loved the Father by the keeping of His word (14:21).

16:28-30 *I... go to the Father:* Jesus

here claims deity. He came from the Father, having given up being on an equality with God (vss 5,10,17; 1:1,2,14; 13:1-3; Ph 2:6-8). It was time that He now return to the Father to reign over all things. ***We are sure:*** The disciples here express their overconfidence in their faith in Jesus. They think that they understand, but they do not. They had only a shadow of understanding concerning the things that were to come, not only in their lives, but also in the Spirit's revelation to them of all truth.

16:31,32 Jesus here admonishes their overconfidence in their allegiance to Him at this time. ***You will be scattered:*** Their faith in Jesus was not strong enough to overcome the fear that was about to come upon them, for in a few hours the betrayal and trials would begin (17:1ff). They would be scattered from Jesus because of fear. He would thus go alone with the Father through the turmoil of the trials and crucifixion. Those who would stand for Jesus must be willing to stand alone with the Father if the situation calls for such.

16:33 *In Me you might have peace:* Only in Jesus are all spiritual blessings (See Ep 1:3,7; Rm 8:1; 2 Co 5:17; 1 Co 1:2; 2 Tm 2:10; 1 Jn 5:11). Only in Jesus is there the peace that surpasses all understanding. It is the peace that comes as a result of one's assurance of His salvation in Christ (See Rm 5:1; Ep 2:14; Ph 4:1-6). ***I have overcome the world:*** Jesus had overcome the world in the sense that the world had not deterred Him from His destiny of the cross. He did not sin, nor did He turn from His mis-

sion. Contrary to what they would do in a few hours, Jesus did not turn from His commitment to fulfill His redemption ministry (Compare Rm 8:37; 1 Jn 4:4).

CHAPTER 17

This chapter is a prayer of Jesus to the Father. He prays (1) for Himself (vss 1-5), (2) for the apostles (vss 6-19), and (3) for those who believe on Him throughout history (vss 20-26).

PRAYER FOR HIMSELF

17:1,2 *The hour has come:* Reference here is to the death of Jesus on the cross (12:33). The time had come to fulfill the plan of God that was determined before the world was created (See comments Ep 3:8-13; Rv 13:8). All prophecy concerning the plan of redemption was now to be completed in Jesus (Lk 24:44). *Glorify Your Son:* God glorified Jesus by the cross and resurrection. Jesus gave glory to the Father by carrying out the plan of redemption that manifested the love of God in His grace toward all men (3:16; Rm 5:8). *Power over all flesh:* See comments 13:2; Mt 28:18; Rv 5. Since Jesus at this time had all authority, all judgment had been committed to Him (3:35; 17:2; Dn 7:14; Mt 11:27; At 17:31; Ph 2:10; Hb 2:8). He is the One who has authority to give salvation to the righteous (2 Tm 2:10,11; 1 Jn 5:11). He is also the One who will condemn the unrighteous (2 Th 1:7-9).

17:3 *This is life eternal:* In referring to “knowing” God, John refers to more than an intellectual knowledge. One must know God through response to who He is and what He has done as a result of His grace (1 Jn 2:42 Co 4:15).

It is this “behavioral knowledge” that brings eternal life. *Jesus Christ:* Jesus here mentions Himself in the third person. He thus identifies Himself with the one true God. Therefore, to know Jesus is to know the one true God who manifested Himself as Jesus in the flesh (1:1,2,14). One cannot know the one true God of heaven without knowing and obeying Jesus. It is for this reason that religions throughout the world that do not emphasize a knowledge of Jesus have created a god after their own imaginations. Those religions of the world that do not seek to know Jesus through the Bible, can never know Him.

17:4 Jesus glorified the Father on earth by teaching the will of the Father and doing the work of the Father (13:31). *Finished the work:* The certainty of Jesus’ going to the cross is seen here in the past tense by which Jesus explained the accomplishment of the plan of redemption (4:34; 19:30). The cross was so certain in his life that He here speaks of it as if it had already happened. He was crucified before the creation of the world, but now it was time to carry out the event.

17:5 *Before the world:* In the statements that Jesus has just made, it is quite clear that He affirmed that He existed before His incarnation into the flesh of man (1:1-11,14; Ph 2:6-8; Cl 1:15,16; Hb 1:3). In other words, there would have been no incarnation unless there was first

preexistence. One cannot accept Jesus as simply a good teacher of Israel. Jesus must be accepted as the preexistent Son of God.

PRAYER FOR THE DISCIPLES

As Jesus expressed the following thoughts for the apostles, He did so in the past tense. He saw their work after He went to the cross, was resurrected, and ascended to the right hand of God. He saw them in their work after the establishment of the church on Pentecost in Acts 2.

17:6 *Whom you gave Me:* Before Jesus began His ministry, the apostles were God's because of their obedient faith (6:37; see Ps 22:22). They were given to Jesus when He came in the sense that when He came they recognized that He had come from God. From their first acceptance of Jesus, their faith grew to accept Him as the Son of God (See comments Mt 16:13-18). ***Your word:*** They remained faithful to their commitment to Jesus as His disciples.

17:7,8 The apostles, as well as all who believe on Jesus, understand the fact that Jesus' coming and teaching were from God (3:2). Jesus came speaking the words of the Father (8:28). The apostles received the words of Jesus because they believed that He and His teachings came from the Father (16:27; compare 12:48-50).

17:9,10 Those who are sons of Abraham by faith belong to God because of their faith (See vs 6; 6:37). ***Glorified in them:*** Jesus had invested His life in the lives of the apostles. Therefore, when

they went forth to preach, people understood that they had been with Jesus (At 4:13).

17:11 *No longer in the world:* By the time Jesus made this statement, He had completed His earthly ministry of teaching and miraculous work. In leaving the world, He would leave the apostles in the world in order to carry out His work. They would be kept by God insofar as they remained faithful to their commitment to His word (Compare 1 Pt 1:5; Jd 1). By keeping the word of God, they would remain one with God (10:30; see comments 1 Jn 1:3).

17:12 *I guarded them:* The apostles were kept because their faith that they had in God was applied to Jesus when they accepted Him as the Son of God. Jesus drew their faith unto Himself by His teaching and love for them. ***Son of perdition:*** Judas was lost because He failed to allow his heart to be permeated with the life of Jesus. However, Jesus knew that Judas was of such a nature. Because Judas was such, he was chosen in order that prophecy be fulfilled (Ps 41:9; see Jn 13:2,18; At 1:20).

17:13,14 *My joy fulfilled:* The apostles would fulfill the joy of Jesus in the sense that they would complete the redemptive work by taking the gospel to all the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16). They would thus experience the joy of Jesus by continuing His ministry. ***Not of the world:*** In this prophetic statement of Jesus concerning the lives of the apostles throughout their ministry, He stated that the world would hate them because they would preach and live the

word of God (15:19; Mt 24:9; Lk 6:22; 21:17; 1 Jn 3:13). They were not of the world because they had chosen to obey God (8:23; see Gl 5:19; Js 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15). Because they were obedient to the word of God, those who chose to live contrary to the will of God would rise up against them, especially those who had created religions after their own desires and traditions.

17:15-17 As the special witnesses of Jesus, the apostles had a mission to accomplish (Lk 24:48). Jesus was leaving them in the world in order to accomplish His mission, and thus, He prays here that they not be led into sin (Compare Mt 6:13; Gl 1:4; 1 Jn 5:18). They must remain separate from the world by their obedience to the will of God. **Sanctify them by Your truth:** Sanctification here means that they must be separated from the ways of the world. Obedience to the truth of God will separate one from the world in the sense that one obeys God and not men (See vs 19; At 15:9; Ep 5:26; 1 Pt 1:22; compare Rm 10:17 with At 15:9). One's continued obedience maintains his separation from the world.

17:18,19 I have also sent them: The great commission of the apostles to all the world is as Jesus was sent into the world by the Father (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16). Those who accept Jesus, must accept the responsibility to complete His mission to preach the gospel to all the world. **For their sakes:** Jesus separated Himself from His former state of existence in heaven on an equality with God in order to save both the apostles and all the world (See comments Ph 2:6-8). He

came to do the will and work of the Father. The apostles would thus remain sanctified (separated) from the world if they would also go forth to do the will and work of Jesus.

PRAYER FOR ALL BELIEVERS

At this time in His prayer, Jesus turned to those who were beyond His immediate company. He prayed for all those who would in the future be His disciples through the preaching of the apostles.

17:20 Believe in Me through their word: The word that was first revealed to the apostles, and secondly to the New Testament prophets, was the word of Jesus. Therefore, all who believe these words must "*be mindful of the words that were spoken before by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through us your apostles*" (2 Pt 3:2). There is no other way to learn from the Father than to learn from the inspired words that were given by the Holy Spirit to the apostles (See Js 1:21). We learn only of Jesus today through the inspired New Testament. Therefore, if any man would come to believe in Jesus, he must come through a knowledge of the inspired written word of God (See comments Lk 1:1-4).

17:21 That they all may be one: This prayer for oneness among the disciples is based on the oneness that exists between the Father and Son (10:38; 14:20). It should be the prayer and goal of every Christian to be one with all his brothers and sisters in Christ. A fundamental principle of Christianity is the

unity among those who believe on Jesus (See 10:16; Rm 12:5; 1 Co 1:10; Gl 3:28; Ep 4:1-6; Ph 1:27). Those who would call themselves after Christ must seek to answer this prayer of Jesus. No one can claim to be one with the Father and Son, and at the same time, not seek unity with all those who believe on Jesus. The desire to be united with fellow believers is a fundamental attitude without which one is not suitable for eternal dwelling with fellow Christians in heaven. **That the world may believe:** The signal of discipleship is love among brethren (13:34,35). The bond of unity that is based on love is evidence to the unbelieving world that all Christians call themselves after the same Lord. Those disciples, therefore, who persist on promoting divisive issues that are not fundamental, are thus hindering the unbelieving world from coming to Jesus. We must not confuse the oneness about which Jesus spoke. He spoke of an attitude of oneness in diversity. Though the disciples would have diverse opinions and gifts of ministry, they would have a spirit of being one in Christ. They would preserve their unity through tolerance of one another's diversity (See comments Ph 4:5).

17:22,23 In the immediate context, Jesus was speaking of the apostles. However, in the extended context, the organic body of Christ is one because of the oneness that exists between the Father and Son (See comments Ep 4:4-6). **I in them:** It is not that Jesus would literally be in them, for He is now in heaven. The metaphor here refers to one's submitting to

the permeating direction of the word of Jesus. Those who have given themselves in submission to Jesus have Jesus abiding in them. **Perfect in one:** Jesus does not talk about perfect agreement. He is discussing the perfect unity that is seen through the blood of Jesus (See Cl 1:28; 1 Jn 1:7; compare Cl 3:14). **That the world may know:** The life-style of godliness of the disciples would manifest the fact that Jesus dwells in them (See comments At 4:13).

17:24 Jesus is here looking to the future. He possibly refers to the eternal dwelling where the disciples would eventually be with Him in heaven wherein they would behold His glory as God (See 12:26; 14:3; 1 Th 4:17). **Before the foundation of the world:** In this statement Jesus again affirmed His Deity. As Deity, He was in eternity with God before the creation of the world (See vs 5; 1:1-11; 17:5; Mt 25:34; Ph 2:6-8). Because He was in existence before the creation of the world, He existed in eternity. Only God is eternal. Therefore, since Jesus dwells in eternity, He is God.

17:25,26 These have known: The disciples of Jesus came to know Jesus. They understood that He was sent from God (vs 8; 6:69; 16:27). Though the world did not know Jesus (1:5; 15:21; 16:3), those who approached God through trust in the word of Jesus discovered the God of love in an unloving world (3:17; 17:3,8,18,21,23). **Your name:** Emphasis here is on the totality of who God is (vs 5; 16:27). Jesus had revealed who God is to the disciples. He revealed the character and nature of God

through the demeanor of His life. Therefore, by knowing the love of Jesus, the disciples would know God. *“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God. And everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love”* (1 Jn 4:7,8). Through Jesus one can know God, but He cannot know all of God. One would have to be God in order to understand all that God is. The totality of who God is, therefore, was not revealed through the incarnation of God in the flesh, for Jesus gave up the form of God when He came into this world (See Ph 2:6-8). Nevertheless, the more we know Jesus, the more we know God.

The manifestation of Jesus into the world, therefore, has offered man the opportunity to know the one true and living God. ***I in them:*** Jesus would dwell in those who submitted to the direction of His will (Rm 8:10). He would dwell in them as His word permeated and controlled their behavior. When the word “indwell” is used in reference to Deity in man, it is used metaphorically. Jesus is in heaven at the right hand of God. However, He dwells in every Christian. The indwelling, therefore, is in the sense that His kingdom reign rules in their lives through their obedience to His will (See Lk 17:20,21). In this way Jesus dwells in the Christian.

CHAPTER 18

Sacrificial Ministry Of The Son Of God

(18:1 – 20:3)

Outline: (1) Prayer in Gethsemane (18:1) (2) The betrayal and arrest (18:2-12), (3) Examination before Annas (18:13-23), (4) Trial before Caiaphas (18:24-27), (5) Trial before Pilate (18:28 – 19:16), (6) The crucifixion (19:17-27), (7) The death (19:28-30), (8) The burial (19:31-42), (9) The resurrection (20:1-10), (10) The appearances (20:11-31)

PRAYER IN GETHSEMANE

(Mt 26:31-46; Mk 14:32-42; Lk 22:39-46)

18:1 See comments Mt 26:31-46. In John's record of the final hours of Jesus' earthly ministry he does not mention the time Jesus spent in prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus spent time alone in prayer because the hour of the betrayal and trials had begun. After the prayer, Judas came with the company of religious

leaders and soldiers who would arrest Jesus. He identified Jesus to the company with a betrayal kiss. The affectionate gesture of kissing was here used as a gesture of betrayal. Judas thus fulfilled his part in the plan of redemption.

THE BETRAYAL AND ARREST

(Mt 26:47-56; Mk 14:43-52; Lk 22:47-53)

18:2-12 See comments Mt 26:47-56. The chief priests and Pharisees possibly expected to be opposed by the other disciples because they brought with them a detachment of soldiers in order to arrest Jesus. ***Drew back and fell to the ground:*** It is apparent that the boldness of Jesus in this situation caught the soldiers off guard. ***Let these go:*** Jesus did not want the disciples to become involved in any armed conflict with the soldiers. Therefore, He asked that they be dismissed, for

what was now to take place did not involve them. It was a time when the Son of God must stand alone in order to carry out the eternal plan of redemption. **Peter ... struck the high priest's bondservant:** Jesus knew the volatility of the disciples in reference to their loyalty to protect Him. Their loyalty was manifested in Peter's impetuous action here to strike Malchus across the head. Malchus dodged the blow, suffering only the loss of an ear. **Will I not drink the cup:** Jesus' destiny was to accept the responsibility of the plan of redemption (See Mk 10:38,39). His kingdom was not of this world, therefore, it would not be promoted with swords (See comments 18:36-38). Anyone who would seek to promote the cause of Christ by physical force does not understand the nature of the kingdom. The kingdom reign of Jesus is within the hearts of those who have submitted to Jesus (Lk 17:20,21).

EXAMINATION BEFORE ANNAS

(Mt 26:58,69-72; Mk 14:54,66-72; Lk 22:54-62)

18:13,14 When Jesus was taken in the garden of Gethsemane, He was bound and taken first to Annas. **Annas:** Annas was deposed by the Romans in A.D. 15 from being high priest. However, the Jews continued to honor him as such, and thus, they took Jesus first to him for examination. **Caiaphas:** Caiaphas was one of the son-in-laws of Annas who served as the high priest from about A.D. 18 to A.D. 36 (See 11:48-50).

18:15,16 Other disciple: John does not identify himself here by name, but does so in an indirect way because the

disciples knew who the other disciple was. **Known to the high priest:** James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were known by the high priest. The household of Zebedee was evidently an influential family in the Jewish hierarchy. Because John was known by the high priest, he was able to get Peter into the area where Jesus was being examined before Annas.

18:17,18 I am not: Though the exact times when Peter made the three denials of Jesus is not easy to determine, this denial in the court of Annas appears to be the first. It was common knowledge that John was a disciple of Jesus, and here, the maid assumes that Peter was also a disciple.

18:19-21 I spoke openly: Jesus did not start a secret movement among men. He did not work in obscurity among a few disciples. It was not that the movement of Christianity was started from a few of His disciples. They publicly proclaimed His teachings. Annas, as well as all the religious leaders of Jerusalem and Palestine, knew of the teachings and life of Jesus.

18:22,23 Struck Jesus: It was not that Jesus sarcastically replied to Annas or that He spoke in an offensive manner. The fact is that He spoke the truth and the truth convicted those who were of an evil heart on this occasion. The religious leaders before whom Jesus stood during the trials before His crucifixion had already planned a murder scheme against Him. Their hatred of Jesus was now being carried out, and thus, they cared nothing for the facts about either Jesus' teach-

ings or actions. Their desire here was simply to carry on with the plans to eliminate Jesus from the religious scene of Israel. All that happened at this time in reference to Jesus was an effort to remove His influence from society by removing Him. These were religious leaders going through a murderous scheme to terminate the Son of God on earth.

TRIAL BEFORE CAIAPHAS

18:24 See comments Mt 26:57-58 (Mk 14:53-65; Lk 22:54-65). From this meeting with Annas, Jesus was then taken to the acting high priest, Caiaphas.

18:25-27 John records that sometime between the taking of Jesus from Annas to Caiaphas, Peter denied Jesus two times. After the third denial, there was the first crowing of the roosters in the early morning. Emphasis of the cock crow is not on the crow of a single rooster, but the time of the early morning when the roosters crowed together. The time of the first cock crow was the signal for the morning, but in this case, the signal that Peter had fulfilled Jesus' prophecy that he would deny Him three times (13:38). The encouraging fact about Peter's denials is his repentance as a prominent personality in the early beginning of the church. Though He denied the Son of God, he later was willing to die for his conviction that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. We thus see in his denials his later humble repentance, and then commitment to bring forth fruits of repentance in his life.

TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

(Mt 27:1,2,11-14; Mk 15:1-5; Lk 23:1-5)

18:28 *Eat the Passover:* This statement by John indicates that the disciples had not actually eaten the Passover meal with Jesus the previous night. Jesus evidently ate a pre-Passover meal with them for He knew that He would be on the cross when the actual Passover meal was eaten. He would be on the cross when all Israel was remembering the Passover sacrifice that God instituted with Israel centuries before when He delivered them from Egyptian captivity. At this time in history, it was time for another deliverance. Jesus was now delivering those who were sons of Abraham by faith out of the captivity of sin by offering Himself as the sacrificial Passover lamb (Rm 6:17). Though the disciples did not view any talk of His death at this time as an occasion for rejoicing, they would later celebrate this occasion in the Lord's Supper as they celebrated their deliverance from Egyptian bondage in the Passover/Pentecost feasts.

18:29,30 Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea from A.D. 26 to A.D. 36. He was the governor at a time when the Jews were restless with Roman occupation. Therefore, at this time he made several decisions in reference to Jesus that were politically motivated, but not according to the wisdom of a just governor. *If He were not an evildoer:* The fact was that these evil-hearted religious leaders had convinced themselves that they were doing the work of God. How-

ever, in delivering up the Son of God, they judged themselves to have evil hearts. They assumed that because they had delivered Jesus up to Pilate that this was evidence enough for Pilate to judge Jesus guilty of some crime. But we must assume that Pilate knew of their evil nature and prejudices, and thus, he knew that there was something suspicious about their delivering of Jesus to him. Throughout the trials and crucifixion of Jesus, we must keep in mind that Pilate was seeking to keep the peace with a nation of people who were set on freeing themselves of Roman occupation.

18:31,32 *You take Him:* The fact was that the Jews could not take Jesus to trial and execution on their own since they were ruled by the Romans. They wanted to execute Jesus. However, the Romans had taken the power of capital punishment away from the Jews when they occupied Palestine. On this occasion, Pilate would not unjustly judge and sentence Jesus because he assumed that the envious Jews were in the process of working out some evil scheme among themselves to kill Jesus. ***Might be fulfilled:*** It was prophesied that Jesus would be killed by the instrumentality of the Gentiles (See 3:14; 8:28; 12:32,33; Mt 20:17-19; 26:2; At 2:23). This affirms that Jesus came to die, not to reign on earth over a physical kingdom. The death of Jesus was prophesied, and thus Jesus fulfilled all those prophecies that spoke of the death of the Messiah.

18:33,34 The Jews had falsely accused Jesus of being an insurrectionist king who wanted to overthrow the Ro-

mans in Palestine, and thus, run the Romans from Jewish land. In his investigations of Jesus about whom he surely had heard much, Pilate had probably been told that Jesus was an insurrectionist leader. The envious Jewish religious leaders had surely fabricated such a slanderous statement and spread it among the people. After the slander was spread among the people, they then reported it to Pilate as if it were the truth.

18:35,36 Pilate's reply to Jesus indicates that he did not accept the slanderous reports of the religious leaders. He thus asked Jesus what He had done in order to have Himself delivered to him by a group of religious leaders who were determined to rid Him from society. ***My kingdom is not of this world:*** Jesus could not have made it more clear that the nature of His kingdom reign was never intended to be an earthly kingdom wherein He would reign on this earth (See Dn 2:44; 7:14; Lk 12:14). His reign is in the hearts of those who voluntarily submit to His lordship (See comments Mt 6:9,10; Lk 17:20,21). As men on earth submit to His present kingdom reign, the will of God is done on earth as it is done in heaven. His reign is thus a spiritual reign through the voluntary submission of men to the will of Jesus. In this context, Jesus' proof that His kingdom was not of this world was in the fact that He did not allow His disciples to promote His work through physical means. Therefore, those who would seek to promote the kingdom through violent means can be sure that they are not promoting the kingdom of Jesus. They are only using their

corrupted view of Christianity and the name of Jesus to promote their own political ideas. Jesus never came to instigate a religious political movement among men. Therefore, anyone who would so use the name of Jesus to do so, is working contrary to the will of Jesus.

18:37 We must assume that Pilate perceived the wicked motives of the Jewish religious leaders. He thus assumed that their accusations against Jesus were twisted, if not totally false. However, he here carries on his own investigation in order to determine who Jesus is. ***For this reason I was born:*** Jesus came into the world in order to leave the world to become King of kings and Lord of lords (Dn 7:13,14; 1 Tm 6:15). He came to the world in order to go to the right hand of the Father to assume the divine kingship over all things (See 2 Ch 29:10,11). The Father had reigned over all things until the ascension of Jesus. But after the ascension, Jesus assumed kingship over all things (Ep 1:20-23). He is now reigning with authority over all things (Mt 28:18; 1 Pt 3:22). He will reign until all kingdom reign is returned to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit at His final coming (See comments 1 Co 15:24-28).

Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice: Those who are of an honest and true heart will examine the evidence, and thus, accept Jesus for who He said He was (8:47; 1 Jn 3:19; 4:6). John wrote this document in order to present the truth of Jesus to all men. Those who have the faith of Abraham will accept the evidence and believe (20:30,31). According to the plan of God, therefore, the writing of

these things concerning Jesus is sufficient proof to convince those who are of the nature of the truth that Jesus is the Son of God. One who is of the nature of the truth has a humble heart that is willing to allow God to reign in his life. What God expects of man, therefore, is that this document of John of the ministry of Jesus should be sufficient evidence to believe that Jesus is the Christ and Son of God. No miracles are required for this belief. God expects us to accept only the seven recorded miracles of this book in order to believe.

18:38 *What is truth:* This statement by Pilate was evidently made in frustration, for Pilate did not wait for Jesus' answer. Pilate seems to be confused concerning the false accusations of the Jews, the political crisis that has been presented to him, and the actual testimony of Jesus on this occasion. It may have been that Pilate was frustrated with the situation he was in as a representative of the Roman Empire in Palestine. He surely knew the history of the Jews. He knew the prophecies of the Messiah. It may have been that he was pondering all these things, and thus at this time expressed his frustration with the predicament of having one of the Jewish teachers before him. ***I find in Him no fault:*** According to Roman law, Pilate found no crime in Jesus that would call for execution (19:4-6; Is 53:9; Mt 27:24; Lk 23:4; 1 Pt 2:22-24). He presents this fact to the religious leaders in order to have this matter settled and Jesus released. But such was not in the plan of God. God would continue to allow Satan to use the misguided reli-

gious leaders of Israel to take Jesus to the cross.

18:39,40 It was a custom of the Romans to release some insurrectionist during the Passover feast. This may have been started as a token show of the Romans to give a pretense of honoring the central theme of the Passover concerning Israel's release from Egyptian captivity. Their motive in instituting the cus-

tom was to gain the favor of the Jews. Therefore, Pilate sought to use this custom to have Jesus released. **Not this Man, but Barabbas:** Pilate's plan to have Jesus released failed because the religious leaders wanted Jesus removed. They thus called for Barabbas who was a convicted thief (See Mt 27:20; Mk 15:11; Lk 23:19).

CHAPTER 19

19:1-3 The practice of scourging was carried out before one was crucified. A scourge was a multi-stranded whip with pieces of metal or bone at the end of each strand. After His scourging, Jesus was dressed as a king. He was mocked as the king of the Jews. The garment with which the Roman soldiers dressed Him was possibly of different colors (red, blue and purple) that were interwoven. **Kept on striking Him:** The imperfect tense of the Greek verb here means that they kept on striking Him (See Is 50:6).

19:4-6 Behold the Man: Pilate presented Jesus to the Jews as a mere man. He possibly hoped that the Jews would be satisfied with His scourging, and then allow him to let Jesus go free. **Crucify Him:** One must keep in mind that these were religious leaders of Jerusalem. Their legalistic system of religion would allow them to maintain their religiosity while at the same time call for the execution of an innocent man. As long as they maintained the structures of their religious traditions, they could behave in a manner to kill even the innocent. **You take Him:** On the basis of fabricated and

distorted evidence that the religious leaders presented, Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, and thus, could not be executed according to Roman law. According to Roman law, Pilate found no fault in Jesus. Therefore, Pilate turned Jesus over to the Jews to do with Him what they wanted. He accepted no responsibility for their actions. They must accept the full responsibility for what they desired to do with Jesus.

19:7 We have a law: According to Jewish law, it was a capital offense for one to falsely claim to be the Messiah (Lv 24:16). However, if one were actually the Messiah as Jesus was, then prophecy was fulfilled. No law was broken. Jesus' claim to be the Messiah did not conflict with Leviticus 24:16. The law of Leviticus 24:16 was written against those false messiahs who would rise up and claim to be from God, and thus, lead people into apostasy. The Jews' accusation that Jesus was an insurrectionist was not proven according to Roman law. They could only charge Him on the basis that He claimed to be the Messiah and Son of God. It was because

of these claims that they nailed Him to the cross (See comments Mt 27:22,23; Lk 22:70,71).

19:8,9 *He was more afraid:* When Pilate considered the many things his wife suffered in a dream concerning Jesus (Mt 27:19), he possibly began to wonder that maybe there was something to Jesus' claim to messiahship. Because of his reaction that is expressed in this verse, at least he manifested his superstitious beliefs concerning Jesus. ***Jesus gave him no answer:*** Jesus did not answer because He was taking Himself to the cross (Is 53:7; Mt 27:12,14; Lk 23:9). The time for discussions was over. It was now time in the plan of God that He go to the cross.

19:10,11 The government that Pilate represented was in power because of God (See Rm 13:1ff). However, it could also be that God raised up Pilate for this very occasion (See comments Rm 9:17). ***He who delivered Me:*** The one who was primarily responsible for Jesus' being delivered up for crucifixion was the high priest. He violated his appointment by Sinai law because he did not lead the people to the One to whom the law pointed. He used his religious appointment to do the opposite for which it was established by the Sinai law. Any religious leader who does not lead people to Jesus is a false leader.

19:12,13 *Sought to release Him:* The tense of the Greek verb here is imperfect active. It expresses continuous action by which Pilate kept on trying to have Jesus released. However, the religious leaders used political blackmail to force Pilate to proclaim a sentence of

death against Jesus. ***Pavement:*** This was an elevated stone seat in the Praetorium upon which Roman rulers sat to make judgments. In this case, Pilate made a formal judgment against Jesus and in favor of those who sought to kill Him.

19:14 *The Preparation of the Passover:* This would be Friday, the day before the beginning of the seven days of the feast of the Unleavened Bread. ***Sixth hour:*** Since John was using Roman time, this would be 6:00^{AM}. The crucifixion would occur three hours later. Mark records Jewish time for the crucifixion which would be the third hour, or 9:00^{AM} Roman time (Mk 15:25). ***Your King:*** Pilate made this statement as an insult to the Jews because they had used this accusation against Jesus because they sought to incite the Romans against Him.

19:15,16 *Will I crucify your King:* Pilate both mocked and taunted the Jews. He knew the hate and envy by which the religious leaders were seeking a death sentence against Jesus. ***The chief priests:*** These religiously misguided leaders of Israel had been so blinded by their envy that they were driven to call for the death of the incarnate Son of God. Such should be a warning to any religious leader to question his heart if he should carry out the same actions as these chief priests. ***No king but Caesar:*** Previously, the religious leaders had said that they were not in bondage to anyone (8:33). Here they cry out that they are under the bondage of Caesar. Their loyalty to Caesar, however, was not as this statement would assume. They detested the occupation of their land by the Gentiles. Their hypo-

critical statement here was only made to expedite Pilate's favor to have Jesus delivered over for execution. **He delivered Him to them to be crucified:** After having made his attempts to release Jesus, Pilate cowardly handed over the Son of God to a mob of religiously misguided Jews who were filled with hate and envy (See Mt 27:31-61; Mk 15:20-47; Lk 23:26-56; see comments Mt 27:24-26).

THE CRUCIFIXION

(Mt 27:27-44; Mk 15:16-36; Lk 23:26-43)

19:17-22 See comments Mt 27:27-44 (See also comments Lk 23:39-43). Condemned men were to carry their own crosses. And so Jesus carried His cross outside the city walls of Jerusalem to be crucified at a place called the Skull. The exact location of the Skull is unknown. It was probably a skull shaped knoll or rock somewhere outside Jerusalem. At the place of crucifixion, two malefactors were also crucified with Jesus. **Wrote a title:** When considering this statement that was written by Pilate, the Bible student must keep in mind that all the records of the gospel must be considered (See comments Mt 27:37). Pilate wrote the inscription in order to taunt the Jews. Unknowingly, he wrote the truth, for the Jews were crucifying their king.

19:23,24 His outer garment: The prophecy of Psalm 22:18 was here fulfilled. This garment of Jesus was without seam. It was thus a garment on which someone had spent much time in making. Jesus was stripped of His only worldly possession and humiliated before the world.

19:25-27 His mother and His mother's sister: Mary, His mother, was there with John who wrote this book. Mary's sister could possibly be Salome, the wife of Zebedee and the mother of James and John (See Mk 10:35-45; Mt 27:56). **Woman, behold your son:** In this hour of death, Jesus thought of the future of His earthly mother. John was the disciple whom Jesus loved. He was thus the one to whom Jesus entrusted His mother for the rest of her life.

THE DEATH

(Mt 27:45-56; Mk 15:33-41; Lk 23:44-49)

19:28 See comments Mt 27:45-56. It was now time for the redemptive plan of God to be fulfilled. The Lamb that was slain before the creation of the world was now on the cross and at the point of death (Rv 13:8). Jesus' thirst here was the fulfillment of prophecy (See Ps 22:15; 69:3).

19:29-30 John does not go into detail concerning the death of Jesus on the cross. He gives his eyewitness account, but He does not agonize his readers through the actual event. He writes to emphasize the event, not the events that took place at the scene. It was the historical event of the cross that brought redemption to all men. It was John's purpose to prove that it actually happened as it had been reported to his readers. **Sour wine:** Some translations use the word vinegar to refer to the sour wine (See Mt 27:34). Such was given to relieve pain. **It is finished:** Jesus had completed all that was necessary in order to accomplish the plan of redemption. All

prophecy concerning the redemptive act was fulfilled, and thus, His ministry on earth was completed (See Lk 24:44). Of His own free will, therefore, He ended His life on earth. ***Gave up His spirit:*** Jesus voluntarily gave up the spirit. He voluntarily gave His life. It was not taken from Him (Jn 10:17,18). He did not die as others on the cross. After all things were accomplished, and the plan of redemption carried out, then there was no need to prolong the event of the cross. Therefore, He surrendered His spirit to the Father (See Js 2:26; compare comments Lk 23:43; 1 Pt 3:18-20). Any theory that promotes the idea that things were out of hand, and Jesus fell into the hands of men who took Him to the cross against His will, must be rejected. The crucifixion of Jesus for the sins of mankind was in the plan of God for the redemption of all men. Though the disciples did not understand this at the time of Jesus' crucifixion, they would understand later when the Holy Spirit would come upon them. What they felt at this time was sadness. But their sadness would be turned into joy three days after the crucifixion. They would eventually understand the meaning of all the events that took place here once the Holy Spirit came upon them on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

THE BURIAL

(Mt 27:57-66; Mk 15:42-47; Lk 23:50-56)

19:31,32 *Preparation:* Many Bible students believe that this day was before the Sabbath that began the feast of Unleavened Bread. Therefore, this Sabbath

was a special ("high day") Sabbath to begin the feast of Unleavened Bread (vs 4). Since the Sabbath began at sundown on Friday, Sabbath law would have been violated if the bodies of Jesus, and the thieves who were crucified with Him, were left on their crosses (Dt 21:22:23). Therefore, the legs of those on the cross were to be broken in order to speed up death, though Jesus' legs were never broken because He was already dead. In their actions here, the religious leaders were thus hypocritical. They crucified an innocent man, yet sought to keep their law in order not to violate their understanding of the Sabbath.

19:33,34 *Blood and water came out:*

Jesus had died before either of the two thieves (See Ps 34:20). However, He was not dead long enough at the time the soldier pierced His side in order for decay to occur in His body. God would not allow His body to decay according to natural processes (At 2:27). The soldier thrust the spear into the side of Jesus to make sure a mortal wound would insure death. This soldier unknowingly fulfilled prophecy by what he did (Ps 22:16,17; Zc 12:10; 13:6; Rv 1:7).

19:35-37 John assured his readers that he was an eyewitness to these events. He actually saw the blood and water come forth as a result of the thrust of the spear into Jesus' side. Prophecy was fulfilled in that not a bone of Jesus' body was broken and the fact that the bystanders gazed on Him whom they had pierced (See Ex 12:46; Dt 21:22,23; Nm 9:12; Ps 22:16; 34:20; Zc 12:10).

19:38,39 See comments Mt 27:57-

60. **For fear of the Jews:** Reference here is to the fear the people had of the religious leaders of Judaism. The religious leaders had intimidated the populace into submitting to their religious traditions. Therefore, Joseph secretly asked for and was granted the body of Jesus. Because of his fear of his fellow leaders, Nicodemus, a Pharisee, had on another occasion come to Jesus at night (Jn 3:1ff).

19:40-42 Jesus was buried before the beginning of the Sabbath which started

on Friday at sundown. His body was hastily prepared for burial in compliance with the least of the Jewish burial traditions. His body was laid in a new tomb in which no one had ever been buried. He would be in the tomb on Friday, all day Saturday, and subsequently resurrected early on Sunday morning. Since any part of a Jewish day was considered to be representative of the entire day, this would mean that Jesus was three days in the grave.

CHAPTER 20

THE RESURRECTION

(Mt 28:5-8; Mk 16:1-8; Lk 24:1-8)

20:1 See comments Mt 28:5-8. In his historical narrative of these events, John bypasses the events of the Sabbath while Jesus' body was in the tomb. He continues with Sunday morning. **While it was still dark:** Jesus was raised from the dead early on Sunday morning (Mk 16:9).

20:2-7 When Mary discovered that the tomb was empty, she ran first to tell Peter and John (the "other disciple") (13:23; 19:26; 21:7,20,24). Peter and John then ran to the tomb to verify what Mary had reported. John was the younger of the two, and thus, outran Peter to the tomb. **The linen clothes:** John records the details of these events as an eyewitness (20:4). He records the details of how the burial clothes were left in the tomb. If the body of Jesus had been stolen, then certainly these clothes would not have been left as they were. The resurrected Jesus left the clothes in order to prove

that His body was not stolen. He left the tomb without the burial clothes.

20:8-10 Though John reached the tomb before Peter, he hesitated to enter the tomb. However, after Peter arrived and entered, John also entered and believed that Jesus had risen from the dead. Unto this time, they had not understood the prophecies concerning the resurrection of Jesus. Because they did not understand the prophecies meant that they were not expecting a resurrection (See Ps 16:10; Is 53:10,11; At 2:25,31; 13:34,35). John's apologetic argument here is based on the fact that the disciples were not expecting Jesus' resurrection. Since they were not expecting the resurrection, then surely they would not have fabricated the teaching of the resurrection as some have accused. John was thus careful to explain details concerning the resurrection that only eyewitnesses could report. John wanted us to understand that the apostles taught the resurrection because they had actually experienced it.

THE APPEARANCES

(Mk 16:9-11)

20:11-13 Mary Magdalene (vs 1; Mk 16:9) had returned to the tomb with Peter and John. Mary must have returned to the tomb in grief since the body of Jesus was not to be found. However, our God sent two special messengers to console her in this time of great sorrow. Her sorrow concerning the death of Jesus was compounded by the thought that someone could have come and taken the body of Jesus. She may have thought that the body was taken to another tomb.

20:14,15 At this time, Mary was certainly thinking inwardly, and thus, did not recognize Jesus. However, it could possibly be that Jesus did not allow her to recognize Him as He did not allow the two men on the road to Emmaus to recognize Him (See 21:4; Lk 24:13-24,31). She may have thought that Jesus was someone who was responsible for the tomb, and thus, had knowledge of the removal of Jesus' body.

20:16-18 *She turned:* This may explain why Mary did not at first recognize Jesus. John here explains that she turned in order to look directly at Him. Once Mary did recognize Jesus, she addressed Him with the Hebrew word *Rabboni*, which means teacher. ***Stop clinging to Me:*** The Greek verb here refers to her clinging to Jesus for joy. It was not that Jesus did not want her to touch Him, for on other occasions Jesus invited others to touch His resurrected body in order to confirm the fact that He had been resurrected (20:27; Lk 24:39). Because of great joy, Mary was simply

clinging to Jesus. He thus asked her to stop clinging to Him, for He would be with her and the disciples for about six weeks before He ascended to the Father. ***I have not yet ascended to My Father:*** When Jesus died, therefore, He did not immediately ascend to the Father in heaven. He went to Paradise of the hadean realm of existence (Lk 23:49; At 2:31,32; see 1 Pt 3:18-22). He instructed Mary to go to the other disciples and tell them of the resurrection.

20:19,20 See comments Lk 24:36-43. ***The doors were shut:*** John gives this detail to let us know that Jesus in some way came into their presence in the room without entering through the doors. His resurrected body, therefore, was not limited to the confinements or laws of the physical world. We do not fully understand the nature of His resurrected body. However, we must understand that it was in some way different than the body He had before the resurrection. John later wrote, "*Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we will be. But we know that when He appears, we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is*" (1 Jn 3:2).

20:21 *Even so I send you:* Though all the words that Jesus said on this occasion are not revealed in John's account, this is his account of the great commission of Jesus to the disciples (See Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15).

20:22 *Receive the Holy Spirit:* When God breathed the first breath of life into the body of Adam, he came to life (Gn 2:7). It would be the Holy Spirit

that would bring the apostles to spiritual life in order that they go forth as Jesus' witnesses to all the world. Therefore, in this context they were not being given the Holy Spirit. They were commanded to receive the Holy Spirit when He came upon them. And such the Spirit did in Acts 2:1-4. Jesus refers here to their correct attitude of mind, for He was looking forward to the outpouring of the Spirit on the apostles on the day of Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Passover. They were here given the promise of the Holy Spirit (At 1:4,8; Lk 24:49). They must receive Him in order to carry out the commission of receiving and revealing the truth (14:26; 16:13).

20:23 This is a parallel teaching to Matthew 16:18,19; 18:18. Forgiveness of sins was dependent on whether they would preach the truth of the gospel because the gospel was the only means by which men could receive forgiveness of sins (Rm 1:16; At 4:12; Js 1:21). The apostles went forth to preach the gospel in Acts 2, therefore, verses 21-23 here look forward to their activities after they received the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4 (See comments Mk 16:14-20). In this passage Jesus was not giving them the authority to forgive sins personally. Only God had this authority because sin is against God, not man. What Jesus did mean was that they must forgive those whom God has already forgiven. They must not forgive sins that God has not forgiven. The only way they could know whether to forgive or not to forgive was by the truth that would be revealed to them. The truth of the gospel, therefore,

was the standard for forgiveness. When they preached the gospel and men repented, then forgiveness occurred. If men did not repent and obey the gospel, then there was no forgiveness.

20:24,25 When Jesus first appeared to all the apostles, Thomas was not with them (See 11:16). John is the one in the passage who declared to Thomas that they had seen the Lord. *Unless I see ... I will not believe:* Thomas at this time wanted to walk by sight. He would not believe in the resurrection unless he had personally seen and touched Jesus. He is like many today who cry out for a miracle from God in order to believe. Religions that seek signs are those religions with adherents who are struggling with their faith. They want to walk by sight and not by faith (2 Co 5:7). But God will not send miracles in order to increase faith, for He expects all men to grow in faith by studying the miracles of the Bible. He works through the inspired written testimony of those who actually experienced the life and resurrection of Jesus. God has set forth this testimony in written form in order to produce faith (vss 30,31). It is this record of His miraculous manifestations in history (the Bible) that must be consulted in order to grow in faith (Rm 10:17; compare comments 2 Tm 3:16,17; Hb 5:11-14).

20:26,27 *After eight days:* Jesus left Thomas to his unbelief for eight days. It is not certain why He did this. He possibly wanted some discussion to carry on in order that Thomas be confronted by the testimony of those who did see the risen Lord. On the occasion of this ap-

pearance, the doors of the room were again closed in order to prove that this appearance was miraculous (vs 19). ***Do not be unbelieving:*** In this case, Jesus asked Thomas to fulfill his desire to investigate. The evidence of the resurrection was standing before him, and thus, Jesus requested that he put forth his hand. Jesus' physical presence with the disciples after the resurrection was proof that He had been raised from the dead (See 1 Jn 1:1-3). He was not a phantom that had appeared to the apostles because they were in a religiously hysterical state of mind. He was not a spirit. He was not the imagination of a group of men who were so expectant of the resurrection that they conceived Him to be alive in their minds, and thus, went forth to preach the resurrection. Jesus was alive and in their midst. They touched Him and talked with Him. God intends that this testimony of John, who wrote this document, should be sufficient evidence for one to believe (vss 30,31). It is probable that John's readers had only this one document concerning the life and teachings of Jesus. Therefore, with this one testimony from an eyewitness, God expected belief on the part of those who are honest and objective in their search for truth. He has sent this letter to all who are seeking to believe that Jesus is the Christ and Son of God.

20:28 *My Lord and my God:* This should be the reaction of all who would read this book of John. Thomas believed because he personally experienced Jesus. He walked by sight. However, God expects us to read and believe. We must

walk by faith in what Thomas and the other apostles personally experienced (2 Co 5:7). The extent of our belief in Jesus must be what Thomas here proclaimed. Jesus must be accepted as both Lord and God. He is Lord in that He is now in control of all things (Mt 28:18; 1 Pt 3:22). He is God in His being and essence (1:1,2,14).

20:29 *Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed:* Thomas believed because he had personally touched the body of Jesus. Those who believe without having touched and talked to Jesus have greater faith. They are blessed because they have believed without the empirical evidence for which Thomas sought. Therefore, those today who would seek a miracle from God in order to believe are actually struggling with their faith. They are asking God to take away what blessedness they have by believing without seeing. Those who would truly believe today will ask for no miracles from God because they do not want God to take away their blessedness. They seek to walk by faith, not by sight (2 Co 5:7). They are assured that God is pleased with their faith because they continually allow Him to lead them through His word (See comments Hb 11:6).

20:30,31 John now comes to the purpose for which he has written this apologetic document concerning the life and teachings of Jesus. He wrote to produce belief in the hearts of those who seek to walk by faith (See Rm 10:17). ***Many other signs:*** Neither Matthew, Mark, Luke or John recorded all the miracles of Jesus (21:25). There was no need to

do so. One valid miracle that was supported by reliable witnesses was enough to accomplish the purpose for which God caused it to happen. The purpose for which God worked miracles through Jesus and the apostles was not accomplished by the multiplicity of miracles. The purpose was accomplished when only one sign produced faith in the heart of the beholder (See Hb 2:3,4). Nicodemus was such a beholder. He said, "*Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him*" (3:2). **That you might believe:** "*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ*" (Rm 10:17). God expects this document of John of the miraculous signs of Jesus to be sufficient testimony to produce belief in the hearts of the humble-hearted. If one calls on God today to produce a miracle in order that he might believe, then he is saying that John's record of Jesus' miracles in this book are not sufficient to produce faith (See comments 2 Tm 3:16,17). He actually denies the purpose for which John wrote and the sufficiency of the word of God. The faith that is produced by one's study of the word of God is suf-

ficient to take one to eternal life. **Life through His name:** This is the result of belief. John is not talking about a simple mental recognition that Jesus is the Son of God. He is talking about a belief that moves one into action (Js 2:14-26). A faith that is without response is dead and useless in reference to one's salvation. However, when one truly believes that Jesus is both Lord and God, then there is response to the teachings of Jesus (14:15; see 2 Co 5:16). The response is obedience to the word of God. The concept that one is saved by a simple faith with a confession that Jesus be his Savior is contrary to the very nature of recognizing that Jesus is the Son of God. If one recognizes the sonship of Jesus, he will certainly respond with obedience. If one will not respond to a knowledge that Jesus is God, then certainly the depth of that person's faith must be questioned. A faith that does not obey, therefore, is actually coming from one who really does not understand who Jesus is. Obedience to the will of Jesus is the signal that one truly believes that Jesus is the Son of God (See comments Mt 16:13-19). If one does not obey, then he has a dead faith (See Js 2:14-26).

CHAPTER 21

Commission Of The Son Of God

(21:1-25)

Outline: (1) The appearance in Galilee (21:1-14),
(2) Jesus commissions Peter (21:15-25)

THE APPEARANCE IN GALILEE

21:1-3 Jesus had promised that He would meet His disciples in the area of

Galilee where He had carried out the greater part of His ministry (Mt 28:7,10). This appearance was the fulfillment of His promise. **I am going fishing:** This statement may have expressed the disillusionment of the apostles that still lingered in their minds concerning what had happened in Jerusalem. They had spent

several days walking from the place of the appearances in Jerusalem to the Sea of Galilee, and now, were going fishing. It may have been that they were going to reconsider all that had happened. Whatever their feelings, they had not yet sensed the fact that they were to take the gospel of the cross and resurrection of Jesus to all the world. Therefore, they went fishing for fish and not for men to believe on what they had personally experienced.

21:4-6 *Did not know that it was Jesus:* It was early in the dawn and Jesus was standing at a distance from the boat from which the disciples were fishing. They therefore did not recognize that the man who was standing on the shore was Jesus. *Children:* A better translation would be “lads” or “boys.” This was a common form of greeting among friends. Jesus knew that they had not caught any fish. He asked the question of this verse in order to generate a response, and then ask them to cast their nets to the other side of the boat.

21:7,8 The “other disciple” here was John (13:23; 20:2). The miracle of the great catch moved John to declare to Peter that it was the Lord who was standing on the shore. John’s proclamation moved Peter into action. He could not wait for the men to row the boat ashore. He jumped in the water and headed for Jesus. The other disciples rowed in the boat that was about ninety meters (about one hundred yards) from the shore (Compare Lk 5:1-11).

21:9,10 By the time the disciples came ashore, Jesus had already prepared

a fire with fish and bread. Jesus had certainly not been fishing that morning, nor had He gone to the market to buy bread. What seems to be the case is that Jesus again created fish and bread in order to feed man (See 6:11,12; Mt 14:13-21; 15:32-39).

21:11 The disciples counted the number of fish that were caught in the net. John mentions such in order to confirm the miracle, for no net of the day could contain such a great number of fish. John, a fisherman, would have known this. This also confirms the fact that John was there. He witnessed the miracle and thus relates to us that he stood on the shore of the Sea of Galilee with the risen Son of God.

21:12,13 The disciples had not yet eaten on this morning. They were invited to the beach breakfast by the risen Son of God. John records that they did not need to ask who Jesus was because they all recognized Him to be the risen Lord.

21:14 *Third time:* This was Jesus’ third appearance to the apostles as a group though He had appeared to others than the apostles, but on an individual basis (See comments Mt 28:9,10).

JESUS COMMISSIONS PETER

21:15 *Do you truly love Me more than these:* In the presence of the other disciples, Jesus questioned Peter concerning his loyalty. They had known that he had denied Jesus during the arrest and trials. Jesus knew that they needed to hear a confession of his loyalty. The Greek word for love in this question is *agape*. It is a word that expresses the

greatest form of love. This is unconditional love that is unselfishly extended to others. **You know that I love you:** The word that is translated "love" in Peter's reply is from the Greek word *phileo*. This is a lesser expression of love than that which is conveyed through the word *agape*.

21:16 Jesus asked Peter a second time if he loved (*agape*) Him. This question turned the thought from loving the other disciples to loving Him. Peter responded that he loved (*phileo*) Jesus.

21:17 Jesus asked a third time if Peter loved (*agape*) Him. It was with this third question that Peter was stirred with grief because Jesus kept asking Him for a commitment that was the response to *agape* and not *phileo*. Peter here responded again that he had affection for Jesus by using the word *phileo*. The purpose for Jesus questioning Peter on this occasion was to restore him to the fold of the apostles after his three denials. Jesus possibly extracted three statements of loyalty from him for his three denials. **Feed My sheep:** This would be one of the primary works of the apostles among the sheep of God. They were to deliver unto the disciples all truth, and thus, build the disciples upon the foundation of truth in order that they not be tossed to and fro in a world of religious error (See comments Ep 4:1-16; see At 20:28; 1 Tm 4:6; 1 Pt 5:2).

21:18,19 In this statement Jesus prophesied the manner of death by which Peter would die. When Peter was younger, he made his own decisions as to what he would do. But as an apostle,

his discipleship would lead to his own death. Tradition that has been recorded in ancient writings affirms that Peter was eventually crucified on a cross head downward at his own request because he did not feel worthy to be crucified as Jesus. **When you are old:** This is a significant point because Jesus said that Peter would live to an old age. Therefore, neither Jesus nor the apostles went forth to preach that Jesus was coming in His final coming in their lifetime. This one statement should remind us that the New Testament does not teach the imminent return of Jesus, that is, that Jesus would come in His final coming in the lifetime of the apostles. If the New Testament did not teach the imminent return of Jesus in the 1st century, then it does not teach such today. The New Testament teaches that one be prepared at all times for the coming of Jesus. There are no specifics given concerning the exact time Jesus will come. It only teaches the certainty of His coming. **Follow Me:** Regardless of what happened in Peter's life, Jesus reaffirmed that he must remain faithful. And so it is with all those who would claim to be disciples of Jesus. Regardless of the persecution and trials through which we must go, we must remain faithful.

21:20-23 The "other disciple" here is John (13:23,25; 20:2). Peter understood what Jesus had told him concerning his death. He is naturally concerned about the young John with whom he seems to have a special attachment. Therefore, he asked Jesus concerning John's destiny. It was not Peter's busi-

ness to know the fate of John. Such was in the power of Jesus. Peter must concentrate on his own discipleship. ***Until I come:*** In this record John wants to correct a misunderstanding concerning his own death. The rumor had gone out that Jesus here stated that John would never die. But such was not true. Jesus did not mean that John would remain alive until His final coming. When He made this statement, Jesus had in mind His coming in time in judgment upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). It is believed that John was the only apostle who lived beyond the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The destruction of Jerusalem took place forty years from the time this statement was made. Since John was the youngest disciple at this time, then it is probable that he was the only disciple alive at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. It is traditionally believed that John died an old man near Ephesus around A.D. 97 or 98. Other than tradition in reference to the death of John, there is no evidence that any of the Christ-sent apostles lived beyond A.D. 70. They had accomplished their ministry, and thus they were called home by God (See comments At 12:1,2).

21:24,25 In this closing statement John affirmed his authorship. All the early Christians who were familiar with the events of Jesus' life knew who the "other disciple" was. Therefore, John knew that they would deduct from his references to the "other disciple" in the book that it was he who wrote the book. In making this deduction, they would know that he was an eyewitness to the life and

teachings of Jesus. They knew that his testimony concerning the events of Jesus' life were true. They knew the character of the man, and thus, concluded that his testimony was true (19:35; 3 Jn 1,2). ***Many other things:*** The Holy Spirit did not need to inspire men to record all that Jesus did. He only had recorded sufficient material that would spark belief in the minds of those who were hungering and thirsting after truth (20:30,31). One evidence for the inspiration of the New Testament is that it is not an encyclopedia of material on the life and teachings of Jesus. Those who are seeking to know the truth in order to be set free from sin will find more than enough evidence in the document of John to believe. Those who are seeking to know the person of Jesus in order to pattern their lives after His behavior have sufficient material to follow the behavior of Jesus. The great blessing we have today is that we have more than the document of John. We also have the witnesses of Matthew, Mark and Luke. These witnesses also give their testimony with John that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. They give us enough examples of the life of Jesus that encourage us to follow in His steps. Therefore, God expects all men to honestly consider the evidence for the sonship of Jesus that is recorded in the New Testament. He expects all men to follow the example of Jesus' behavior. For this reason, the Holy Spirit affirms that the word of God is able to furnish the man of God unto all that is necessary for godly living (2 Tm 3:16,17). God's "*divine power has given to us all things that per-*

tain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue" (2 Pt 1:3). If we ask for more than what God has promised, then we are asking for too much. If we ask for too little, then we are minimizing what God has given us through a knowledge of His only begotten Son who came to deliver us out of death and bring us into eternity.

The End Of The Old Testament Era

In the New Testament canon of Scriptures, the end of Jesus' ministry and ascension marked the end of the record of events of the Old Testament. Acts 1 is a record of the ascension, with the added actions on the part of the apostles to choose Matthias to replace Judas as a Christ-sent apostle. The New Testament of Christ began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

The documents of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John record the ministry of Jesus, and the final years of Old Testament history. Because these books are included in what is called the New Testament, Bible students should not confuse them as part of the New Testament record of history. Jesus lived under the Old Testament. He was subject to the Sinai law, and thus He did not live under

His New Testament law which was enacted with the first announcement of the gospel event by Peter on the day of Pentecost.

Jesus came to fulfill the Sinai law (Mt 5:17,18). When Jesus died on the cross, the Sinai law was nailed to the cross (Cl 2:14). Christians are not under the Sinai law (Rm 7:1-4), but the law of Christ. With the beginning of the preaching of the gospel in Acts 2, disciples were called to submit to Christ. They were called into the freedom of the law of Christ (See comments Gl 4:21 – 5:1). Though Jesus lived under the Sinai law, those today who have submitted to the gospel live under the law of Christ.

Those books of the Bible that record Old Testament history begin with Genesis and conclude with the book of John. From Acts 2 to Revelation, the Holy Spirit inspired a record of the early beginning of the church and concluded with the Revelation of John. Those religious books that are outside this canon of Scriptures must not be considered inspired documents. They are simply documents that were written by religious people, giving sometimes spurious information concerning their thoughts or lives in their relationship with God (See First Principles of Christian Faith, *Encyclopedic Study Guide*).