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# BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOK

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## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, Vol. II

by

PAUL T. BUTLER

A New

- *Commentary*
- *Workbook*
- *Teaching Manual*

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## **THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED**

to

my beloved brethren in Christ  
in the congregations where I have served  
the Kingdom,

for,

it is through their support and inspiration  
that this writing ministry has been made possible.

The Conway Christian Church, Conway, Missouri

The Oxnard Christian Church, Oxnard, California

The Washington Church of Christ, Lebanon, Missouri

The West Side Christian Church, Carthage, Missouri



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## Preface

For nearly nineteen centuries the Gospel according to John has been a tremendous source of testimony for converting the world. This wonderful Gospel has also been a storehouse of strength for the church of Christ. For almost the same length of time innumerable commentaries, translations, and critiques have been written concerning the fourth Gospel.

We entered this work humbly, aware of the great responsibility incumbent upon any who propose to teach God's Word to others (Jas. 3:1ff). We are also humbled when we consider the illustrious and scholarly company with whom we presume to associate ourselves by producing this work on the Gospel of John. In the early years of the Church such distinguished men as Origen wrote commentaries on this particular book. Later scholars have since given equally reputable works on this Gospel. We herewith acknowledge especial indebtedness to B. F. Wescott (who spent 25-30 years in this field), A. T. Robertson, William Hendriksen, R. C. H. Lenski, R. C. Foster, and the many others listed in the Bibliography.

We have embodied special studies, maps, diagrams, outlines and another technical, linguistical, and highly critical work. Our aim is to present a book that can be used by Sunday school teacher, preacher, student and layman alike. For those who desire a more technical treatise of the subject, we suggest the works of the aforementioned commentators and those enumerated in the Bibliography.

As excellent as these great works are, however, there are yet new discoveries that need to be incorporated into new commentaries on John. Manuscript discoveries, papyri finds and the recent *Dead Sea*

*Scrolls* have been made available to this generation and were not, of course, available when Wescott, Lenski and others published their works.

We have embodied special studies, maps, diagrams, outlines and photographs which we hope will both inform and inspire the reader to further study concerning the fourth Gospel.

Grateful acknowledgment is made of the assistance and inspiration of Professors Don DeWelt, Seth Wilson, and Woodrow Phillips, of Ozark Bible College, as they have contributed toward making this commentary possible.

PAUL T. BUTLER

## SPECIAL STUDY NO. ONE

In our Introduction to the *Gospel of John, Volume I*, page 13, we made brief mention of the papyrus, Bodmer II (P 66). This special study is a digest of some of the recent reviews of this codex as to its importance in exegesis of the fourth Gospel.

The first portion of the codex was published in 1956 by Victor Martin, Professor of Classical Philology at the University of Geneva. The codex now resides in the Bodmer Library in Geneva, Switzerland.

### *Significance of the Codex*

One reviewer says it is "of the greatest importance." It is classified by others as even more significant to Biblical philology (language study), though less publicized, than the Qumran (Dead Sea Scroll) discoveries.

The Chester Beatty papyri, comprising some of our most ancient manuscript fragments of the New Testament text, offer only a very few fragments from John's Gospel. Conservative scholars were, until Papyrus Bodmer II, able to call to witness for the antiquity of John only the small fragment called Rylands Papyrus 457 (P52) which contained not even one complete verse. Now conservative scholars have the Gospel of John complete through chapter fourteen, verse twenty-six, except for the loss of one sheet in the sixth chapter plus portions of each of the remaining chapters (15 through 21) in a codex which dates from about 200 A.D. This means that the Bodmer manuscript (P66) dates from within only about one hundred years of the original manuscript written by John the Apostle himself!

As a witness to the text of the Fourth Gospel this codex is second only to the Vaticanus (B). Most reviewers are amazed at its legibility. The writing is so clear that there has been no question, so far, as to the identity of any Greek letter.

### *The Type of Text in P66*

The textual scholars say the most important testimony of this codex is its amazing confirmation of the Neutral or Alexandrian text (the type of text which conservative scholars regard as the most accurate text—the text most likely to represent the original mss.). In eighty-seven percent of the cases where the important manuscripts disagree (such as Aleph, B, C, D, etc.), Bodmer II has the Neutral reading. We are more assured than ever before that we have in the Neutral text the type of text actually used by the early church. All of this technical jargon simply means that this manuscript brings forth an-

other very reliable testimony that the New Testament as we have it today is the same New Testament that the apostles wrote, except for some minute errors made by copyists in centuries of copying by hand.

One review says, "we seem to have (in P66) what might be called a people's copy of a portion of the New Testament . . . there is no ornamentation of any kind . . . legibility seems the one aim." This is very significant for it shows that in the second or third century A.D., the common believers, not just the scholars, had the Neutral text in their hands.

In John 7:8 the Bodmer II has *hupo* rather than *ouk* which gives the context the better reading, "I go not yet up to the feast," rather than the present ambiguity, "I go not up unto this feast."

In John 7:52, P66 adds the definite article before *propheteis* causing it to read, "Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth not *the* Prophet." The belief that *no* prophet at all arises out of Galilee conflicts with the Old Testament in II Kings 14:25; Jonah 1:1.

In John 9:27 the Bodmer II omits *ouk* before *ekousate* causing it to read "I told you already and you heard," which eliminates another ambiguity and makes the phrase more agreeable with the context.

The most significant of all variants, however, is the fact that it omits all of the story of the adulteress, John 7:53 through 8:12, without a break in the continuity of the manuscript and without the slightest hint that it was ever included in John's Gospel.

### *Conclusion*

It is easy to see that this has been one of the most significant discoveries in Biblical philology since Tischendorf's discovery of the great manuscript Siniaticus in 1834. The Bodmer II papyrus dates from about 200 A.D. and verifies again that we have uncorrupted, except for a few minor scribal errors, the text of God's Word as it was delivered by the Holy Spirit unto the apostle John.

### *Postscript*

Very recently a Coptic (Egyptian) version of the Gospel of John was found and also placed in the Bodmer Library. This manuscript has been dated somewhere between 300 and 400 A.D. It is of interest that passages in John which textual scholars have previously recognized as critically suspect (John 5:3b-4; John 7:53—8:11) are not present in this manuscript.

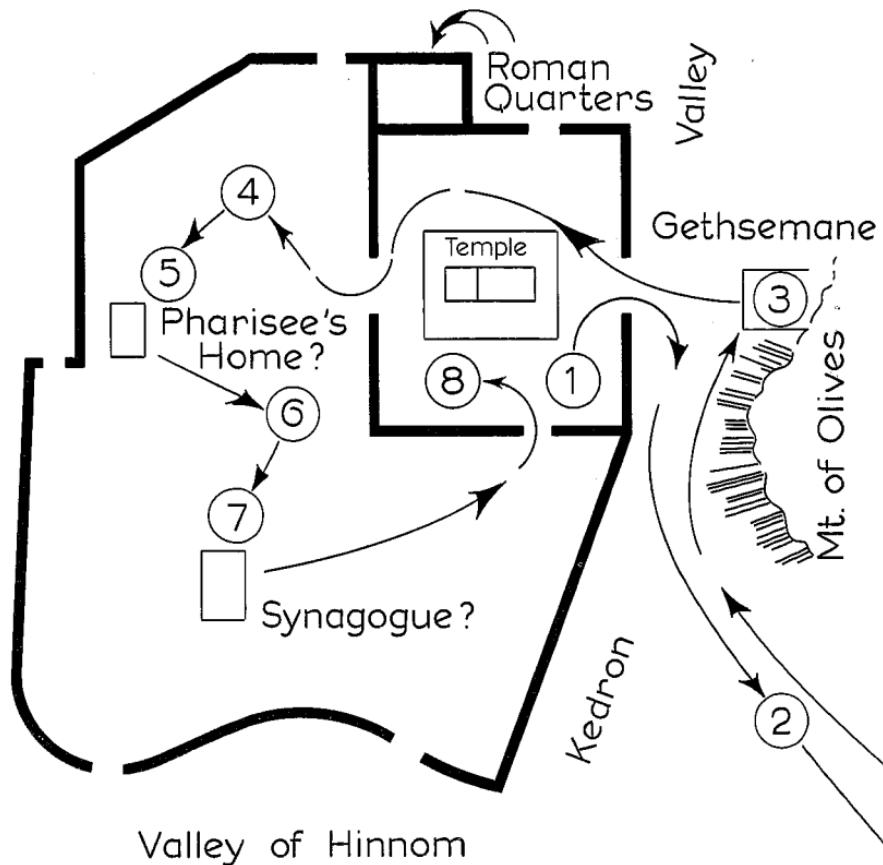
### *Some Variant Readings*

The Bodmer II papyrus omits the explanatory glosses in John 2:3; 3:13 and 6:56 as they are now found in the King James Version. In John 1:18 it has the better attested reading "God only-begotten" rather than "only begotten Son."

It omits the reference to the angel troubling the waters of the pool of Bethesda, John 5:3b-4.

MAP NO. 5-THIRD YEAR, LATER JUDEAN MINISTRY (about 3 months)

1. Temple; Feast of Tabernacles; Sermons on Light of World; Freedom; Abraham's Children; Man born blind healed; Good Shepherd; 70 sent out to evangelize, Jn. 7:8-9:10 & Lk. 10
2. Bethany; Jesus, Mary & Martha, Lk. 10
3. Place of Prayer; Discourse on Prayer, Lk. 11
4. Place unknown; charged with being in league with Satan, Lk. 11
5. Dining in Pharisee's home; denounces Pharisaism, Lk. 11
6. Before multitudes of 1000's Great evangelistic appeals on Hypocrisy, Anxiety, Covetousness, Lk. 12-13
7. In a Synagogue; heals woman bowed double; controversy over healing on the Sabbath, Lk. 13
8. Feast of Dedication (December); Jews seek to kill Jesus, Jn. 10



## CHAPTER SEVEN

Between chapters six and seven of John's Gospel an interval of approximately six months occurs. During this interval of six months Jesus carries on a relatively private ministry in Galilee. In order to give His disciples some much needed personal instruction, He retires into semi-privacy and travels to the north of Galilee. John makes only a brief note of this extended ministry in the first verse of chapter seven. Here are some of the outstanding incidents of this Later Galilean Ministry (see Map #4, page 266, volume 1).

1. Syro-Phoenician woman's demonized daughter is healed.
2. Many are healed in Decapolis and four thousand are miraculously fed.
3. The Pharisees demand a sign from Jesus at Magadan.
4. Peter's great confession and Jesus' first plain prediction of His crucifixion at Caesarea Philippi.
5. The Transfiguration on a high mountain.
6. Peter and the question of the temple tax.
7. The disciples arguing as to who shall be the greatest.
8. The unknown miracle worker is discussed.
9. Jesus discusses stumbling blocks, etc.

Chapter seven opens with Jesus and the Twelve still in Galilee. The Lord's skeptical brothers are chiding Him. Their advice is that He stop hiding in the hills of Galilee, quit beating around the bush about His kingdom and go to Jerusalem and make His Messianic claims public.

In Chapter six we see the attitudes of the people of Galilee toward Jesus. Now John sets out to show, in Chapters seven through ten, the attitudes of the Judean people toward Jesus and His claims.

We now take up our outline of the Fourth Gospel where it was discontinued in Volume I of our commentary, *Gospel of John*.

### II The Word Manifested to the Jews and their rejection of Him, D. Public Ministry, Third Year

2. Later Judean Ministry, 7:1—10:21, The Feast of Tabernacles
  - a. Jesus' unbelieving brethren advise Him, 7:1-9
  - b. The Multitudes in Jerusalem have varying ideas about Him, 7:10-13
  - c. The old Sabbath controversy renewed, 7:14-24

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- d. Mixed emotions concerning Jesus at the feast, 7:25-36
- e. Discourse on the Living Water, 7:37-52

## ADVICE OF HIS UNBELIEVING BRETHREN

*Text 7:1-9*

- 1 And after these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him.
- 2 Now the feast of the Jews, the feast of tabernacles was at hand.
- 3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may behold thy works which thou doest.
- 4 For no man doeth anything in secret and himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou doest these things, manifest thyself to the world.
- 5 For even his brethren did not believe on him.
- 6 Jesus therefore saith unto them, My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready.
- 7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil.
- 8 Go ye up unto the feast: I go not up unto this feast: because my time is not yet fulfilled.
- 9 And having said these things unto them, he abode still in Galilee.

*Queries*

- a. What is the Feast of Tabernacles?
- b. His brethren admit His miracles—why do they not believe Him?
- c. What does Jesus mean, "my time is not yet come?"

*Paraphrase*

After the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, Jesus taught His disciples semi-privately for about six months in Galilee. He would not travel in Judea, because the Jewish rulers sought to kill Him. Now the feast of the Jews, the feast of tabernacles was at hand. So His brothers said to Him, This is hardly the place for you. Why don't you leave here and go into Judea, where all your disciples are and there your disciples may see the miracles you are doing. As everyone knows, a person does not do something secretly if he is eager to be known publicly. Since you are doing these miracles, show yourself to the world. This was the advice of His brothers because they did not believe in His spiritual kingdom. Jesus said to them, This is not the opportune time for Me, but for you any time is suitable. The world does not hate you but it does hate me, because

I proclaim that the world is evil. You go up to the Feast yourselves. I am not yet going to the Feast because my time has not yet been fulfilled. Having said these things to them, He stayed behind in Galilee.

### *Summary*

The Lord's brethren give Him some worldly advice on how to carry out His divine mission. Jesus answers their advice by informing them that He is acting in accord with the eternal purposes of the Heavenly Father.

### *Comment*

After the miraculous feeding of the multitudes (Jn. 6) the crowds would all depart toward Jerusalem, for the Passover "was at hand" (Jn. 6:4). But why would Jesus refuse to go to Jerusalem and avail Himself of the opportunity to teach the great throngs of Jews gathered there for the Passover? Was He afraid? Yes and no. He was no coward, but He was fearful that the Jews might force the issue of His death before the divinely appointed time. When that time should come He would courageously and stedfastly "set his face to go to Jerusalem." No one could take His life from Him, He would lay it down willingly—but at the appointed time within the Father's Will. Another reason He might wish to remain in Galilee is privacy. When these great throngs of people left Galilee to go to the Passover, their absence would give Jesus much more privacy and freedom of movement to teach not only His disciples, but people in the borders of Gentile territory (the Syro-Phoenician woman).

During the six-month ministry in Galilee the open hostility of the Jews in Jerusalem might lose some of its fervor; especially if Jesus should make His ministry as private as possible. He recognized this and "charged his disciples" to refrain from spreading abroad the news of the miracles and teachings of this six-month Galilean ministry (cf. Mk. 9:9; Lk. 9:36).

Please notice that the plain inference of verse 1 of this seventh chapter is that Jesus did not attend the Passover mentioned in John 6:4. It is not wise to dogmatically assert that Jesus must of necessity keep every ritual and attend every feast commanded in the Law of Moses. After all, He is the Law-Giver. He taught Peter the same lesson in regard to the Temple tax (cf. Mt. 17:24-27).

The Feast of Tabernacles was to be celebrated by every grown Israelite male in Jerusalem on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (our October). The feast was to last eight days and the people were to dwell in tabernacles (booths) made entirely of fresh branches of

fruit and palm trees. This was to commemorate their fathers dwelling in booths (tents, temporary dwelling places) after their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. It was to be a joyful festival, reminding them of the fatherly care and protection of Jehovah in the wilderness journeys of their forefathers. It was also the festival at which they celebrated the ingathering of the labor of the field. It is called The Feast of Tabernacles, The Feast of Tents, The Feast of Ingathering, The Festival of Jehovah, or simply the festival (cf. Ex. 23:16; Lev. 23:33-44; Num. 29). There was much expression of joy in the ritual of the Feast. The trumpets were blown each day of the feast; there was the ceremony of the outpouring of water drawn from the pool of Siloam to commemorate the miraculous water from the rock at Meribah and to look forward to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit by Jehovah; the great candelabras (four of them so large that ladders were used to light them) were lighted and the light from these lamps illuminated the whole city at night. It is probable that Jesus referred to some of these rituals as He taught during the feast concerning the Holy Spirit, the Water of Life and the Light of the World. What a sight it must have been to enter the city at this period of the year and see over a million Jews living in these booths. They would be crowded into the courts, streets, public squares and on housetops. Then to see the smoke from the great altar in the Temple as hundreds of animals were sacrificed in burnt offerings. There would be the trumpets, harps, psalteries, cymbals and other musical instruments, the singing of the Great Hallel and the dancing before the Lord to behold.

In view of the tremendous throngs of people and the holiday excitement about to ensue in Jerusalem, the brothers of the Lord, James, Joseph, Simon and Judas (the Mother of Jesus had other children (cf. Mt. 13:55-56, 12:46-50; Mk. 3:31, 6:3; Lk. 8:19; Jn. 2:12; Acts 1:14), advise Jesus to go to the Feast and do His miraculous works there in public. Our text says of these brethren that they "did not believe on him." How, then, do they admit His miracles and disbelieve? They did not believe or place their trust in Him as a spiritual King over their wills and hearts (see Expository Sermons Seven and Eight).

The time for Him to drink His bitter cup was not yet come and this was His answer in verse 6. He knew the moment the proper time had come (cf. Jn. 17:1). Jesus' answer also has some definite inferences as to the attitudes of His half-brothers. Their godly wit-

ness was weak. They were "friends of the world" for the world did not hate them (cf. Jas. 4:4).

The world hated Jesus for testifying of its evil works just as it hated and killed the prophets of the Old Testament. John the Baptist and the Apostles of the New Testament, and all the righteous saints of God in all subsequent ages (cf. Jn. 15:18-24, 3:19, 18:37).

Then Jesus dismisses His caviling brothers to go up to the feast. He will not yet go up to Jerusalem. The K.J.V. supplies "yet" which seems to be the best reading. The statement "I go not *yet* up to the feast" agrees with the context and is further substantiated by the Bodmer Papyrus (P66) which places the Greek word *bupo* in place of *ouk* in verse 8. Because of the apparent contradiction between Jesus' statement, "I go not up to the feast," (A.S.V.) and His subsequent action of actually going up to the feast, one German liberal is quoted as saying "Jesus Christ did of set purpose utter a falsehood." But now the ancient manuscripts verify what the context demands.

Therefore, having vindicated His actions to His doubting brethren, He remains behind in Galilee until the proper time affords itself and then He takes His disciples and goes to the feast.

### *Quiz*

1. How much time transpires between chapters 6 and 7 of John's Gospel?
2. Why did Jesus not go to the Passover which was "nigh" in John 6?
3. Was it necessary for Jesus to go to every Feast? Why?
4. Describe as nearly as you can the festivities and rites of the Feast of Tabernacles.
5. How could the Lord's brethren admit that He worked miracles and still disbelieve in Him?
6. What is inferred about His brothers in that the world did not hate them?
7. How may we reconcile Jesus' statement "I go not up to the feast" and His subsequent appearance at the feast?

### VARING IDEAS OF THE MULTITUDES

*Text 7:10-13*

- 10 But when his brethren were gone up unto the feast, then went he also up, not publicly, but as it were in secret.
- 11 The Jews therefore sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he
- 12 And there was much murmuring among the multitudes con-

cerning him: some said, He is a good man; others said, Not so, but he leadeth the multitude astray.

**13 Yet no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.**

### *Queries*

- Why did Jesus go up to the feast in secret?
- What is the significance of the varying opinions concerning Him?

### *Paraphrase*

But after His brothers had gone up to the feast in Jerusalem, then Jesus went up to Jerusalem and the feast also, but Jesus traveled in secret and not openly with the crowds going to the city. Consequently, the Jewish rulers kept searching for him at the feast, asking, Where is that fellow? There was much whispering and guarded murmuring among the multitudes of people concerning Him: some whispered, He is a good man, while others said, No, He is not good for He deceives and misleads the people. But none of the people dared speak with boldness their convictions concerning Him on account of their fear of the Jewish rulers.

### *Comment*

It should be plain from John 5:18 and 7:25 the reason for Jesus' secrecy. The Jewish rulers were constantly dispatching officers to search Him out to arrest Him. Therefore, He waited until His brothers had departed and then, beckoning His twelve disciples to follow, He took a road through Samaria that would not be traveled by Jews on their way to the feast. Luke 9:51 ff., informs us that Jesus went through Samaria on His way to Jerusalem at this particular time. It also shows the hostility of the Samaritans toward the Jewish worshippers. Jesus and His disciples could travel here without being discovered by the Jewish rulers. He probably did not let anyone know of His departure from Galilee or His arrival in Jerusalem. The word *secret* is *krupto* in the Greek and our English word *crypt* is derived from it—hence *cryptograph* means "secret writing."

We will soon find Jesus teaching publicly and boldly in the Temple at the feast. Why does He not remain incognito? It is relatively safe for Him to reveal His identity as He is surrounded by the great throngs of well-wishers, for some believe Him to be a prophet. The rulers of the Jews are themselves afraid of being stoned should they harm Jesus in public.

The sullen contempt of the rulers is brought out vividly in the Greek as it reads literally, "Where is that one?" They will not so much as do Him the honor of mentioning His name. The imperfect

tense of *asking* indicates that these rulers were continually questioning the multitudes as to His whereabouts. They seemed to have been expecting Him.

The hundreds of thousands of worshippers were also on the tiptoes of expectancy concerning the man of Galilee. They were probably gathering in small groups whispering their opinions and discussing Him and His teachings and works.

Some were whispering that they thought Him to be a good man. He had healed lepers, made the lame to walk and had even raised the dead in Nain; He had just miraculously fed multitudes in Galilee. Others, however, murmured that He was a false prophet and was leading the people astray. They could remember Theudas and Judas of Galilee (Acts 5:36-37) and other false Christs who deceived the people and brought Roman retaliation and punishment upon the whole Jewish nation.

Whatever their attitude, not one of the multitude was willing to declare openly and boldly just what he thought of Jesus. It is plain from the text that their secrecy was due to fear. Everyone preferred to remain in the good graces of the hierarchy. To say the wrong thing would mean excommunication from the synagogue which would in turn ostracize one from all other social contacts. Barnes has a comment worthy of repetition here: "There are always many such friends of Jesus in the world who are desirous of saying something good about Him, but who, from fear or shame, refuse to make a full acknowledgment of Him. Many will praise His morals, His precepts, and His holy life, while they are ashamed to speak of His divinity or His atonement, and still more to acknowledge that they are dependent upon Him for salvation."

### Quiz

1. What route did Jesus take on His way up to the feast?
2. Why would He be relatively safe from discovery on this route?
3. How could Jesus drop His secrecy and teach publicly in the midst of the feast?
4. Why would some of the multitude say that Jesus was leading people astray?
5. What kept the people from speaking openly and boldly of Jesus?

### THE OLD SABBATH CONTROVERSY RENEWED

*Text 7:14-24*

14 But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

15 The Jews therefore marveled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

16 Jesus therefore answered them, and said, My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me.

17 If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself.

18 He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

19 Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law? Why seek ye to kill me?

20 The multitude answered, Thou hast a demon: who seeketh to kill thee?

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I did one work, and ye all marvel because thereof.

22 Moses hath given you circumcision (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers); and on the sabbath ye circumcise a man.

23 If a man receiveth circumcision on the sabbath, that the law of Moses may not be broken; are ye wroth with me, because I made a man every whit whole on the sabbath?

24 Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

### *Queries*

- What is the test Jesus proposes for His teaching in verse 17?
- How does Jesus interpret the law of Moses here?
- What is "righteous judgment"?

### *Paraphrase*

But when the feast was already half over, Jesus went up to the temple and began to teach. The Jewish rulers were filled with incredulity, saying, How can this man know anything about literature or the Scriptures, never having been a scholar in our schools? Jesus answered the rulers and said, My teaching is not the philosophy of mere mortal men, but comes from Jehovah God who sent Me. If any man is willing to surrender his will to God's will and do the will of the Father, he will be able to discern whether I teach the doctrines of God or whether I speak philosophies of men. Anyone who teaches on his own authority is seeking honor for himself. The teacher who seeks only to honor and glorify the one who sent him, this one is trustworthy, and there is nothing false in him. Moses gave you the law, did he not? Yet none of you are keeping the law for you are

seeking to kill me—and why do you seek to kill me? The multitude cried in astonishment, You are demon possessed. Who is trying to kill you? Jesus answered, One deed I did, and you are all taken aback and want to kill me. And for this reason I now say to you, Moses gave you the rite of circumcision (not that it originated with Moses but with the fathers) and on the sabbath you perform the work of circumcising a man. Why then, if you go to work and circumcise a man on the sabbath to avoid breaking the law of Moses, are you seeking to kill me for healing a man's body on the sabbath? Do not judge by superficial appearances, but judge justly, fairly and according to reality.

### *Comment*

In verse 14 we are told that Jesus did not appear at the feast until it was about half over. Evidently He spent two or three days in Samaria (Lk. 9:51ff). The priests and rulers would be occupied with services in the temple and the crowd would be concerned with the observances of the many rites midway in the feast. This diversion afforded Jesus a certain degree of safety, momentarily, from the anger of the rulers who were seeking to kill Him (cf. Jn. 5:18). A part of the great multitude was sympathetic to Jesus (7:12) and so He was able to go on with His teaching. Jesus went boldly into the very courts of the temple and began to teach. As He began to "speak as never man so spake," the crowd around Him grew larger. Soon many of the rulers would join the listeners. The incredulity of the rulers (7:15) is to be found in their amazement at the liberties this Galilean is taking. The audacity of someone like this Nazarene teaching publicly, a prerogative reserved only for those Rabbis with "accredited degrees," is causing them no small amount of amazement.

According to their records the Nazarene had never attended any of their official theological schools. They derisively scorned, "How can this fellow know theology, having never attended our accredited schools?" To "know letters" was to be trained by Rabbinical schools in the science of interpreting the law and the prophets. In other words, Jesus was not expounding the accepted and orthodox interpretations of the Rabbinical schools.

Jesus answers the amazement of the Jewish Rabbis. His wisdom is divine—it comes from God the Father. Jesus, Himself a member of

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

the Godhead; knew the Scriptures because the Scriptures were His words given centuries ago by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to Moses and the prophets. What Jesus was teaching, therefore, was not the theological interpretations and opinions of a man *about* the Scriptures, but His words were in fact the words of God. This is another of Jesus' many claims to equality with God.

Verse 17 is one of the many plain, yet profound, utterances of the Saviour. Being a follower of God is more than mere knowledge of what the Scriptures say. There must be that surrender of one's stubborn will to the point where we *desire* to do God's will. It is a *disposition* to do God's will. The man who "willetteth to do His will" is the man of a "good and honest heart" (Lk. 8:15).

The New Testament teaches that, fundamentally, doing God's will is a result of knowing Christ. In other words, as Hendriksen says, "The fundamental relationship . . . is therefore, (a.) knowledge, (b.) love, (c.) obedience, (cf. Jn. 14:15, 17:26)." (The N.T. Commentary, Gospel of John, Vol. II, p. 11, pub. Baker Book House.) Yet each of these three principles complement one another so that there is always an interaction between them. Knowledge of Jesus leads to love and obedience, while on the other hand, obedience leads to a full-grown knowledge and love (cf. Eph. 4:11-16). We never quite grasp the full significance and import of some of the more profound passages of Scripture until we have obeyed them or experienced them.

A lifetime of studying the Bible is of no avail if a man's will and desire is out of harmony with God's will. Paul said the same thing in I Corinthians 2:6 through 3:9. The rebellious, carnal-minded man cannot discern the things of the Spirit, because the worldly-minded man has no desire to *do* God's will. These Jewish rulers, to whom Jesus spoke, had studied the Old Testament from their youth up—hour upon hour, year after year—but they did not comprehend that Jesus spoke God's word for they had no desire to *do* God's word.

It is the man who humbles himself and has, as it were, the mind of a child (receptive, willing, pure) that understands the wisdom of an Omniscient God—while the prideful, rebellious man who is puffed up with his worldly knowledge can never understand God (cf. Matt. 11:25-30; also Isa. 1:18-20).

As one writer has expressed it, verse 17 is the "proper disposition" for man and verse 18 is the follow-up of that, or the "proper ideal."

If Jesus was only expressing His own views He would be sure to "toot His own horn" like other self-appointed wisemen and prophets. But to the contrary, Jesus always sought to give the glory unto His Father, the One Who sent Him (cf. Jn. 5:41-44). These Jewish rulers, who were supposed to "sit in Moses' seat" and teach the Word of God so that God might be glorified, rather taught and practiced religion in such a manner that they might be glorified. It was, in fact, their envy of the honor the people paid to Jesus that drove them to crucify Him (Matt. 27:18; Jn. 11:47-50, 12:17-19).

Verses 19-23 are still part of Jesus' efforts to get these Jews to receive His word as that which comes from God. They are judging His teaching superficially. Their judgment is prejudiced and Jesus continues by showing just how unrighteous their judgment is. They were supposed to be upholders of the Law of Moses. They pretended great reverence for the Law. Yet, in their hearts they were plotting to kill Jesus. Murder violates every moral principle given by God. He penetrated the outward sham of their righteousness and looked upon their heart (cf. Matt. 5:21-23).

The multitudes, of course, could see no outward signs of such drastic action. There were no soldiers, no one carrying weapons, no angry mobs as yet. This man from Galilee was beside himself, they reasoned.

But Jesus shows the inconsistency of their judgment. He had made a man whole on the Sabbath over a year ago (cf. Jn. 5:1-18) and for this they sought to kill Him. Now in view of the fact that the rulers had determined to kill Him for healing on the Sabbath, for this reason, He is going to show how they themselves set aside Sabbath regulations for much lesser expediencies.

The Pharisees were fond of making Sabbath rules (*not legislated by Mosaic law*) for the people to be burdened with, while they themselves used all sorts of devious means to get around their own traditions. Sabbath regulations were not for the rulers. They enforced a tradition that no one was to travel over seven-eighths of a mile on the Sabbath. But the rulers could not afford to be bound by this tradition. They built little palm-leaf booths all over the countryside and on the roads between the villages every seven-eighths of a mile apart. If business or some other reason demanded it, they could travel from city to city just by going seven-eighths of a mile, abiding in the booth for a while, and then traveling seven-eighths of a mile farther toward their destination.

So Jesus, the accused, now puts them on the defensive and shows them their unjust judgment by illustrating their regulations regarding circumcision (ceremonial rite).

According to the Law of Moses, every male child had to be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. Even if that eighth day fell on the Sabbath, the priests performed the rite of circumcision.

The argument of Jesus is, if they permit this *work* of circumcision to be done on the Sabbath that the Law of Moses be not broken—how can they be so unrighteous and prejudiced as to prohibit the healing of a man's body and soul on the Sabbath? God did not create man merely to keep Sabbath regulations, but the Sabbath was given for man's benefit. There are principles and actions which are higher and must supercede Sabbath regulations. God works on the Sabbath; He sends rain, sunshine, life and many other necessary things on the seventh day. So it was proper that the Son of God heal and teach on the Sabbath.

In verse 24 Christ makes the application. "Judge righteously—judge according to truth." Consider the real substance of the situation (cf. I Sam. 16:7). How different the atmosphere of many churches today if Christian people were not so quick to condemn others in those things which they themselves do. "Consistency, thou art indeed a gem!"

Incidentally, verse 24 is a positive command by Jesus that men judge! So often we are told that we *must not judge*, yet here our Lord requires it of us. There is, however, no contradiction between Matthew 7:1, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," and verse 24 here. In Matthew 7:1 Jesus condemns censorious judgment—unfair, hypocritical judgment motivated by an evil desire to hurt another's character. But in John 7:24 He commands that men use wisdom, discretion and honesty in their judgments of both men and doctrines. Followers of Christ, *must* judge religious doctrines and religious teachers (cf. Matt. 7:15-20; Jn. 10:4-5; Rom. 16:17-18; Thess. 3:14; I John 4:1-3; II John 7:11).

### *Quiz*

1. Why were the rulers amazed at Jesus' teaching?
2. Why is it necessary to have a desire to do God's will in order to understand the truth of His word?
3. What is the natural tendency of the teacher who seeks to glorify himself?
4. What attitude of heart by the Jewish rulers violated the Law of Moses?

5. How did the Jews, out of necessity, violate the Sabbath regulations?
6. Explain the principle laid down by Jesus in verse 24 concerning righteous judgment.
7. Have we a right to judge religious teachers?

## MIXED EMOTIONS CONCERNING JESUS

*Text 7:25-36*

25 Some therefore of them of Jerusalem said, Is not this he whom they seek to kill?

26 And lo, he speaketh openly, and they say nothing unto him. Can it be that the rulers indeed know that this is the Christ?

27 Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when the Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence he is.

28 Jesus therefore cried in the temple, teaching and saying, Ye both know me, and know whence I am; and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.

29 I know him; because I am from him, and he sent me.

30 They sought therefore to take him: and no man laid his hand on him, because his hour was not yet come.

31 But of the multitude many believed on him; and they said, When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than those which this man hath done?

32 The Pharisees heard the multitude murmuring these things concerning him; and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to take him.

33 Jesus therefore said, Yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto him that sent me.

34 Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, ye cannot come.

35 The Jews therefore said among themselves, Whither will this man go that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?

36 What is this word that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, ye cannot come?

*Queries*

- a. What did the people of Jerusalem mean when they said, "when the Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence he is."
- b. Did Jesus mean that they actually knew Him as the Messiah? (v. 28)
- c. When would they seek Him and not find Him?

*Paraphrase*

Some of the Jerusalemites, recognizing the profound wisdom of Jesus' words, said, Is not this the man whom the rulers seek to kill, yet behold, he speaks openly and boldly in the temple and they say not one word to Him. Some said, Can it be possible that our rulers have come to recognize this man as the Christ? Others replied, No, we know where this man comes from—when the Christ comes, no one will know where He comes from. Exasperated at their unbelief, Jesus cried aloud, as He taught in the temple and said, So you think you know me? and where I am from? To the contrary I have not come to you as a mere mortal—on my own authority. He who sent me is the One True God, and Him you do not know. I know Him because I came from His very presence and He sends me with His commission. The rulers, hearing Jesus' words, were eagerly seeking to arrest Him. However, in the Divine providence of God, His hour had not yet come, and no one laid a hand upon Him. Great numbers of the feast crowds were following Him and saying among themselves, When the Christ comes He will not do more signs than this man has done, will He? The Pharisees heard the crowd mumbling these things concerning Him and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple police in order that they might arrest Him. Then Jesus said, I am going to be with you only a little time more and then I go away unto Him that sent Me. You will look for Me but you will not find Me, and where I am you are not able to come. At this the Jews said among themselves, Where is this fellow about to go that we shall not be able to find him? Will He go to the Jews that are scattered in the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What does he mean when he says, You shall seek and shall not find me, and where I am you are not able to come?

*Summary*

There are many opinions concerning Jesus at the Feast. Some say He cannot possibly be the Christ—others say He must be—the rulers are determined to kill Him. Jesus claims unequivocally to be sent from the very presence of God and soon to return to the Father. Jesus then warns the Jews of a time when they will diligently seek Him but they will not be able to find Him.

*Comment*

In verse 25 John uses the word *Hierosolumton* (Greek for Jerusalemites) to make a distinction between the definitely hostile rulers of the Jews (7:15), the crowds of pilgrims from Galilee, Perea and

Judea (7:20), and these city dwellers or Jerusalemites. Why their opinion of Jesus was important enough for John to include it in an extremely abridged account of the Life of Christ we do not know. But notice that they seem to be well informed as to the premeditated intentions of the rulers, while the pilgrims who have come from afar are shocked at the suggestion of Jesus' impending execution (cf. John 7:19).

The Jerusalemites were shocked at the boldness with which Jesus openly denounced the rulers. Neither could they understand the hesitancy of the Jews to have Jesus silenced or arrested. Their amazed reaction is an impulsive, "Can it be that the rulers' have been persuaded that this man is the Christ?" To say, as some commentators, that the question is asked in derision does not suit the context. These city dwellers knew very well the attitude of the rulers in the past (cf. John 5:18). But now the Nazarene was even more bold and there was no official action being taken. They could only conclude that the rulers had recognized Jesus as the Messiah.

Yet, with a moment's deliberation, they knew this man could not be the Messiah. The rulers may have made a mistake but not these people—they knew where Jesus was from! Some of them knew that He was from Nazareth and some, perhaps, knew His family.

There seems to have been a popular theory that the Messiah, when He came, would appear suddenly and no one would know where He came from. The origin of this theory is obscured by vagueness, but there are some passages in the Jewish apocryphal books and Rabbinical writings such as this extract: "A roe appears and then is hid; so the Redeemer shall first appear and then be concealed, and then again be concealed and then again appear. So the Redeemer shall first appear and then be hid, and then, at the end of forty-five days, shall reappear, and cause manna to descend. (Barnes, Notes on the New Testament, Luke and John, Baker Book House, 1956, page 258.) There are also passages in the canonical books such as Isaiah 53:2, 8; Daniel 7:13; Malachi 3:1, from which the people may have started this theory. On the other hand, it appears that many of the Jews knew the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem (cf. Matthew 2:5 and Jn. 7:42). Jesus may have been correcting their theory in Matthew 24:23, when He said, "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not." And again in Matthew 24:26, "If they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth; behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not." When the "great tribulation" was to come upon Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the people in

that city would certainly look in every direction for a sudden appearance of the Messiah.

The origin of their false theories about the Messiah is of minor importance here. Of major importance is the self-willed rejection of Jesus by these Jerusalemites and His ironic condemnation of their ignorance of the One True God.

Their unbelief vexed the Lord's heart. He was exasperated, yet heartbroken; ironic in tongue, yet concerned for their souls. He cried out, "So you think you know me? and you know where I am from?" We believe Jesus was using irony and was not making a statement of fact. We further feel the words of Jesus are better punctuated interrogatively. Our most ancient manuscripts indicate that there were no punctuation marks at all in the original New Testament. But time after time Jesus said emphatically the people did *not* know Him (cf. John 3:11; 5:18, 37, 38; 6:42, 60-62; 8:19, 42, 43; 8:55-69; 14:9). Jesus was not averse to using irony (cf. Luke 13:31-32; Mark 7:9).

They knew His mother and brothers and sisters—they knew His boyhood home—but they did not know *Him*. They were like so many of our modernists today. They accepted Jesus as a wise teacher, but they knew too much to accept Him as the Divine Son of God.

Then Jesus declares that He comes not on His own authority (see our comments on John 5:32-32, Vol. I, pages 192-193). Jesus comes forth from the presence of the One True God. It is no wonder they reject Him as the Divine Messiah—they do not know the One True God. Jesus had said essentially the same thing six months before at the Passover in this same city (cf. John 5:37-44), and He repeats it again and again (cf. John 8:19, 55). They did not know God for the same reason the Gentiles of Romans 1:25, 28 did not know God—*they did not want to know God*. And for this reason, thousands of every generation do not know God—they refuse to have Him in their lives because His Word condemns their carnal minds and deeds.

In verse 29, Jesus claims to have come from the presence of the Father with a Divine commission. The Greek word *aposteilen*, from which we get *apostle*, means "sent with a commission, or by the authority of another." This is the word Jesus uses for *sent* in verse 29. Jesus is called "the Apostle . . . of our confession" in Hebrews 3:1.

The rulers of Jerusalem had sought to kill Jesus even before the close of His first year of ministry. At the second Passover of His public ministry they sought "the more" to kill Him (cf. John 5:18). Now they were trying again to take Him into custody (v. 30). But,

strangely enough, no one laid a hand on Him. The excuses His antagonists had for not taking action against Him at this time are not made known. Perhaps they were afraid of the multitudes of pilgrims who were in favor of His teaching (v. 31). One thing is certain, the proper time for His suffering within the Divine scheme had not yet arrived and the Providence of an omnipotent God overruled the designs of evil men.

In contrast to the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah by the Jerusalemites and the rulers, many of the pilgrims there for the Feast of Tabernacles were clamoring after His teaching. We agree with Hendriksen that the words in verse 31 "many believed on him" do not "necessarily indicate true, living faith." There were many in Galilee who believed in Him until the time of testing at the Sermon on the Bread of Life. Then multitudes forsook Him.

Their materialistic attitude is revealed in the remainder of verse 31. They were enamored of His wonderful miracles and signs. But six months later, in this same city, they, too, will forsake Him when they realize He is not to be a materialistic Messiah. The construction of the Greek in verse 31 shows the people to have asked the question expecting a negative answer. In other words, the pilgrims are asking each other and expecting confirmation of each other that the wonders and signs of this man can only mean He is the Messiah they are looking for.

The Pharisees, hearing the teeming multitudes mumbling among themselves that the Nazarene is the long looked for Messiah, must take drastic steps for a serious situation. The Pharisees and chief priests were bitter enemies, yet they united in this Satanic pact to destroy a common foe, Jesus the Nazarene.

In verses 33 and 34, Jesus speaks a solemn and fearful warning. Yet, He speaks it in a voice full of tenderness. They have decided secretly to kill Him, but He knows it and tries to tell them that He is aware of it. He warns them further that the time will come when they shall seek Him, but be unable to find Him. This does not mean that there would come a time when it would be impossible for these Jews to find Jesus unto salvation and forgiveness. We know, in fact, that many thousands did seek Him and find Him for salvation (cf. Acts 2, 3, 4 and 5). We believe Jesus refers to a time of great sorrow or tribulation when they would search desperately for the Messiah to lead, deliver and comfort them. Just such a time occurred in 70 A.D. at the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Matthew 24; Josephus' "Wars of

the Jews, Books V and VI). Jesus here warns that He will be unavailable for such leadership and deliverance. He will soon ascend unto His Father in Heaven (cf. John 13:33, 36-38).

The Jews glibly cast aside any seriousness to His warnings. They joke about His prophetic warnings. "Where will He go," they say, "to our people who are scattered throughout the world (the Dispersion)?" In sarcasm and ridicule they ask if He will go among the Gentiles and teach them. Little do they know how the gospel of Christ will be rejected by their countrymen and then taken by the apostles to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 13:46-52; 28:25-28).

The Jews are perplexed (v. 36). Their carnal minds are not able to comprehend that He was sent forth from the presence of Jehovah and will soon return to heaven. But amazingly, Jesus does not answer their question. He has more relevant teaching He wishes to give the multitudes. What He says in verses 37-39 will be more pertinent at this time than a discussion of eschatology, and so the Lord merely ignores their sarcastic question.

### *Quiz*

1. Where would the people get the idea that the appearance of the Messiah would be sudden and secret?
2. How do you think verse 28 should be punctuated?
3. What does the word *apostle* mean?
4. Why was Jesus not arrested at this time?
5. Do you think the belief of the multitudes was sincere or superficial?
6. When would the Jews seek the Messiah and be unable to find Him?

### DISCOURSE ON THE LIVING WATER

#### *Text 7:37-52*

37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water.

39 But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified.

40 Some of the multitude therefore, when they heard these words, said, This is of a truth the prophet.

41 Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, What, doth the Christ come out of Galilee?

42 Hath not the scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?

43 So there arose a division in the multitude because of him.

44 And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

45 The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why did ye not bring him?

46 The officers answered, Never man so spake.

47 The Pharisees therefore answered them, Are ye also led astray?

48 Hath any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees?

49 But this multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed.

50 Nicodemus saith unto them (he that came to him before, being one of them),

51 Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?

52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

### *Queries*

- a. How will the "rivers of living water" flow from the believer?
- b. Was the Spirit not given in some measure prior to Jesus' glorification?
- c. What criteria did the Pharisees use to judge the validity of Jesus' teachings?

### *Paraphrase*

On the last day of the great feast, Jesus stood and cried aloud, If any man thirsts after righteousness and everlasting life let him come unto Me and drink. For the man believing in Me, as the scripture has said, Out from his innermost being shall flow an abundant river of this life-giving water (He said this concerning the gift of the Holy Spirit which they that believed in Him were about to receive. For the gift of the Holy Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus was not yet glorified). Some of the multitude, having heard these words of Jesus, were saying, This is truly the Prophet. Others were saying, This is the Christ. Still others said, The Christ does not come out of Galilee, now does He? Have not the scriptures said that the Christ, when He comes, will come from the ancestry of David and from the village of Bethlehem where David was born? There arose a division therefore in the multitude on account of Jesus and His teaching. Some of them desired to arrest Him but no one forcibly laid their hands upon Him. The temple police even returned to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, Why have you not brought him? The officers answered, Never has a mere mortal spoken as this man is speaking! The Pharisees replied, He has not seduced you also, has he? Have any of the authorities or Pharisees approved his teaching? As

for this crowd of ignoramuses that do not know the law, they are accursed! Then Nicodemus, the one who came to Jesus before, being one of the Pharisees, said to them, Does our law permit a man to be condemned and sentenced without first giving him a hearing and hear his defense in order to determine the facts? The Pharisees replied, You are not also from Galilee are you, Nicodemus? Search where you will in the scriptures and you will see that the Prophet does not come from Galilee.

### *Summary*

The Lord's discourse on the living water touches the chords of hope in some who are ready to accept Him as the Messiah. Others, judging Him hastily and in ignorance of the facts, reject Him as the Christ. The Pharisees condemn everyone as ignoramuses who do not believe what they believe and reject what they reject.

### *Comment*

We have substituted the phrase, "on the last day of the great feast," in our paraphrase in lieu of the traditional ". . . on the last day, the great day of the feast." Josephus (*Antiquities* 3:10:4) states that this feast is "the holiest and greatest feast." We believe that the Greek word *megas* (great) more appropriately applies to the whole feast rather than to any particular day. This was precisely the way the Bodmer II papyrus (P66) read originally—"on the last day of the great feast." The manuscript was evidently changed in later years from its original reading to the traditional reading.

The most joyous of all festive seasons in Israel was that of the Feast of Tabernacles. It fell on a time of year when the hearts of the people would naturally be full of thankfulness, gladness and expectancy. Edersheim says of the three great annual feasts: "the first [Passover] . . . spoke, in the presentation of the first sheaf, of the founding of the church; the second [Pentecost] of its harvesting, when the church in its present state should be presented as two leavened wave-loaves; while the third [Tabernacles] pointed forward to the full harvest in the end, when 'in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things . . .'" (*The Temple, its Ministry and Services*, p. 269, pub. Eerdmans, by Alfred Edersheim.) The Rabbis, in many passages of the Mishnah, single this feast out from all the other feasts. This feast closed the sacred festive cycle for the year. It very appropriately followed the Day of Atonement by only five days. At the Day of Atonement the sin of Israel was removed

and her covenant relationship to God was restored. Thus a sanctified and cleansed nation could keep a holy feast of harvest joy unto the Lord. In Zechariah's prophecy of the new world it was this Feast of Tabernacles which was to be celebrated all over the world (Zechariah 14:16-19). Finally, more sacrifices were offered at this feast than either of the other two annual feasts.

Some of the background of the ceremonies during this feast will make Jesus' words in verses 37 and 38 much more significant. Each day of the feast the people came with palm branches and limbs of willows to the temple. They held these branches over the great altar of burnt offering until they formed a sort of roof and the people marched around the altar. While the people were thus marching, one of the priests went, according to the ceremony, to the pool of Siloam and filled a golden pitcher with about two pints of water. As he returned through the Water Gate, the people chanted Isaiah 12:3 . . . "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." The priest walked up the steps to the great altar and began to pour the water out into the altar and the people began to sing the Hallel (Psalms 113-118) to the accompaniment of the flute.

Perhaps this is the very moment Jesus cried out, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." Jesus explained the deep significance of the ceremony and claimed to be Himself the One through Whom they would find fulfillment of its promises.

To the people this ceremony was both a prayer of thanksgiving and supplication for the rains which brought the harvest. It was also a memorial ceremony looking back to the water which sprang from the rock when their forefathers were in the wilderness. It was also understood as a prophetic-type ceremony in which they depicted the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. The Talmud says, "Why is the name of it called, The drawing out of water? Because of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, according to what is said: 'With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.' "

Jesus must have meant "the scriptures in general teach that from within the believer shall flow rivers of living water." No scholar yet has been able to determine that His words (verse 38) are an exact quotation from any specific Old Testament passage. These are some

of the Old Testament passages to be studied in connection with verses 37 and 38: Psalms 46:4-5; Isaiah 44:3, 55:1, 58:11; Ezekiel 47:1-12; Zechariah 14:8.

In John 4:14 Jesus promises the believer a never-failing source of life, strength and joy. The living water promised to the woman at the well was to be a "well of living water springing up unto eternal life." This is figurative language to describe the continual renewing work of the Holy Spirit so long as He is allowed to dwell within the believer (cf. Isa. 40:31; II Cor. 4:16; Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10; Titus 3:5). But here in John 7:37-39 Jesus uses figurative language to show that the living water will also flow out from the "inward man" of the believer. The Christian will naturally become a source of life to others. Jesus is the Water of Life and believers become streams of life-giving water pouring forth to those thirsting for Life, the believers being ever supplied from the Source themselves. Jesus is the Light of the world and believers are also lights (Matthew 5:14). One only need review the book of Acts and especially the life of Paul to see examples of those who have drunk deeply of the Water of Life and become rivers of living water themselves.

The indwelling Spirit of Christ is meant in verse 39. The gift of the Holy Spirit which is promised to every Christian (Acts 2:38, 5:32); without which no man belongs to Christ or may have eternal life (Romans 8:8:1-17). This measure of the Holy Spirit was not given before the resurrection and ascension of Christ. The Holy Spirit was given to individuals in the Old Dispensation on an arbitrary basis by God (I Pet. 1:10-11; II Pet. 1:20-21). A few individuals out of God's chosen people were given the Spirit, e.g., Samson; Samuel; etc. Even those believers who repented and were baptized at John the Baptist's preaching were not given the indwelling Spirit. We have an instance of the rebaptism of certain of John's disciples (Acts 19:1-7) into the name of the Lord Jesus because John's baptism carried with it no promise of the Holy Spirit. Jesus distributed the powers of the Holy Spirit as He saw fit while He lived on earth (cf. Matthew 10:1). But while Christ dwelt among men in the flesh it was not possible for Him to send the Comforter to each believer. As Westcott says, "The necessary limitations of Christ's historical presence with the disciples excluded that realization of His abiding presence which followed on the Resurrection" (The Gospel According to St. John, by B. F. Westcott, p. 279, Eerdmans). Jesus says much the same Himself (cf. John 14:17, 16:4-5, 16:7). Jesus is spoken of as being glorified in a num-

ber of ways—through His works, through His disciples, in His death, in His resurrection, in His exaltation to the right hand of the Father (cf. John 11:4; 12:16, 23, 28; 13: 31; 14:13; 15:8; 17:4, 10; Acts 3:13).

When Jesus cried aloud in the temple courts it was probably right at the moment when the worshippers were at the highest pitch of interest in the ceremony. His words, being highly significant for the moment, had instantaneous effect. Many of the worshippers were ready to impulsively declare, "This is truly The Prophet, the one our father Moses promised in the Law" (cf. Deut. 18:15). Others were just as ready to declare Him "Christ!" But their emotional instability and their ignorance is betrayed. They do not even know that Jesus was actually born in Bethlehem—they hastily make their judgment of Him assuming that He originated in Galilee.

They were correct in two points! The Scriptures do say that the Christ is to be born in David's birthplace, Bethlehem (cf. I Sam. 16:1-4 Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Micah 5:2). And the Scriptures also say that Christ comes from the seed of David. Scholars are not agreed on the lineage of Mary. Some say Christ gets His Davidic lineage from Joseph. But this writer is persuaded that Mary was a descendant of David (cf. Sam. 7:12; Acts 2:30; Rom. 1:3; II Tim. 2:8; Rev. 5:5). Scripture tells us that Jesus was born, according to the flesh, of the seed of David, and Jesus' human nature was not derived from Joseph, for Jesus was born of the *virgin* Mary.

Some of the worshipping pilgrims appear to have been actually hostile. Perhaps they were angered by Jesus' interruption of the ceremonies—perhaps at His silence in denying to be the Christ (which was really a claim). How could a lowly Galilean be the Christ—he was guilty of blasphemy. Some wanted Him arrested. There were temple officers already there, sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Him. But they returned empty-handed. Their superiors demanded a reason for their failure. The officers' reply would seem rather ludicrous were it not for other instances where people were overawed by the words, countenance, or mere presence of Jesus (cf. Matt. 7:28-29; Luke 5:8; John 18:6). What restrained these hardened temple police—was it the eloquence of Jesus? His personality? Or the authority with which He spoke and carried Himself? Perhaps all three.

But the Pharisees were not the least impressed by such a report. These ignorant police and the ignorant masses might think the Galilean to be eloquent, persuasive and speaking with authority, but the Pharisees knew him to be a sinister character, seeking to lead the masses astray. The scribes and Pharisees spent practically their whole lives in minute study of the Scriptures and the traditions of the fathers. The more Scriptures one could quote, the more Rabbinical authorities and traditions one could quote, the wiser and holier one became. And so the multitudes who could not quote much Scripture or traditions were ignorant and sinful. Thus the ignorant masses were to follow unhesitatingly the decisions and opinions of the religious experts—the Pharisees. This is one reason Jesus told men who were following the Pharisees that they were "blind men following blind guides . . ." (cf. Matt. 15:14).

The Pharisees have just boasted that none of their number believes in this Galilean and now one of their own number, Nicodemus, speaks up in defense of Jesus. The Pharisees have just boasted that they were the great students and interpreters of the Law and now one of their own number points out that they are violating that Law.

We have discussed the personality of Nicodemus in Volume I, page 93. This incident shows that he was not a craven coward. He was speaking in defense of a hated enemy of his colleagues. They had sworn to kill the Galilean and were not at all reticent in expressing their hatred for Him and His followers. Nicodemus was reminding these arrogant, self-righteous men that they were violating their own Law.

And violating the Law they were indeed! The law required that justice be done, and impartially. Every man was to have the right to fair, and legal trial upon being accused. Every accusation had to be established at the mouth of two or more witnesses (cf. Ex. 23:1-2; Lev. 19:15-18; Deut. 1:16; 19:15-18).

Although Nicodemus was ready to speak out for a fair trial for Jesus, this passage (7:50-52) leaves one with the feeling that Nicodemus could have been more bold and direct and testified openly his persuasion that Jesus was a "teacher come from God" (John 3:2)—even that He might be The Prophet or the Messiah. Nicodemus quoted the relevant legal maxims and when his august colleagues taunted him with having a connection with the Galilean rabble, he said no more.

Many Christians today often find themselves in much the same situation. There comes the "moment of truth" in every Christian's

life—and more than once—when he must openly and boldly witness for Jesus or be reduced to an uncomfortable and ashamed silence. Let every follower of Jesus remember His warning, "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32-33).

A final note in the field of textual criticism. Both the King James Version and the American Standard Version texts read, in the last sentence of verse 52, "Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth *no prophet*." (Italics mine.) The Bodmer II (P66) manuscript places the definite article before "prophet" in verse 52 making it read thus: ". . . *the prophet* does not arise out of Galilee." This relieves the chief priests and Pharisees of making an egregious error, for there were prophets who came from Galilee, such as Jonah (II Kings 14:25; Jonah 1:1), and perhaps Hosea and Nahum. It is doubtful that the scribes and Pharisees would make such an error as the K. J. V. and the A. S. V. would have them commit by saying "*no prophet* ariseth out of Galilee." Furthermore, the P66 rendering would more aptly fit the contextual discussion which concerned "*the prophet*" and "*the Christ*."

### Quiz

1. How important was the Feast of Tabernacles to the Jews?
2. What was the most significant part of the ceremonies connected with this feast?
3. Name four Old Testament passages which speak of "living water."
4. What is the "living water" within believers—and how does it flow out from within them?
5. What measure of the Holy Spirit was not given prior to Jesus' glorification?
6. Why could the Holy Spirit not be given before Jesus was glorified?
7. What law was the Pharisees violating in their accusations and actions against Jesus?

**EXPOSITORY SERMON NO. SEVEN**

**SYMPTOMS OF UNBELIEF**

John 7

*Introduction*

**I. FEAST OF TABERNACLES**

- A. Describe the Feast: its meaning, its ceremonies, the rejoicing, the spectacle of it all (cf. comments Chap. 7, pgs. 15, 16, 17).

**II. OMINOUS SHADOWS OF UNBELIEF CAST UPON THE FEAST**

- A. In spite of all the joy, ritual and splendor of the feast, its significance was ruined by the manifestations of unbelief. Ugly infidelity cast a pall over the whole joyous occasion and obscured the real lesson behind the feast. This festival was to remind the Jews of ancestral trust in God . . . it was to teach them of the Fatherly care of Jehovah in the wilderness journeys of their forefathers.
- B. But when Jesus faced the people here with His claims it becomes evident that Judaism is rotten to the core with unbelief.

*Discussion*

**I. UNBELIEF OF JESUS' BROTHERS, vs. 1-9**

Notice that they admitted His supernatural character. They admitted that He performed miracles. But it says of them that "they did not believe on him." How can men admit the supernatural nature of Jesus and disbelieve in Him? Is such a contradiction possible? Remember the rulers of the Jews in Acts 4:15-16 who admitted the miracles of the apostles and could not deny them, but they refused to accept the message of the apostles. His brothers would not accept Him as a spiritual King over their wills and hearts. THERE IS THE CRUCIAL POINT. One may get many people today to say they believe in Christ and God and the Bible—but they do not want God's Word to rule over their minds, hearts and actions. This attitude is very prevalent among people today. You may see such people any Lord's Day, washing their cars, raking leaves, going to the lake or some other mockery of God. You may see them at the football games sitting on hard seats in bitter cold, screaming their lungs out, while twenty-two boys run back and forth over a field with a piece of pigskin. But these people can't get up on Sunday morning and come to church and sing and

worship the Lord who willingly hung on Calvary's cross for their sins. Oh, God, have mercy upon their souls! His brothers betrayed their weakness. Jesus told them that the world did not hate them as it did Him. The Lord is plainly indicating that their godly witness was weak—they were friends of the world, but enemies of God (Jas. 4:4-5). They had the worldly outlook. They mockingly betrayed their skepticism by chiding Jesus for staying in Galilee when He could be in Jerusalem doing His miracles and getting a worldly following toward His mission as Messiah. Remember the thousands of Jews as they walked the wilderness and beheld all the miracles of God, but murmured to return to the leeks and garlic of Egypt.

## II. MISTAKING ERUDITION FOR HOLINESS, vs. 15-16; 47-49

Jesus had never attended the Jerusalem schools of the Pharisees. Immediately they crossed Him off their list as an unlearned ignoramus from the hills of Galilee. At once they threw up a barricade of self-willed prejudice against anything Jesus had to say. In verses 47-49 the Pharisees show that they believe scholarship and law-keeping is the way to piety. There are many self-named "scholars" today who show the same symptoms of disbelief by attacking the Bible and Jesus as unphilosophical, unscientific and irrational. They demythologize the Scriptures—they attack fundamentalist preachers and small preacher training schools (loyal Bible Colleges). These "scholars" claim the real wisdom is to be found in their universities where the Bible is studied, not as the only supernatural revelation from God, but as a work of man-conceived literature contemporary with Buddhism, Mohammedanism and other Oriental religions. Paul faced the same situation in Corinth. Christians there were elevating the wisdom of men above a growth in knowledge of God's word. The Corinthians were placing value on eloquence, reason and rhetoric rather than the "foolishness of the cross." Great numbers of preachers today are too scientific and too reasonable to try to change men's hearts and convert them through preaching the gospel of atonement by the blood of Jesus Christ. To such the Gospel is outmoded. Scholarship and the evolutionary attainment of man now demands the preaching of a "social gospel"—raising the standards of living, one world government, etc. On the other hand, there are orthodox believers who maintain that study leads to salvation. They know the Book from "kivver to kivver" and have read it all the way through so many times. The Pharisees studied—memorized the Scriptures frontward and backward. They

counted the words, letters and paragraphs and knew every jot and tittle. But although they knew the Scriptures as no other men have known them since, they could not recognize the Messiah when He came (cf. John 5:39-47).

### III. UNWILLINGNESS TO DO GOD'S WILL, v. 17

When the Jews rejected Jesus because they supposed Him to be unlearned and uneducated, He posed a statement that contains all the wisdom and supernatural insight of One who is able to read their very deepest meditations: "If any man willetteth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (v. 17). They were unwilling to do God's will—they had not the love of God in them (cf. John 5:42). Knowledge, as such, never produces love. No matter how much we know *about* Christ, our knowledge alone will never produce obedience. A certain amount of understanding and knowing God comes *only* from obedience or the desire to obey His will (cf. I John 2:3-5). See also John 8:47. This same stubborn unwillingness to do God's will led the Pharisees to reject the counsel of God, refusing to be baptized of John the Baptist (Luke 7:29-30). If we are not willing to do God's will, we shall desire to do Satan's will! There is no middle ground, no neutrality (cf. John 8:44). There must be that surrender—that giving up—of one's will to where one desires to do God's will. The man who wills to do God's will is the man Luke calls the "man of an honest and good heart." The fundamental equation is, then, (1) knowledge, (2) love, (3) obedience. Yet each of these three principles complement one another and interact. Knowledge of Jesus leads to love and obedience, while on the other hand, obedience leads to a full-grown knowledge of Christ and a more perfect love of Him (cf. Eph. 4:11-16). We never quite grasp the full significance and import of some of the more profound passages of Scripture until we have obeyed them or experienced them (like Job and David). A lifetime of studying the Bible is to no avail if a man's will and desire is out of harmony with God's will. Paul said the same thing in I Corinthians 2:6—3:9. The rebellious, carnal-minded man cannot discern the things of the Spirit, because the worldly-minded man has no desire to *do* God's will. AND THIS IS JUST THE REASON SO MANY PEOPLE IN OUR DAY SAY THEY CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE. THEY HAVE NO DESIRE TO OBEY IT—NO DESIRE TO LIVE LIKE THE BIBLE DEMANDS THEY LIVE. They cannot understand the New Testament concept of stewardship because they do not want to give

like the Bible demands. They cannot understand the Bible concept of worship and personal witnessing because they willeth not to do God's will!

#### IV. PREJUDICED AND SUPERFICIAL JUDGMENT, vs. 18-24

These Jews judged all teaching by how men heaped plaudits upon the teacher. They judged a man's teaching as to whether he sought honor and prestige and applause of others or not. Jesus did not seek His own glory, but the glory of the Father only. They also judged a man's teachings by the standards they themselves had set up. They had judged Jesus as a blasphemer and one possessed of demons because He had cured a man on the Sabbath and had broken their traditions. Jesus shows them just how superficial their judgment was. They circumcised babies on the Sabbath in order that the Law of Moses be not broken (in spite of their traditions). Now if they permitted this work of circumcision to be done, how could they be so shallow and unrighteous and unmerciful as to prohibit the healing of a man's body and bringing him to faith on the Sabbath? You see, making laws where God never made them is also evidence of unbelief! Judging others by man-made standards and by superficial, shallow prejudices is a symptom of unbelief.

#### *Conclusion*

- I. HAVE YOU ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS OF UNBELIEF?
  - A. Believing His supernatural character but not allowing Him to rule your heart?
  - B. Mistaking knowledge or personal merit for holiness?
  - C. Unwillingness to *do* God's will?
  - D. Prejudiced and superficial judgment?
- II. IF YOU DO, YOU ARE HARBORING SOMETHING MORE DEADLY THAN CANCER!
  - A. Flee to the Great Physician . . . partake of the Balm of Christ.
  - B. By His stripes you may be healed . . . ONLY TRUST HIM.
- III. IF YOU HAVE NOT OBEYED THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION, WHY NOT NOW?
  - A. A father once had a boy who liked to have his own way. He said to him one day, "Son, you ought not to want your own way—you ought to want God's way." After thinking a while, the son said, "Father, if I choose the will of the Lord and go His way because I *want* to, don't I still have my own way?"  
IF WE LEARN THAT SECRET, WE HAVE LEARNED THE WHOLE SECRET OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. LET HIM HAVE HIS WAY WITH THEE . . . NOW!

## CHAPTER EIGHT

Chapter Eight, omitting the interpolation of John 7:53—8:11, is a continuation of the Lord's discourses at the Feast of Tabernacles. This commentary will omit printing the text of John 7:53—8:11 for new textual evidence now makes it even more certain that this passage was not a part of the original text.

Our earliest and best Greek manuscripts do not contain this passage. Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex Sinaiticus (Aleph) and Codex Washingtonianus (W)—three of the most important MSS—do not give the slightest indication that the story of the woman taken in adultery is part of the original. In fact, no Greek manuscript prior to the ninth century (with the exception of the bilingual manuscript Codex Bezae) has the story. None of the church fathers who wrote in Greek commented on this passage until the twelfth century, although many of them made reference to the passages which immediately precede and follow it.

A recent manuscript discovery (also in the Bodmer library) of a Coptic version of the Bible in the Bohairic dialect, contains the Gospel of John which is dated by its editor in the fourth century (300-400 A.D.). Passages which textual scholars have previously recognized as critically suspect (John 5:3b-4, etc.) and the passage under discussion (John 7:53—8:11) are not present in this manuscript.

The most crucial evidence against this spurious passage, however, comes from the Bodmer II Papyrus (P66). It is highly significant that this earliest complete text of John's Gospel does not have the account of the adulterous woman. There is no mark or hint at either 7:53 or 8:12 of this MS that either scribe or corrector knew anything additional belonging here (see Vol. I, p. 13, and Vol. II, Special Study No. One, pgs. 11, 12 for the value of Bodmer II in textual criticism).

In many of the late Greek manuscripts which do have the story, it is marked so as to inform the reader that it is an insertion. Furthermore, the manuscripts which have the account vary so much from each other in wording that there are at least sixty different readings. Someone has determined that this is an average of five variants for each verse of the twelve-verse unit—a much higher average than is found in the rest of John's Gospel. The account also occurs in other locations in the New Testament. Some have it after John 7:36; others after John 21:24; still others after Luke 21:38.

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

8:12-20

The style and vocabulary of the story in Greek are quite different from that which John employs in the rest of the book. It does not in any way contribute to John's account, but to the contrary, disrupts the context. How meaningful the two declarations of Jesus become—the "Water of Life" and the "Light of the World"—when we understand their setting coincident with the last day of the great Feast of Tabernacles. But if the unit 7:53—8:11 remains in the text of John's Gospel, then both the incident of the adulterous woman and the discourse on "light" occur at the Temple *on the day after the feast has closed*, for 8:2 reads, "Early in the morning he came again to the temple."

We, therefore, do not accept the passage John 7:53—8:11 as part of John's Gospel and have omitted it from our commentary. We continue our outline as follows:

II. The Word Manifested to the Jews and their rejection of Him,  
1:19—12:50

D. Public Ministry, Third Year

2. Later Judean Ministry, 7:1—10:21, The Feast of Tabernacles

- a. The Light of the World, 8:12-20
- b. Fatal Unbelief, 8:21-30
- c. Truth brings Freedom, 8:31-36
- d. Abraham's Children, 8:37-40
- e. Satan's Children, 8:41-47
- f. Christ Defamed, 8:48-59

## THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

*Text 8:12-20*

12 Again therefore Jesus spake unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest witness of thyself; thy witness is not true.

14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye know not whence I come, or whither I go.

15 Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.

16 Yea and if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

17 Yea and in your law it is written, that the witness of two men is true.

18 I am he that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

19 They said therefore unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye know neither me, nor my Father; if ye knew me, ye would know my Father also.

20 These words spake he in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man took him; because his hour was not yet come.

### *Queries*

- a. What is the "light of life"?
- b. Does Jesus contradict Himself on the matter of judging?  
(vs. 15, 16.)
- c. What is the significance of the mention of the Treasury?

### *Paraphrase*

Again Jesus addressed the people, saying, I am the Light of the world. The man who believes, obeys and follows Me will not wander, being lost in the darkness; but he will possess The Light which is life. At this the Pharisees said to Him, You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is therefore not valid. Jesus replied, My testimony is valid even though I do testify concerning Myself; because I know by direct knowledge where I come from and where I am going. But you are wilfully ignorant of where I came from and where I am going. You are judging me according to your worldly standards for a Messiah. I am not now primarily concerned with judging anyone. Yet even if I am judging, my judgment is true, because I am not alone in my judgment as a mere man but I am One with the Father who sent me. And in your own law, which you as Israelites are sole possessors, it is written, that the testimony of two men is valid. I am bearing witness concerning Myself and my Father who sent me is also bearing witness concerning Me. Then they said to Him, Where is your Father? Jesus answered, You know neither me nor my Father; if you knew me as the Son of God, you would also know my Father. These words spake Jesus near the Treasury as He taught in the Temple. Yet no one arrested Him, because His hour had not yet come.

### *Summary*

Jesus claims to be the Messiah—Light of the world. The Jews reject His testimony. Jesus aduces the Father's testimony on His behalf.

### *Comment*

Jesus' discourse on the Light of the world here naturally connects with the former discourse on the Living Water (7:37-52). The significance of His claim to be the Light of the world is related to the

ceremony of lighting the great candelabra during the Feast of Tabernacles. Great candelabra with four receptacles for oil were placed in the inner court. The candelabra were so tall that the priests climbed ladders to light the oil. When they were lighted, the priests and the people "danced before the Lord" with joy. This was in commemoration of the blessing of the pillar of fire which led their fathers in the wilderness. What that pillar of fire was to Israel (leading them through darkness and the wilderness), Jesus is for the whole world. To the ignorant and unbelieving His light brings wisdom and faith; to the persecuted and downtrodden saint His light brings comfort and hope.

There are also the Old Testament prophecies which depict the Messiah as the Light of the World (cf. Isa. 9:1; 42:6; 49:6; 60:3; Mal. 4:2; Lk. 2:32). The Pharisees were well aware of these prophecies and when Jesus claimed to be the Light of the world, they understood Him to be claiming to be the promised Messiah. For a discussion of the relationship between light and life and darkness, see our comments on John 1:4, Vol. I, pp. 23, 24.

To follow Christ means to trust and obey Him. We follow His words (Jn. 10:4) and His example (I Pet. 2:21; Jn. 13:15, 34, 35). When we place such complete trust in His Person and His precepts, we possess the Light which not only illuminates our life but is the very source of Life itself.

The Pharisees are alert to the inference that Jesus is claiming deity for Himself. They immediately reject His claims on the basis of insufficient evidence.

His answer (v. 14) is that His testimony alone ought to be accepted, for in reality He is not alone (v. 16). But He has come from a realm of existence where they can know nothing except they receive His testimony as true. Barnes illustrates it very well: "As they had not seen and known these things, they were not qualified to judge. An ambassador from a foreign court knows the will and purposes of the sovereign who sent him, and is competent to bear witness of it. The court to which he is sent has no way of judging but by his testimony, and he is therefore competent to testify in the case. All that can be demanded is that he give his credentials that he is appointed, and this Jesus had done both by the nature of His doctrine and His miracles." (Barnes' Notes on the N.T., Luke & John, p. 226.) Compare also this verse (v. 14) with John 5:31 (see our notes on Jn. 5:31, Vol. I, pp. 192-193).

In verses 15 and 16 Jesus goes to the heart of the problem. The Pharisees and the people judged Him after the flesh—that is, they compared His earthly appearance with their ideas of a worldly Messiah. His meekness, poverty and apparent powerlessness did not fulfill their ideal. Theirs was a superficial judgment and one made with minds closed to truth by preconceived ideas (cf. our comments on John 7:24, Vol. II, p. 24). In the Lord's emphatic statement, "I judge no man," He seems to contradict Himself in John 9:39, "For judgment came I into this world . . ." But the apparent contradiction vanishes when we understand that His primary purpose for coming into the world (salvation) necessitates self-condemnation upon all who reject Him (the only source of salvation). (See our notes on John 3:17-18, Vol. I, pp. 112-113.) Yet even if He does pronounce a judgment (as He apparently did in Matt. 11:20-24 upon the unrepentant cities; upon Jerusalem in Matt. 24:15-28), His judgment is just, valid and certain for He is One with the Father (see notes on John 5:19-23, Vol. I, pp. 184-186). What Jesus is saying is that His testimony and judgments are not made by Himself alone as would be the case with any other man, but He and the Father are perfectly united—their words and wills are in complete accord.

This is what He boldly and plainly declares in verses 17 and 18. The law to which He refers is in Deut. 17:6. He says "your law" because the law of Moses was exclusively given to the Jews and these scholars should have interpreted it correctly. They should have accepted this double testimony of Father and Son (for the testimony of the Father concerning the Son, see our comments on John 5:36-38, Vol. I, pp. 196-197).

Their question, "Where is your father?" was undoubtedly couched in sarcasm. He had made it plain enough for them to understand that His Father was the Invisible Jehovah. His answer to them is also very plain and candid. They did not know the Father and therefore they did not know His Son. They did not know the Son and therefore they could not know the Father (cf. John 5:37-43; 8:47). The *only* way to know God is to know Jesus Christ (cf. John 1:18; 14:6-11; Matt. 11:27).

Why would John mention the fact that Jesus was near the Treasury when He uttered these tremendous claims? Because the Temple Treasury was very near the council chambers of the Sanhedrin. It is possible that this group of men, now dedicated to kill Him, could hear Him as He taught. But no one arrested Him because in the Divine scheme of redemption, His hour had not yet come (see our comments on John 7:30, Vol. II, p. 29).

*Quiz*

1. How does the discourse on the Light of the World relate to the ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles?
2. How does the discourse on the Light of the World relate to the Old Testament?
3. In what two ways should we "follow" Jesus?
4. Why should men be expected to accept Jesus' witness to Himself?
5. How were the Pharisees judging Jesus?
6. Does Jesus contradict Himself in the matter of judging others?
7. How may we truly know the Father?

## FATAL UNBELIEF

*Text 8:21-30*

- 21 He said therefore again unto them, I go away, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sin: whither I go, ye cannot come.
- 22 The Jews therefore said, Will he kill himself, that he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come?
- 23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.
- 24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.
- 25 They said therefore unto him, Who art thou? Jesus said unto them, Even that which I have also spoken unto you from the beginning.
- 26 I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you; howbeit he that sent me is true; and the things which I heard from him, these speak I unto the world.
- 27 They perceived not that he spake to them of the Father.
- 28 Jesus therefore said, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things.
- 29 And he that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to him.
- 30 As he spake these things, many believed on him.

*Queries*

- a. What is the consequence of dying in sin?
- b. Why say "I am from above . . . ye are from beneath"?
- c. How would the Jews know that Jesus was the Christ after they had "lifted Him up"?

*Paraphrase*

So He said again to them, I am going away, and in your hour of death you will search for the Messiah and His salvation, but you will die in and under the sentence of your sin. Where I am going it is not possible for you as an unforgiven sinner to come. At these words the Jews began to ask among themselves, He is not going to kill Himself and be cast into hell, is He? Is that why He says, Where I am going it is not possible for you to come?

Jesus replied, You are from below; I am from above. You in your unregenerate nature, are of this condemned world. My nature is divine and I am not of this world. That is why I told you that you will die in and under the sentence of your sins. For if you do not trust and believe in Me as the Messiah and obey my words and become spiritually regenerate, you will die condemned in your sins.

The Jews said to Him, Just who are you anyway? Jesus replied, I am exactly the One of whom I have been telling you all along. I have many things to say and many judgments to bring concerning this nation. But, in spite of your rejection and unbelief, what I say is true and shall come to pass because He who sent Me is true and whatsoever I have heard from Him these things only do I speak to the world. They did not perceive that He was speaking to them of the Father so Jesus added, When you have crucified the Son of Man, then you will have evidence that I am the One sent from God and that of my own authority I do nothing but I say exactly that which My Father Jehovah has taught Me. And Jehovah who sent Me is with Me constantly. He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing unto Him.

As He said these things many believed on Him.

*Summary*

Jesus patiently warns these Jews again that their rejection of Him will be fatal for them. By their unbelief and disobedience they remain unregenerate and unable to follow Him into the presence of God. They will die with the wrath of God abiding upon them. When they shall have crucified the Man of Nazareth they will realize they have slain God's Son, but too late for many of them.

*Comment*

Behold the longsuffering and patience of the Son of God! He had been pleading with this nation and these people for over two years. He gave them signs and wonders to substantiate His claims. But again and again they blatantly repudiated them. Especially was this true here at the Feast of Tabernacles (cf. John 7:27, 30, 32, 35-36; 8:13, 19).

So He patiently explains to them once more concerning His divine nature and the absolute necessity of believing in Him. In verse 21 the Lord looks forward to His "exodus" from this world and His return to the right hand of the Father. There will come a time when many of the Jews now standing about Him will cry out in the hour of their death for the Messiah and the prophesied deliverance of the Messiah. Such a time actually came in 70 A.D. at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman legions. Millions of Jews were besieged within the walls of that city at Passover-time and suffered indescribable torments. Josephus, a Jewish general then captive of the Roman army, wrote a history of this terrible conflict, and said the lamentations of the people within the city exceeded even the noise of the battle! He also relates that there were many false Christs in the city at that time. People followed them in desperation, hoping until the terrible end for a Messiah to deliver them from the Romans. But many thousands died "in their sin." His words would be applicable, of course, to any of these Jews who, having come by any manner or at any time to their hour of death seeking the Messiah, had rejected Jesus as the Christ. Christ's warning here is for all mankind. There is only one end for men who deny Christ. They shall die in their sin.

What a fearful alternative to choose! To "die in one's sin" is to enter into eternity with the wrath of God abiding upon one (cf. John 3:36). It is to be called before the Righteous Judge of all the earth to pay the penalty decreed by this Judge for one's own sin. Sin *must* be paid for (cf. Rom. 2:3-16). The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews illustrates from the reality of history that punishment for sin is inevitable *if* we neglect so great a salvation as may be found by faith and obedience to Christ (Heb. 2:1-4). Those men and women who are even now rejecting the Son of God are "judged already" (cf. John 3:18) and are "dead [separated eternally] in their sins" (cf. Eph. 2:1-2). When Christ returns, all the unrepentant and disobedient shall be sent away into everlasting punishment (cf. II Thess. 1:7-9).

And so these self-satisfied, unregenerate Jews would die "in their sins" and suffer the second death because of their sins. They would be eternally separated from the God whom they professed to worship. Jesus said plainly enough that they would not be able to go where He was going—namely, to the Father. Why, then, could they not understand? Why the sarcastic answer, "Will he kill himself, that he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come?"

Jesus both explains His warning and the reason for their misunderstanding in verses 23 and 24. They could never follow Him into heaven and the presence of Jehovah God because they were unregenerate. They were at enmity with God—rebellious and unrepentant. They were, in fact, children of the devil—"sons of disobedience" (cf. John 8:44). Christ plainly told a Judean Pharisee many months before this that a new birth was necessary for every man who wished to become a part of Jehovah's kingdom (cf. John 3:1-21). They were degenerate and their hearts, minds, desires, goals and actions had not been changed; they had not the love of God in them (cf. John 5:42) and thus they deliberately misunderstood and misrepresented every great spiritual truth uttered by Jesus. They were so wise they were foolish. What they needed to do was to become "fools" in order to partake innocently and open-mindedly of the wisdom of God (cf. I Cor. 2:1-16; 3:18-21). If men are to understand the wisdom of God they must have "honest and good hearts" (cf. Luke 8:15); they must "seek the things that are above" (cf. Col. 3:1-4; Phil. 4:8); they must "will to do the will of Christ" and then they will begin to understand (cf. John 7:17); and they must accept and rely upon the infallibly inspired revelation of God as the only true source of wisdom (I Cor. 2:1-16; John 8:31-32). Such men these Pharisees refused to be and thus their ludicrous question, "Will he kill himself . . ." etc.

They are actually mocking Jesus, for the Jews the deepest and darkest recesses of the regions of Gehenna claimed all those who committed suicide. Trusting in their religious heritage as sons of Abraham, they were positive they would not be able to follow this Nazarene to Gehenna. According to certain Jewish traditions, father Abraham will sit at Hell's gates and will not permit one son of Abraham to fall into its pits.

Hendriksen seems to have caught the spirit of the Jews in their question of verse 25 when he writes that they were "probably thinking that the best defense is an offense"; they attack Him with the scornful, "You, just who are you?" They are not interested in knowing who He is, for they have already settled that matter in their hearts, but they sneeringly demand, "How do you come to assume a role like this?" The Lord's answer to this jeer is not easy to interpret and is discussed at length by the various commentators. Essentially there are two conflicting interpretations: (a) "I am altogether, essentially or exactly, that which I am telling you from the beginning"; or, (b)

"How is it that I should even speak to you at all!" We are inclined to favor the first because it seems to be a better rendering of the original language. The second interpretation does not take proper account of *ten archen* (from the beginning).

By their *ad hominem* argument they hoped to put Jesus on the defensive and thus dispose of His penetrating judgments. If they can successfully attack His character and reject His authority, they will salve their consciences and justify their unbelief. This has been the point of attack by infidelity through the centuries. Christ's claims and His soul-searching doctrines are mocked and attacked as being those of a "deluded Jewish Rabbi."

Jesus will not be side-tracked in His aim to reveal to these Jews their necessity for conversion. As the Messiah, it was His prophetic duty to be the "arm of Jehovah's judgment" (cf. Isa. 11:3; 51:5; Micah 4:3). He had many piercing judgments to make concerning this nation and these men. And in spite of their attacks upon Him—in spite of their rejections and unbelief—they could not change the truth of His pronouncements. For He came forth from Jehovah who is Truth and Son and Father are One. Both the Son and the Father agree in word, will and deed (cf. John 5:19). The judgments made and the sentences pronounced by the Son are exactly the same as those of God the Father (cf. John 3:11; 5:30; 32, 37; 7:16).

Again the Jews must have given evidence in some manner that what Jesus was speaking was beyond their carnal comprehension. They had already prejudged Jesus as a "demon" because He spoke of suicide. If what Jesus said before was beyond their comprehension, certainly His statement concerning the "lifting up of the Son of man" would present an incomprehensible enigma to their hardened hearts.

By the statement in verse 28, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he," Jesus looks forward to His crucifixion. Not merely the crucifixion only, but the resurrection, the appearances and the manifestation of His ascension on the day of Pentecost is also included. Some scholars reject the idea that Jesus may be referring to the crucifixion as the motivating power behind the conversion of three thousand on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36). We believe, to the contrary, that His passion did offer testimony which caused some of the Jews to turn to Him and become followers of the Way. Even the Roman centurion was touched in the very depths of his soul as he witnessed the crucifixion of the Nazarene (Matt. 27:54; Mark 15:39). We quote here the comments of R. C. Foster in his Syllabus of the Life of Christ concerning verse 28:

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"Jesus refers to His crucifixion and how His divine personality and God's spiritual program will become plain to them in His death. Some in the crowd are earnestly trying to understand and believe; some are maliciously determined not to believe, but Jesus is sympathetic and kind. He realizes how hard it is for them to understand the mysterious program of God and patiently explains that they will be able to see clearly later that which seems beyond comprehension now."

When Jesus said, "lifted up, etc., . . ." He meant not only the crucifixion, but all the culminating works of God in His Son. Naturally, the crucifixion without the resurrection would be powerless to convict and convince these people of Christ's deity. Just as the crucifixion without the resurrection would not be able "to draw all men unto Him" (cf. John 12:32). Thus we believe Jesus means the entire process of the glorification of the Son (death, resurrection, ascension and sending of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost), when He says, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he." Yes, after these things many would come to know Jesus as the Christ—the One from the very bosom of Jehovah-God. Some would cry out in faith and repentance, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" These would be told the gospel plan of salvation (Acts 2:38). But many others, unable to deny the facts (Acts 4:15-16), would still reject Jesus as the Messiah because they "loved the glory that is of men rather than the glory that is of God" (cf. John 12:42).

Verse 29 is a beautiful lesson on how we may have God with us. We need only follow the example of Jesus and attempt always to do the things pleasing to God. If we keep His commandments we abide in the love of Christ even as He kept His Father's commandments and dwelt in the Father's continual love and presence (cf. John 15:10).

We remember the man David, "a man after God's own heart," that he attempted always to do that which pleased God. God's presence was always very near to David—God was an "ever-present help" to him.

Verse 30 tells us that many believed on Him, and verse 31 indicates that He addressed His next discourse to those who "believed." But how sincere was their "belief"? Read ahead in the text, verses 31 through 59, and it is singularly evident that their faith was not one of surrender and change of heart. As Hendriksen says, "whether the

faith here indicated is genuine or not will have to be indicated by the following verses [the context]." The context certainly indicates that it was not genuine. There are other instances where people were said to have believed on Jesus, but their faith was far from that which changes men's hearts (cf. John 2:23; 7:31; 12:42). There were many who thought they believed in Him as the Messiah. Perhaps they professed their beliefs aloud—or perhaps Jesus looked upon their hearts and saw a superficial faith which they dared not express. At any rate, He begins, in verse 31, addressing these people and showing them that their faith was short of the mark. It did not even measure up to the faith of the one they claimed as their father, Abraham (cf. vs. 39-40).

### *Quiz*

1. When did the Jews seek the Messiah most fervently? At what other time would they seek a Saviour, but "die in their sins"?
2. What is meant by "die in your sins"?
3. Why could the Jews not follow Jesus when He should go away?
4. Why the sarcastic question, "Will he kill himself . . . etc."?
5. Of what does Jesus speak when He says, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man . . . etc."?
6. How may we be sure of God's presence with us?
7. How did these Jews "believe" in Jesus?

### TRUTH BRINGS FREEDOM

#### *Text 8:31-36*

- 31 Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples;  
 32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.  
 33 They answered unto him, We are Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?  
 34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin.  
 35 And the bondservant abideth not in the house forever: the son abideth for ever.  
 36 If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

#### *Queries*

- a. How does the truth make a person free?
- b. How does sin enslave?
- c. What does Jesus mean, "the bondservant abideth not in the house forever"?

*Paraphrase*

So Jesus said to those Jews who had said they believed in Him, If you are living and dwelling in My word, then you are beyond doubt My followers, and you will apprehend and experience the truth and the truth will liberate and emancipate you. They answered Him, We are the descendants of Abraham, a chosen people above all that are upon the face of the earth, and we have never given ourselves into bondage to anyone—God alone is our Master. How can you dare to say, You will be set free from bondage? Jesus answered them, I assure you most solemnly, Whosoever continually practices sin is the prisoner and slave of sin. Now those who are slaves may enjoy the privileges of the household temporarily, but not permanently, but the son remains forever. If, therefore, the son liberates the slave and he is adopted into a family relationship, then you are really and unquestionably free.

*Summary*

Abiding in the doctrine of Christ constitutes genuine discipleship. All else is enslavement to sin. Servitude to Christ brings genuine freedom. The Jews, by their sin, have become slave and have no permanent dwelling place within the kingdom. They must be set free through the authority of the Son in order to have a permanent place within God's household.

*Comment*

It is very evident that Jesus is addressing His remarks to a group of the Jews here at the Feast of Tabernacles who had, in some way, manifested a superficial belief in Him. They wanted to believe in *a* Messiah, but not *the* Messiah. They were willing to follow, fight or die for a temporal King, but they would have none of a spiritual King who demanded sovereignty over their motives and deeds. They would gladly serve Him with their lips, but not their hearts.

And in verse 31 Jesus plainly declares the requirements for genuine discipleship to the *true* Messiah. To abide in His word is to make it one's dwelling place—to live by it as the Bread of Life (see our comments on John 6:56, Vol. I, page 250). His word is the only source of life (cf. John 6:63) and to abide in it is to keep it stedfastly (cf. I Cor. 15:58; Acts 2:42; Col. 1:23; II John 9). In John 13:35 Jesus tells how we are to witness our discipleship to the world—by loving one another as He has loved us.

Now in verse 32 comes the beautiful paradox. To become really and absolutely free, every man must submit himself to servitude to Christ's word. Much more than intellectual recognition is involved in "knowing" the truth as Jesus means it. To "know the truth" is also to do it, to experience it (cf. John 7:17; Psa. 1). There are those who are aware of the truth but do not "know" it, because they refuse to live according to precepts of truth (cf. John 3:19, see our comments, Vol. I, page 114).

When Jesus says *truth* He means all that is embodied in the Life He manifested and the doctrines He taught—both in His Incarnation and by the Holy Spirit through the apostles (cf. John 1:14, 17; 14:6; 16:13; 17:17). That which is truth is that which is real, genuine and veritable. The truth is not a philosophical abstraction which is reached by the reasoning of the human mind. It is not relative to time, change or feeling. Truth, all truth, originates in God and is divine and everlasting fact. See also these references: Psa. 25:10; 119:142, 151, 160; Eph. 4:21. The truth which Jesus brings and wishes men to trust in is the eternal verities of God which are in contradistinction to things which are temporal (cf. II Cor. 4:18—5:7; Jn. 6:27; Heb. 12:27; I Jn. 2:15-17; Psa. 102:25-26). But the truth of God abides forever and is unchangeable (cf. I Pet. 1:222-25; Heb. 13:8).

Those who abide in these eternal verities and "walk by faith and not by sight" are those who are unquestionably free. The man who depends entirely upon human wisdom certainly cannot be free for He is imprisoned by the very limitations of human reason! That the mind of the flesh cannot possibly plumb the depths of wisdom is evident from Romans, the first chapter, and from I Corinthians, chapters one through three. The truth that is found in Christ gives men freedom in at least three ways: (a) Freedom from the habits and enslavements of the flesh can come only through knowledge and obedience of the truth; (b) freedom from spiritual lies, falsehoods, deceptions and prejudices which evil men use to enslave the minds and souls of men and women through their perversions of the truth; (c) freedom from sin and all its consequences—guilt, fear of death, penalty and sentence of sin which is eternal death.

Freedom or victory through the truth of God is the theme of the great apostle Paul's eighth chapter of Romans, Galatian epistle, and eighth, ninth and tenth chapters of First Corinthians. We like the way Hendriksen says it: N. T. Commentary, Gospel of John, Vol. II, page 5, "One is free, therefore, not when he can do what he wishes to

do, but when he wishes to do and can do what he should do."

Religiously the Jews enjoyed a unique position among all the peoples of the earth until after Christ brought truth and salvation to the Gentiles. They alone were the repositories of God's revealed will for men. An illustrious remnant of Israel had never been, enslaved to idolatry or philosophical schemes of religion. Especially would the Pharisees claim to be free of all the passions and failures of the flesh common to other men for they, by their tradition-enforced asceticism remained aloof from the more sensual indulgences of the flesh. One commentator has paraphrased their reply in verse 33 like this: "If the truth you speak of is good only for slaves, do not trouble us, *Abraham's seed*, with it! We are a freeborn, royal nation and acknowledge no one as our master save God. To him we belong as children and to no one else. This is the *truth* which makes us free!" (cf. Ex. 19:5-6; Deut. 7:6; Amos 3:2; Jn. 8:41). They wanted to be sure that they were not connected with the other line of descendants of Abraham—namely, Ishmael, the son of the handmaid who was cast out (cf. Gen. 21:10; Gal. 4:21-31). Remember, also, that Abraham was in the line of Shem and it was prophesied that the descendants of Ham would be servants of Shem's offspring (cf. Gen. 9:25-26). Although they had been politically subservient for hundreds of years to many different rulers (excepting brief periods of temporary freedom) within their hearts burned a fierce freedom of spirit and worship of the One True Jehovah-God. Many Jews through the ages had spilled their very life's blood defending this religious freedom. Even during the Roman rule hundreds were beheaded for refusal to worship the Roman emperor or heathen idols.

Little did they realize, however, that they were slaves to the most binding of all masters, sin! Verse 34 is Jesus' answer to the Jews. When He says "committeth sin," He uses the present participle, *ho poion* (the one doing), which indicates not merely a single sin, but to live a life of continual sin (cf. I Jn. 3:6, 8, 9). This bondage to sin is true of every man who has not been freed from sin by belief and obedience to the Gospel. The libertine is indeed the most wretched of slaves—enslaved to passions and controlled by his flesh. His very soul is a prisoner mastered by his appetites and sensory organs. He allows his will and reason to be controlled by lust. Any man who allows himself to be dominated and led about by sinful habit is a

slave. Such a man does not do what he likes, but he does what sin likes! He has allowed a pleasure to master him so completely that he cannot do without it. That man is a slave to sin and ignorance of the truth who allows himself to be deluded and duped by false doctrines and perversions of the truth. Paul had to fight and battle constantly for his own freedom in Christ and the freedom of the Gentile Christians against the Judaizers. The church has had to wage a constant war for freedom from evil men who would bring men into bondage by prejudice, perversion of the truth and going beyond the things that are written. Men who do not "know the truth" soon become slaves to their sinful ignorance (cf. Rom. 8:2; Gal. 5:1). Finally, sin enslaves man by guilt, fear of death, and penalty or sentence pronounced. It is this guilt and burden of condemnation which keeps sinners from realizing joy, peace and fulfillment in their hearts. Every man has some conscience and feels some sense of guilt and condemnation through it (cf. Rom. 2:14-16). All men are guilty (cf. Rom. 3:19; Jas. 2:10). Men were in bondage to the fear of death until Jesus came and conquered death (cf. Heb. 2:14-15). That men in sin are men in bondage is evident from these Scriptures: Prov. 5:22; Acts 8:23; Rom. 6:16-23, 7:23; II Tim. 2:26; II Pet. 2:19. Praise be to God, the Truth was manifested in the flesh to bring sight to the blind, release to the captives and to set at liberty the bruised (cf. Lk. 4:18). Freedom from sin means, on one hand, "deliverance from all created forces that would prevent men from serving and enjoying their Creator, and on the other, the positive happiness of living in fellowship with God in the place where He is pleased to bless." "Christian liberty is precisely freedom to love and serve to the fullest extent, and is therefore abused when it is made an excuse for loveless license (Gal. 5:13; I Pet. 2:16; II Pet. 2:19; I Cor. 8:9-12).

Men in bondage to sin cannot be sons of God; they are slaves to the devil. A slave may remain within the house, but he is not a permanent member of the household and has no inheritance or can claim no rights. The slave may be driven out or sold at any time (cf. Hagar and her son). Thus Jesus gives a solemn warning to these Jews who could not see their need for regeneration. They were not children of God, but slaves of sin, and unless they become sons of God by adoption—through faith in Jesus Christ—they were in danger of being cast out. He had warned them before that they could not follow Him to Heaven because they were unregenerate (8:21-24). This is the same warning couched in different language. If they expect to be

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"carried to Abraham's bosom in paradise" they must become true sons of Abraham by faith and regenerate obedience (cf. vs. 39-40).

The Son is the rightful heir and abides forever in the house. If by his authority the slave is set free, he shall be free indeed. The "indeed" in this case means more than mere freedom. When a man is freed from his slavery to sin by the Son of God, the former slave is not only pardoned and freed from his shackles, but he is adopted into the family and given the place of a fellow-heir (cf. Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 3:29; 4:1-7).

*Quiz*

1. What is required to become "truly" a disciple of Jesus?
2. What is involved in "knowing" the truth?
3. What is truth?
4. Name the three freedoms which come from knowing the truth.
5. How could the Jews claim freedom from bondage?
6. What brings every man into bondage? How?
7. Explain the figure of "slave" and "Son" abiding in the household.

## ABRAHAM'S CHILDREN

*Text 8:37-40*

37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath not free course in you.

38 I speak the things which I have seen with my Father: and ye also do the things which ye heard from your father.

39 They answered and said unto him, Our father is Abraham. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God: this did not Abraham.

*Queries*

- a. What does Jesus mean by his word having "free course"?
- b. What were the "works of Abraham"?
- c. How did Jesus know they were seeking to kill him?

*Paraphrase*

Yes, I know that according to the flesh you are Abraham's descendants; yet you are seeking to kill me, because my word has found no place for freedom of progress within you. I am telling you the things which I have seen while in the very presence of My Father, and what you are doing indicates who your father is and what you have heard

from him. They replied, Our father is Abraham! Jesus then said, If you were truly Abraham's children you would follow Abraham's example and do as he did; but instead you are eager to kill me, a person who has spoken nothing but the truth to you—and the ultimate truth which I heard in the presence of God. This certainly is not the way Abraham did.

### *Summary*

The discussion previous to this concerning freedom has led the Jews to deny bondage and defend their freedom on the basis of descendancy from Abraham. Jesus recognizes their fleshly relationship to Abraham, but hints that their spiritual father is someone besides Abraham as manifested by their hate and intentions of murder.

### *Comment*

They had reminded Jesus that they were the descendants of Abraham, presumptuously denying any type of bondage upon the basis of this heritage. Jesus concedes their physical lineage to Abraham, but He reveals a spirit of hate and evil within their hearts which is as foreign to the nature of Abraham as is darkness to light. It had been openly visible that the Jews were seeking some way to put Him to death (cf. Jn. 5:18; 7:19, 25, 30, 32, 45). Even if the Jews had tried to hide their murderous envy, the Searcher of hearts would have known it, for "he needed not that anyone should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man" (cf. Jn. 2:25).

In the very same breath (v. 37), Jesus tells the Jews the basic reason for their spiritual apostacy from being true descendants of Abraham. They would not allow His word to run a free course within their hearts. Vine says the verb *choreo* ("free course") means literally, "to make room for; to go forward." Other lexicographers define it, "be in motion, go forward, make progress." Paul said much the same thing in II Thessalonians 3:1 when he asked the brethren there to pray that "the word of the Lord might have free course and be glorified" in him. There are many Scriptures which might be applied and contrasted to the Lord's accusation that the Jews would not allow His word to progress within their hearts and space will not allow us to mention them all. Perhaps the best illustration for what is intended here may be found in Christ's parable of the different soils in Mat-

thew the thirteenth chapter (cf. also Mk. 4:1-34; Lk. 8:4-18). In this parable Jesus vividly portrays different things which prohibit the word of God from having free course in men's hearts—wilfull rejection, shallow emotionalism and choking desire for material gain (see also the entire 119th Psalm).

In verse 38 Jesus states again, what He has told the Jews over and over; namely, that His teachings were delivered to Him by the Father when He was dwelling in the presence of the Father (cf. Jn. 5:19, 30; 7:28-29). He is implying that they should know He is from Jehovah by His teaching and His deeds; He knows their father, the devil, because of what they are seeking to do! Men are either sons of the heavenly Father by faith and obedience (Rom. 8:1-17), or they become sons of the father of Hell by disobedience (cf. Eph. 2:1-3; 5:6-8).

As the Lord points out in verse 39, it makes little difference whose children we profess to be. Actions speak louder than words (cf. Mt. 7:15-23)! They claimed to be Abraham's children, but refused to walk in his steps. Just who are the children of Abraham? They are men of faith and righteousness (cf. Rom. 4:3, 16); they are men of hope (Rom. 4:18); they are men of trust and obedience (Gal. 3:6); they are those who have been baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:26-29); they are those of the New Covenant, New Israel, the Church of Christ (cf. Rom. 9:6-8); they are men who have purified their hearts (cf. Rom. 2:28-29); they are men who show their faith by their works (cf. James 2:21-24).

Abraham was a man of implicit faith and trust in God who dared to obey God without questioning His commands (cf. Heb. 11:8-19). He was a man willing to prove his faith and trust in Jehovah even if it demanded the life of his only-unique son, Isaac. He was a man of righteousness and good works who cared for his nephew, Lot, and prayed for his deliverance from God's wrath. He welcomed and obeyed God's messengers. His great faith even caused him to look down through the centuries rejoicing in the future coming of Christ as though it were a reality to him in his own day! Abraham was indeed, the friend of God.

It is very evident, then, that these Jews are far from being children of Abraham in the best sense. All they could lay claim to from Abraham was physical ancestry. But that did not make them children of God at all (cf. Jn. 1:12-13; Matt. 3:7-10).

While claiming to be Abraham's sons and heirs to the kingdom of God they were plotting the murder of the very Son of God (cf. Mt. 21:33-46; Mk. 12:1-12; Lk. 20:9-19). As Lenski says, "One would expect of the physical sons of Abraham that they more than all men would turn out to be also Abraham's spiritual sons," but their real sonship is revealed by themselves as that of sons of the devil "who was a murderer from the beginning."

### *Quiz*

1. How does the word of God have free course in men?
2. How may we know a man's spiritual father?
3. Name six characteristics of the true descendants of Abraham and give the Scripture references.
4. Give at least one Scripture reference showing that physical lineage does not make one a son of God.

### SATAN'S CHILDREN

*Text 8:41-47*

- 41 Ye do the works of your father. They said unto him, We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.  
 42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but He sent me.  
 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word.  
 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof.  
 45 But because I say the truth, ye believe me not.  
 46 Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?  
 47 He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God.

### *Queries*

- a. What do the Jews mean by saying, "We were not born of fornication"?
- b. Why did the Jews not understand Jesus' teaching?
- c. What do we learn of the nature of the devil in this section?

*Paraphrase*

You are manifesting the nature and doing the works of your spiritual father, the devil. They replied, We are the children of our true father, even God, and we are not the illegitimate children of a spiritually adulterous union with another father. Jesus said to them, If you were the children of the true Father, God, then you would honor Me as His Son and love Me, for I came here from the presence of the Father to be among men; I have not come merely upon my own authority and witness, but manifesting the authority of the Father. Why will you not understand what I say to you? It is because you wilfully refuse to receive my message into your hearts. You are the offspring of your father, the devil, and it is evident because you intentionally do the schemes and works of your father, the devil. He planned and executed the murder of the human race in his heart from the beginning of the world, and he has not one iota of relationship to the truth because there is no truth in his nature. When he lies he merely speaks out of the very essence of his nature for he is a liar and the originator of the lie itself. It is plainly for the very reason that I say the truth that you do not believe in Me. Yet, which of you is able to prove Me guilty of ever committing a sin or telling a lie? He that is a child of God will hear God's words. And this is just the reason you will not hear His message which I have brought, because you are not akin to the nature of God.

*Summary*

Jesus openly charges these Jews with being the children of Satan. Then He vividly gives the reasons for this terrible indictment. The Jews are exhibiting the nature of the devil by their rebellion to God's Son, their lies, and their open intention to kill Jesus. They cannot be the children of God for they reject His word, not erroneously, but wilfully.

*Comment*

In rebuttal to Christ's inference that they were bondservants to sin, these Jews had vociferously claimed descendants from Abraham (cf. 8:33). Now Jesus infers more pointedly than ever that Abraham is not their father. The Lord is talking about spiritual kinship! He admitted their physical relationship to Abraham (v. 37), but denied

their spiritual kinship (v. 39) to him. And now, in verse 41, Jesus implies that they are the offspring of a spiritual father other than Abraham.

Their pride wounded and their ire aroused, these men exclaim "We were born of no adulterous union, we have never had any spiritual father but Jehovah-God." In the Old Testament God was, in a special sense, the Father of Israel (cf. Ex. 4:22; Deut. 32:6; Isa. 63:16; 64:8; Malachi 2:10). When Israel forsook Jehovah and worshipped any other God, she was said to have gone awhorning after strange gods—to have committed spiritual adultery (cf. Judges 2:17; I Chron. 5:25; Ezek. 6:9; Hosea 2:4; 4:12; 5:4).

As most commentators point out, either one of two meanings may have been intended here in the answer of these Jews. When they said to Jesus that they were not the children of any adulterous union, they might have meant (a) they did not belong to a nation of idolaters—spiritual adulterers, or (b) they were not born physically of adulterous parents—inferring that Jesus was, for the Jews had very early circulated the story that Mary, mother of Jesus, had been unfaithful to Joseph and had a lover—a Roman soldier by the name of Panthera—and that Jesus was the child of this adulterous union. In view of the context, we prefer the first interpretation. These Jews knew that Jesus was talking about their spiritual relationship to God for they defended themselves by claiming God as their Father. By emphasizing their spiritual kinship to God they were inferring that Jesus was Himself the spiritual descendant of another father (the devil) (cf. 8:48).

Jesus states in verse 42 a very basic truth. The spiritual parentage of any man is known by his manifest relationship to Jesus Christ. The Lord said it earlier in this manner, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (cf. Matt. 7:15-20; also Jn. 5:42-43, 46; I Jn. 5:1). William Barclay says it so well, "Here again is the key thought of the Fourth Gospel. The test of a man is his reaction to Jesus . . . To be confronted with Jesus is to be confronted with judgment. Jesus is the touchstone of God by which all men are judged." (The Gospel of John, Vol. 2, by Wm. Barclay, p. 33, Saint Andrew Press.) If they were true loving, obedient, believing children of God they would have loved Jesus because He came revealing Himself as the Incarnate God. He gave abundant witness to His claims by signs and wonders performed in their very midst (cf. Matt. 9:1-8). Their trouble was that

they did not want Him as their Messiah—they refused to surrender their ideas to the will of God and, as a result, refused to recognize Jesus (cf. John 7:17).

The Great Cross-examiner continues with His indictment. The next few verses (43-47) contain tremendously incriminating questions and statements. The Divine Barrister not only elicits the facts of the case, but He also lays bare the motives of those indicted.

Jesus asks them the piercing question, "Why do ye not understand my words?" And before they have opportunity to deny or rail irrelevantly He answers for them the answer that is evident to all honest-hearted men—they simply refuse to hear His teaching, not out of ignorance, but out of their rebellious and evil nature. They are like their forefathers of whom the prophet wrote, "To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it" (Jer. 6:10). (cf. Ezek. 12:2; Zech. 7:11; Matt. 11:25-26; II Tim. 4:4; I Cor. 2:14.) They could not understand because they *would* not hear. They could not understand the spiritual nature of Christ's Messiahship because they wilfully carnalized their hearts.

Their failure to recognize Jesus as the Christ is due, as Jesus continues to explain, to their willing submission to the devil. They voluntarily became satan's cohorts. There is the answer; terrifying in all its stark reality and horrible implications. They cannot bear or tolerate the truth of God, so they embrace false doctrine and willingly choose error and lies rather than truth. Thus they become sons of Hell—offspring of satan—for the devil by his very nature stands in no kinship whatever to the truth. It is his very nature and work to deceive and when he speaks a lie, he merely expresses his character. He was a murderer from the beginning of time. He seduced the whole human race when he deceived Adam and Eve. He brought the penalty of death upon us all in the Garden.

The verdict in the charge against these Jews, then, must be "Guilty." They were seeking how they might kill Jesus who was completely innocent of any of their accusations—hence they were murderers at heart. Not only that, they could not tolerate the truth and thus they manifested their spiritual kinship to the devil.

What a morally impeaching indictment verse 45 brings upon these Jews. Because Jesus spoke the truth, they rejected Him. There was no doubting now whose side they were on—the devil's. How reprobate has a man become when truth is rejected because it is truth and error is received and practiced because it is error (cf. Rom. 1:18-32). Are there not those today, even in the guise of being religious seekers after the truth, who reject truth because it is truth and receive a lie because it is a lie?

Then comes the challenge, "Which of you is able to convict me of sin?" What a dramatic moment! None but the Son of God would dare to make such a challenge. There must have been a silent pause while Jesus waited for anyone to speak out. Were there none who could convict Him of some sin or falsehood? Not one! Neither here nor forever after! By their silence they admitted that they could find no sin, falsehood or inconsistency in Him—*then why did they not accept His words?*

The answer is inevitable! They were not, as they claimed to be, sons of God. The man that is of God (or is disposed toward righteousness, truth, justice and the attributes that are God's nature) will listen and endeavor to obey God's word. But these men were haters of the truth and lovers of darkness (cf. John 3:19-21) and it was evident that they were not of God.

May God grant us the wisdom, courage and conviction to accept the truth (wherever it is) because it is the truth, and reject that which is false (wherever it is) because it is false?

### *Quiz*

1. What did the Jews probably mean by their answer, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God"?
2. What is the basic truth asserted in verse 42?
3. Why could they not understand Jesus' words?
4. What is significant in verse 45?
5. What is the inevitable answer to Jesus' questions in verse 46?

### CHRIST DEFAMED

#### *Text 8:48-59*

48 The Jews answered and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon?

49 Jesus answered, I have not a demon; but I honor my Father, and ye dishonor me.

50 But I seek not mine only glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my word, he shall never see death.

52 The Jews said unto him, Now we know that thou hast a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my word, he shall never taste of death.

53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who died? and the prophets died: who makest thou thyself?

54 Jesus answered, If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing: it is my Father that glorifieth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God;

55 and ye have not known him: but I know him; and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be like unto you, a liar: but I know him, and keep his word.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.

57 The Jews therefore said unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am.

59 They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.

### *Queries*

- a. Why accuse Jesus of being a Samaritan?
- b. How will belief in Jesus keep men from "seeing" death?
- c. How could Abraham "see Jesus' day"?

### *Paraphrase*

The Jews answered and said to him, Are we not right when we are saying that you are a Samaritan heretic and that you are possessed of a demon? Jesus answered, I am not demon-possessed but quite to the contrary I honor my Father while you dishonor Him by dishonoring Me. However, to seek self-glorification is not My purpose. Even though men may dishonor Me there is One, even God, who is seeking after and taking care of glorifying Me and He is judging those who dishonor Me. I tell you most solemnly if any man keeps My word he will never experience death unto all eternity. The Jews said to Him,

Now we know for sure that you are possessed of a demon. Abraham died and the prophets also died; yet you say, If a man keeps My word he will never taste death unto all eternity. Are you actually claiming that you are greater than our father Abraham? Both he and all the prophets experienced death; just who do you make yourself out to be? Jesus answered, If I glorify Myself, My glory would be vain. It is My Father, whom you call, Our God, that continues to glorify Me; and you have not come to know Him—but I know Him. If I should deny that I know Him as His only unique Son then I would be a liar like you who say you know Him and do not! But I know Him perfectly and keep His word. Your forefather Abraham was extremely happy that he was to see My day, and he saw it and rejoiced. The Jews therefore said to Him, You have not even lived fifty years and have you seen Abraham? Jesus said to them, I do solemnly assure you that before Abraham was born I am living as I have been and shall be for all eternity. So they picked up stones in order to hurl them at Him. But Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.

### Summary

Jesus is attacked for His tremendous claims of having power to overcome death and of pre-existence. The Jews rightly recognized that Jesus was claiming supernatural powers, but they, in their carnality, accused Him of heresy and demon possession.

### Comment

Some men will always react as these Jews did when their sins and their real nature is revealed; they will slander, back-bite and call names. The Jews could not defend themselves against the overwhelming logic of Christ's words (verses 41-47), so they made derogatory remarks about Him personally.

Jesus had exposed their hypocrisy and evil intentions and had related them to the devil—they were the devil's children. The Jews counter-charged, "You're another!" The participle *legomen* (saying) in verse 48 is in the present tense (continuing action). It may mean that the Jews were continually muttering, "Samaritan," "heretic," "demon," all the time Jesus was addressing them (cf. our paraphrase of this verse). To call Jesus a Samaritan was to call Him a heretic and schismatic because the Samaritans were thus regarded by the Jews (cf. our comments, Vol. I, pages 141-142).

Some commentators argue that since Jesus did not answer the charge of being "a Samaritan," it is doubtful that the Jews really called Him a Samaritan. These commentators claim that what we have in the English word "samaritan" may be a translation of the Aramaic *Shomeroni*, (meaning Samaritan), which, in turn, may be a corruption of the Aramaic word *Shomeron* (which means, prince of the devils). Thus John actually meant to record the Jews as saying, "Say we not well that thou art the prince of demons, and hast a demon?" But where did these commentators get the idea that John wrote his gospel in Aramaic? The weight of evidence presented by early Greek manuscripts (and now the Bodmer II) is overwhelmingly in favor of John's gospel being written originally in the Greek language. We dismiss this argument as unproven and irrelevant.

We like Lenski's comment as to why Jesus did not answer their charge of being "a Samaritan." Lenski says, ". . . Jesus touches only the second epithet hurled at him . . . because that is enough for the contrast he is bringing out between what he is doing and what they are doing. Moreover, while these Jews utterly despise the Samaritan, Jesus does not . . ." (Interpretation of St. John's Gospel, by R. C. H. Lenski, page 658).

He did answer, however, their charge of demon-possession. And He answered it in much the same way He had answered the Pharisees in Galilee (cf. Matt. 12:22-30), ". . . and if Satan casteth out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?" Jesus' answer was simply, "How can I honor the Heavenly Father and be demon-possessed?" If He was a servant of Satan He would be honoring Satan and dishonoring God—but the exact opposite is true. He honored the Father in everything He said or did, while they dishonored the Father by reviling God's Son (cf. John 5:23).

Jesus continues, "It matters little that you dishonor Me, as far as My own self-pride is concerned, for I do not seek to glorify Myself simply for the glory involved." Jesus never sought the honor of men as an end to be desired. He "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant . . . he humbled himself, becoming obedient . . . to the death of the cross," (cf. Phil. 2:6-8). He, though He was the Son, lowered Himself, left Heaven and took upon Himself mortal flesh and experienced subjection and obedience by the things which He suffered (cf. Heb. 5:8). When even His own disciples were contending about places of honor He girded Himself with a towel and took a basin of water and performed the lowliest of services in washing their feet

(cf. John 13:1-17). The Lord Jesus Christ did not concern Himself with seeking praise and honor of men. The matter of maintaining and vindicating His honor is in other, proper hands—the Father's hands.

The Father honored Jesus through His self-assumed humility (cf. Phil. 2:9-11). Although men were reviling and about to kill the Son, the Father was glorifying the Son through the dishonor of men (cf. John 12:27-33). The honor of God comes through humility. The truly great man is the servant of all (cf. Matt. 20:26-28). One day the Judge who judges righteously will assess things at their true value and will assign to men their true honor. On that day the one who has been the servant of all will be honored as the greatest of all.

In verse 51, Jesus makes one of His bold claims. If any man, not Jew only but *any* man, will keep His word, that man will not see death. The word *keep* in this verse comes from the Greek word *tereo* which means to obey. It is the same word that is translated *observe* in Matthew 28:20. Jesus means that those who keep His word shall never experience the *second* death which is eternal separation from God. Jesus means that for those who believe and obey Him, physical death is but the opening of the door to the life that is Life indeed. For the Christian, to be absent from the body means to be at home with the Lord (cf. II Cor. 5:6-8; Phil. 1:21-23). But the Jews, either purposely or ignorantly, take Him literally—as meaning physical death.

To those listening to Jesus, His claim is the height of absurdity. The greatest Jew of them all, father Abraham, had died. Furthermore, the illustrious prophets had died (they seem to have forgotten Elijah's translation in the fiery chariot). All these great men were men of God and yet they had died. In their estimation He was indeed trying to glorify Himself and make Himself greater than Abraham or any of the prophets. Contemptuously they ask, "Whom makest thou thyself?"

When Jesus made His supernatural claims He was not bragging or seeking false glory; He was stating what was true! He knew the Father intimately and proved it by keeping the Father's word, doing the Father's works and manifesting the Father's nature to men. If, then, He should keep silent about His intimate relationship to Jehovah He would be a liar by His silent denial, just as these Jews were liars by their loud claims to know God while denying it by their lives. It is true of the "silent" Christian today, also—he lives a lie! Those who

believe and profess to follow Christ must confess that profession by word of mouth and by good deeds (cf. Matt. 5:13-16; 10:32-33; 12:30; 7:21-23; Mk. 8:38).

Now another astounding claim is made, this time on behalf of Abraham. Abraham rejoiced when he saw the day of Jesus. Of course, Jesus is contrasting the *faith* of Abraham with the *lack of faith* of these Jews who claim Abraham as their spiritual father. Here the Messiah stood before them and had done many mighty works in their very presence and they could not accept Him, yet their father Abraham had, by faith, seen the day of the Messiah. There were others, both before and after Abraham, who through eyes of faith beheld the day of Christ. Moses, it is written, "accounted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt . . . for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (cf. Heb. 11:26-27). The prophets also saw His day (cf. I Pet. 1:10-12).

Many of these Old Testament saints who saw the day of Christ through faith are named in Hebrews, the eleventh chapter. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13). The key phrase is ". . . having greeted them from afar." Abraham rejoiced when Isaac was born for he knew that through Isaac (whose name means "laughter") would come the Messiah in whom God would bless all the nations (cf. Gal. 3:16). These Jews were not glad. Jesus was not the Messiah they wanted. They could not rejoice in a meek, gentle and spiritually-minded King. And so their boast to be the spiritual children of Abraham was hypocrisy.

These Jews have eyes but they see not, and ears but they hear not. They continue to interpret the Lord's words in a literal, physical sense. How could this Jesus of Nazareth, who is not fifty years of age, have seen Abraham who died over 2000 years before? Impossible!

In verse 58 Jesus states very plainly that although Abraham was born in point of time, He enjoyed timeless existence. Here is one of the many instances in the New Testament where the Greek language best expresses what Jesus intended to say. When Jesus says "I am," He means that He not only existed from all eternity before Abraham "became" a being in point of time, but Jesus transcends all time and will continue to exist eternally.

And when Jesus ascribed to Himself the words "I am," the scholars of the Law standing about would remember Exodus 3:14 wherein

God calls Himself "I AM THAT I AM." Of course, the Jews would look upon such a statement as blasphemy. According to their Law, blasphemy was punishable by being stoned to death (Lev. 24:16). But the Law also provided for the accused to have a trial with witnesses present to establish the charges. They knew that when challenged before they could not convict Him of sin, nor could they lawfully convict Him now, so they took up stones and fully intended to criminally assault Him as a mob. The temple even then was still under construction in some parts and there were stones lying around within easy reach (cf. our comments on John 2:20, Vol. I, page 84), and these Jews, enraged and maliciously seeking some excuse to murder Jesus, picked up stones to cast upon Him. Jesus, knowing that His time had not yet come for the supreme sacrifice, hid Himself amidst the crowd and went out of the temple.

Thus Jesus has met His enemies face to face in their own stronghold in Judea in the temple. He has made bold, supernatural claims for Himself and backed them up with His challenge that His enemies bring forth proof, if they can, of any sin or falsehood on His part. Not one shred of evidence or testimony is forthcoming—only slanderous insinuations. But the great controversies at the Feast of Tabernacles are not yet over. Jesus probably spends a few more days in the temple healing and teaching (cf. John 9:1—10:12) before He retires to Bethany and the home of Mary and Martha (cf. Luke 10:38 and Map #5, page 12).

### *Quiz*

1. What are the connotations of Jesus being called "a Samaritan"?
2. How did Jesus answer their charge that He was demon-possessed?
3. Although Jesus never sought the glory of men, wherein did He obtain honor and glory?
4. Why was Jesus not boasting when He made His supernatural claims?
5. Who, besides Abraham, saw the day of Christ? Give Scripture references.
6. What two things did Jesus claim when He said "before Abraham was, I am"?
7. When does this particular period of teaching in the temple end?

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

EXPOSITORY SERMON NO. EIGHT  
SYMPTOMS OF UNBELIEF (Continued)

John 8

*Introduction*I. UNBELIEF MAY TAKE MANY FORMS, AS WE HAVE  
SEEN IN JOHN 7

- A. But all doubting or investigating is not condemned by the Scriptures. The Bible definitely teaches that men are to seek evidence for believing. "By their fruits ye shall know them . . ." ". . . try every spirit . . ." ". . . prove all things, hold fast that which is good . . ." The Bereans searched the Scriptures to establish the validity of Paul's preaching. We do not follow Jesus because we have been deluded, deceived or duped. Our faith is founded on historical fact.
- B. Doubt is condemned, however, when it is born of a refusal to accept incontrovertible fact. Or, when unbelief is simply a carnal refusal to obey the truth when one has seen it—doubt then becomes damning.

II. LET US STUDY FURTHER THE SYMPTOMS OF UNBELIEF  
AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

- A. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God . . . so we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." Heb. 3:12, 19
- B. Could it be that we may be guilty of any of these symptoms which will lead to our final expulsion from the streets of Heaven? Friend, some of these symptoms are evident even within the church of Christ today—among those who profess to follow Jesus we may find these symptoms of growing unbelief.

*Discussion*

## I. PRIDE IN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE, 8:32-40

Pride in ancestral religion was an ever-abundant source of unbelief for the Jews. They could not believe that God would "nail" the exclusive Jewish heritage of Judaism to the cross and open the door for heathens to come into His favor. The Jews staked all his claims to Heaven upon his illustrious ancestry of Abraham, Moses, David and the prophets. God had separated them from all the heathen nations in a special way and they proposed to tell God that He could never give them up (remember Jonah). They enjoyed a unique religious standing because of their nationality. They continually pointed back to their ancestors and their accomplishments . . . they based their

salvation on their physical lineage and upon their national heritage. Many people today rest all their hopes concerning the here-after on Mother's religion or Father's religion. "The members of my family have been (——ists) since the Mayflower and that's good enough for me," they say. But Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Neither Mother's religion, nor the religion of the majority, nor your fiance's religion will save you—the revealed truth of God only brings salvation. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Some members of the Christian church are, in fact or in theory, resting all their hopes in the prestige and traditions of an Alexander Campbell or in an institutionalized church. The Scriptures state unequivocally that we dare not rest our hopes upon men and traditions of men. John the Baptist told the Jews, "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Lk. 3:8).

## II. ABUSE OF THE WORD OF GOD, 7:45-52; 8:37

Some of the Pharisees were infamous abusers of the Word of God. They had a certain mystical reverence for it but they revered their traditions above the pure Word (cf. Mark 7:6-13). They had no qualms about wresting the Scriptures and interpreting them to serve their own ends. They dishonored their aging parents refusing to supply their material needs by pronouncing their own possessions "Corban" (devoted to God). They gave perverted interpretations of the Law in order to Welch on business deals. And here in our text Jesus accuses them of prohibiting the Word of God from having "free course" in their hearts (Jn. 8:37). They accused Jesus of blasphemy and condemned Him to death by a perversion of the law. They grossly perverted the intent of the Word of God when they refused to let Him heal a man on the Sabbath. Yet they would, in turn, violate the very letter of the law and rescue an expensive animal from a ditch on the Sabbath. Any time a person or a group of persons (whether the group be called a church or not) wrests the Scriptures to serve their own selfish ends, they are in a state of evil unbelief. Such an action "tries God" just as surely as the actions of the Israelites in the wilderness (cf. Heb. 3 & 4). Denominationalism is itself a perversion of the Bible. The Bible nowhere allows for men to construct and maintain the multitude of divisions and contrary doctrines taught in the name of Christ. Men and women who persist in perpetuating division by going beyond what is written in the Scriptures must come under the same condemnation as the Pharisees—abusers of God's Word!

**III. NO LOVE FOR THE TRUTH, 8:45-46**

Jesus accused the Pharisees of deliberately hating the truth! For the *very reason* that Jesus was telling them the truth, they would not believe Him. What a terrible accusation! He told them they were children of the devil, who stands in no relationship to anything that is true. When the devil speaks a lie, he speaks out of his very nature, for he is a liar and the father of liars. When the truth about the Pharisees became unpleasant, they sought for the pleasant thing, even if it had to be a lie in order to be pleasing. Such are those today who have "itching ears and heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts . . . and turn away from the truth and turn aside unto fables." Those who hate truth and have no love for righteousness will be deceived and believe a lie (cf. II Thess. 2:10-12). This is the crux of the matter with hundreds of people today—they have no love for the truth because they take pleasure in unrighteousness. They simply close their eyes and ears to the truth, because they have more pleasure in believing a lie! Such a state of heart makes fertile ground for the devil to plant his half-truths. The Jews wanted to believe a lie about the nature of their Messiah and thus the devil obliged them. So many men and women today do not want to face the reality of the temporal nature of this world—the reality of Hell—the reality of sin; these are symptoms of unbelief.

**IV. INFLUENCED BY HEARSAY, 7:12, 40-43**

The very fact that some of the multitude was led astray in their thinking by rumors and hearsay is evidence of their unbelief. Many people without courage and faith to think for themselves allow themselves to be swayed by the reports and rumors and opinions of others. These murmuring Jews had not come to their opinions of Jesus by personal investigation of His claims. They had heard the rulers pronounce judgment upon Him and they had not enough personal conviction or courage to make up their own minds. Uncommitted people are easily influenced and "tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine." James describes this type of person who is "w wishy-washy" and unstable (cf. James 1:6-7). Here one day, there the next—every new idea that comes along they become dupes for it because they haven't enough conviction of what is real truth. The church has a ministry to perform in establishing its members in the truth, which is as important as evangelism (cf. Eph. 4:13-14). The matter of belief is a matter of growing in knowledge of Jesus Christ; so is the matter of Christian unity; and so is the matter of progress and victory for Christ and the church.

**V. LOVING THE HONOR OF MEN MORE THAN GOD'S  
HONOR, 7:50-52**

Nicodemus spoke up timidly once in defense of Jesus. But after the browbeating he received from his important and powerful colleagues, he is conveniently silent! In another place we are told that Nicodemus was a "secret" disciple of Jesus. We do not have the right to judge or pronounce sentence upon Nicodemus, but we do maintain that cowardice is a manifestation of unbelief (cf. Matt. 10:28). As trusting disciples of Christ we must take Him at His word to protect us in all circumstances. There are other illustrations of this symptom (cf. John 12:42; John 9). Shallow faith which withers under tribulation and persecution is the product of rocky soil. The unbelief which will not openly confess Christ will result in Christ's denial of the unbeliever before the Father at judgment (cf. Mt. 7:21-23). When faced with opportunities every day of life to profess Christ and salvation to a lost and dying world, HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP? Do you have the dread symptom of unbelief known as loving the honor of men more than the honor of God?

**VI. MORAL CARNALITY, 8:12**

By carnality we do not necessarily mean sensuality. Sometimes this word "carnal" is used to mean only an unregenerate way of thinking which may be true even of baptized believers (cf. I Cor. 3:1-2). When Jesus accused the Pharisees of judging "after the flesh," He did not mean they were sensual or immoral, but He was warning them that they were judging Him and the works of God by their earthly standards. They "strained the gnat and swallowed the camel . . ." They "left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy and faith . . ." Men may be carnal and not immoral. The Pharisees were such men—generally on the outside they were strictly moral. Their carnality consisted in rejecting Jesus because He demanded sacrifice of self-righteousness—something they did not want to give up. So is every man carnal who desires to be justified before God by His good works alone. He is not eager to admit that he is still a long way from what God demands even in the Law. He will grasp at and hold to every denial of a perfect standard—this is why the Jews killed Jesus. Such men will gladly welcome unbelief because it removes from their sight the accusing high standard of Christ's teachings which pass judgment on their inability to keep the law of commandments.

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*Conclusion***I. THESE, THEN, ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF UNBELIEF**

- A. Human nature has not changed in 2000 years, nor has the devil gone to sleep.
- B. We are just as susceptible to every symptom of unbelief here as were the Pharisees.

**II. CHRIST IS ALWAYS THE BURNING ISSUE!**

- A. He has made claims to be the Son of God . . .
- B. Here at the Feast of Tabernacles He said . . .
  - 1. ". . . except that ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."
  - 2. Unbelief takes a man into eternity with all the sentence of his sins upon his own person . . . where he will have to suffer the eternal punishment for them.

**III. CHRIST FACES YOU NOW WITH HIS CLAIMS**

- A. "If you have seen me you have seen the Father . . ."
- B. "He that hath the Son hath the Father . . ."
- C. "Believe in God, believe also in Me . . ."
- D. Don't be deceived by Satan and trapped into the snare of unbelief.

**EXAMINATION, CHAPTERS 7 and 8***True or False*

1. Jesus may have purposely missed some Jewish feasts.
2. There is a contradiction in the Bible at John 7:8-10.
3. We are commanded by Jesus, in chapter 7, to judge.
4. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit was given to men while Jesus lived on earth.
5. The best manuscript evidence indicates that the story of the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11) is not a part of John's gospel.
6. The Jews had never been in bondage to anyone.
7. Jesus challenged anyone to convict Him of sin.

*Who Said This*

1. "For no man doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly."
2. "Hath not the Scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"
3. "Never man so spake."
4. "But this multitude that knoweth not the law are accused."
5. "Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?"
6. "He that is of God heareth the words of God."

*Supply the Scriptural Answers to These Questions*

1. Q. "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law? Why seek ye to kill me?"  
A.
2. Q. "Why did ye not bring him?"  
A.
3. Q. "Will he kill himself, that he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come?"  
A.
4. Q. "If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?"  
A.

*Multiple Choice*

1. The Feast of Tabernacles commemorated:
  - a. Passing over of the death angel in the time of exodus
  - b. Rededication of the temple
  - c. Wandering in the wilderness
2. Jesus' brothers:
  - a. Saw His miracles and did not believe
  - b. Saw His miracles and believed
  - c. Believed in Him without seeing His miracles
3. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit:
  - a. Is to be kept
  - b. Is to become a source of life flowing from us to others
  - c. Is given only to a select few
4. The multitudes:
  - a. Were all in favor of Jesus
  - b. Were silent about Jesus
  - c. Were disagreeing among themselves about Jesus
5. To die in one's sins means:
  - a. To die while committing a particular sin
  - b. To die as a result of some terrible sin
  - c. To die, not having one's sins forgiven, and having to pay the penalty forever
6. To lift up the Son of man means:
  - a. To glorify Him by praise
  - b. To put Him upon the throne
  - c. To crucify Him

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7. The Jews slandered Jesus by:
    - a. Calling Him a "Samaritan"
    - b. Calling Him a "liar"
    - c. Calling Him "prince of demons"
  8. Abraham saw Jesus:
    - a. Before He (Abraham) was born
    - b. In a vision
    - c. By faith
  9. The Jews could not understand Jesus because:
    - a. He spoke in a different language
    - b. They did not know what He was talking about
    - c. They could not tolerate His teaching
  10. Jesus said that in order to be free:
    - a. We must have a democratic form of government
    - b. We must be free from all restraints of religion
    - c. We must abide in and obey His word
  11. When the Jews said, "We were not born of fornication"; they probably meant:
    - a. Our physical parents were not adulterers
    - b. We were not born of fornication, but you were
    - c. We are not descendants of spiritual fornicators (idolators)

## *Match These Scriptures*

1. "If any man willeth to do his will,"
  2. "But because I say the truth
  3. "If a man keep my word
  4. "Judge not according to appearance
  5. "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said,
  6. "If therefore the Son shall make you free,
  7. ". . . except ye believe that I am he.
  - a. "but judge righteous judgment."
  - b. from within him shall flow rivers of living water."
  - c. ye shall be free indeed."
  - d. ye shall die in your sins."
  - e. and the truth shall make you free."
  - f. he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself."
  - g. he shall never see death."

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- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 8. ". . . and ye shall know the truth | h. ye believe me not."  |
| 9. "If ye abide in my word,           | i. then are ye truly my disciples."                                     |
| 10. "The world cannot hate you:       | j. but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil." |

### *Essay Questions*

1. Describe the Feast of Tabernacles. What was approximate time of feast? How was it observed? Who attended? Where observed?
2. Discuss the textual evidence for the omission of John 7:53—8:11.
3. Discuss the significance of John 7:38-39.
4. Discuss the true spiritual children of Abraham. Who are the true spiritual children of Abraham? What other New Testament Scriptures speak of Children of Abraham (spiritually)?

## CHAPTER NINE

If it were not so tragic, this ninth chapter would be comical. Here is a man blind from birth healed by the Nazarene and the Pharisees, rather than accept the evident fact that Jesus had healed him, chose to question the man's former blindness. Next, his parents, out of cowardice, "pass the buck" and will not take sides with their son. The really amusing section, however, is found in verses 24-34. In these verses the former blind man by common-sense reasoning makes the learned Pharisees look ridiculous. The beggar turns the tables on the Pharisees and he becomes the questioner instead of the questioned. The Pharisees, unable to withstand the man's testimony, can think of nothing but to attack the character of the beggar and use ecclesiastical force against him.

Chapter nine is simply a continued record of teachings and works of Jesus in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles. Whether this incident was on the same day and immediately after the discourse of chapter 8, or whether it was on another day afterward is of little significance. The important matter is the evidential power of the miracle and the teaching Jesus attached to it. The outline is continued:

- II. The Word Manifested to the Jews and their rejection of Him, 1:19—12:50
- D. Public Ministry, Third Year
  2. Later Judean Ministry, 7:1—10:21, The Feast of Tabernacles
    - a. A Blind Man Healed, 9:1-12
    - b. He is Investigated by the Authorities, 9:13-23

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- c. The Questioned One becomes Questioner, 9:24-34
- d. Blindness that is blindness indeed! 9:35-41

## A BLIND MAN HEALED

*Text 9:1-12*

- 1 As he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth.
- 2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?
- 3 Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.
- 4 We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work
- 5 When I am in the world, I am the light of the world.
- 6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay,
- 7 and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing.
- 8 The neighbors therefore, and they that saw him aforetime, that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?
- 9 Others said, It is he: others said, No, but he is like him. He said, I am he.
- 10 They said therefore unto him, How then were thine eyes opened?
- 11 He answered, The man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to Siloam, and wash: so I went away and washed, and I received sight.
- 12 And they said unto him, Where is he? He saith, I know not.

*Queries*

- a. Why such a question from the disciples (v. 2)?
- b. Why put clay on the man's eyes?
- c. Is there any faith evidenced by the blind beggar?

*Paraphrase*

And as Jesus and His disciples were walking along He saw a man who was blind from his birth on. And His disciples asked Him saying, Teacher, did this man's sin or his parents' sin cause him to be blind? Jesus answered, It was not that this man or his parents sinned which caused his blindness. His blindness has happened to him within the providence of God in order that God's works of mercy and power might be made manifest in him. We, while our appointed time and

opportunities for working still remain, must make the most of our opportunities and do the works of the One who sent Me. The night-time of life comes to every man and then our opportunities to do God's work is over. I am the world's source of divine light and truth as long as I am in the world and so I must make the most of My opportunities here. Having said these things He spat upon the ground and made clay of the spittle and daubed the clay upon the blind man's eyes. Then Jesus said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (interpreted it means Sent). So he went away and washed and returned seeing! His neighbors and those who had seen him before and known him as a beggar were saying to one another, This is not the blind one who used to sit begging is he? Some said, Yes, this is the beggar; but others were saying, No, but he resembles that one. But the man himself said, Yes, I am that man. So they said to him, How were your eyes opened? He answered, The man who is called Jesus made clay and daubed my eyes with the clay and said to me, Go to Siloam and wash. I went and washed as he commanded and behold, I received my sight. They said to him, Where is this man? He replied, I do not know.

### *Summary*

Jesus cures a man born blind. The disciples are concerned about the theological aspects of the man's blindness. Jesus uses the man's blindness to perform a miracle and testify to His deity and, further, to illustrate His teaching that He is the light of the world.

### *Comment*

It would seem that the blind beggar was observed by Jesus and His disciples immediately upon their leaving the temple as recorded in John 8:59. The temple gates were appropriate places for the multitudes of aged and infirm of Jesus' day whose only means of existence was begging. People would be coming and going continually (and especially during annual festivals) to drop their shekels in the temple treasury. In fact, the Book of Acts tells of one beggar (Acts 3:3) who was carried and placed daily at the gate Beautiful in order to beg alms. This particular blind beggar must have been well-known for the disciples to have known him as one blind from birth. The time when Jesus and the disciples passed by and saw the beggar is not important. It could have been the day following Jesus' escape from

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the temple (8:59). Jesus continued His later Judean ministry, in and around Jerusalem, for at least three months (from Tabernacles in September to Dedication in December). But it seems more in harmony with the context that this incident took place on the same day that "Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple."

We can understand the alternative explanation of the disciples when they attributed the man's blindness to parental sin, but why would they suggest that a man *born* blind might be blind as a result of his own sin? How could a man sin before he was born? First, the Jews unhesitatingly connected suffering with sin. Job's friends attributed his calamities to his hypocrisy (cf. Job 4:5-8). All of man's infirmities are attributable in the final analysis to sin—Adam's sin brought about physical disease and death (cf. Rom. 5:12-21; also Gen. 3:17-19; Rom. 8:20-23). Furthermore, the sins of parents may be visited upon their children in physical calamities even to the fourth generation (cf. Ex. 20:5; 34:7; Num. 14-18; Deut. 5:9, 28:32; Jer. 31:29; Ezek. 18:2). And it is also true that much of a man's suffering is brought by his own sin and dissipation.

Could it be that in their dilemma they were thinking that if his blindness were a punishment for his own sin, then God must have punished him before he sinned, since he had been blind from his birth—or, the only other alternative, to them, was that the innocent child was being punished for the guilty parents.

According to most commentators, the Jewish Rabbis exaggerated the theological implications of the relationship between sin and suffering all out of proportion to what God's revealed truth actually says. Jesus did not agree with some of their ideas (cf. Luke 13:2-5). Some of the Rabbis are said to have believed that infants still in the womb were able to commit prenatal sin. According to their interpretation of Genesis 25:22-26, Esau had tried to murder Jacob while still in the womb of their mother! Other scholars have traced out in a Judaism later than Jesus' time a Jewish belief in the pre-existence of souls and their ability to sin in such a pre-existent state. Perhaps some of the Rabbis contemporary with Jesus were even then teaching this doctrine.

Whether the disciples had been exposed to these Rabbinical theories or not, they were concerned with the blind man primarily in a theological sense. They were wanting Jesus to give His opinion on the subject.

Jesus was not primarily interested in wasting time in speculating on the theological question of the cause for the man's blindness. His time was precious and to be used primarily for bringing remedy to the results of sin and evil. Jesus does not contradict the teaching of the Scriptures when He says, "that the man is not blind as a result of his own sin nor the sin of his parents." The man is still subject to mortal infirmities because of Adam's sin. Neither did Jesus imply that the man or his parents were without sin. In light of our ignorance on the mystery of suffering and affliction we will do well to accept what God has revealed and not to speculate further. Jesus simply stated here that, within the providential scheme of God, this man's blindness was in order that the works of God might be made manifest through Him. As Hendriksen says, "*All* things—even afflictions and calamities—have as their ultimate purpose the glorification of God in Christ by means of the manifestation of His greatness." (Gospel of John, Vol. II, Wm. Hendriksen, pub. Baker, page 73.) This is the teaching of the Scriptures (cf. Rom. 8:28; II Cor. 4:17) and this is the ultimate lesson which Job learned (cf. Job 42:1-6).

To the disciples this man presented an opportunity for theological speculation which was time-wasting and unprofitable. To Jesus the man's extremity presented a challenge and an opportunity to manifest in Himself the glory of God and the authority of God. Giving sight to the blind was to be a sign that the Messiah had come (cf. Isa. 35:5, 29:18, 32:3ff, 42:7; Matt. 12:22; Lk. 4:18-19).

In verse 4 Jesus makes it plain that He has only a certain allotted time in which to manifest Himself as the Son of God. It seems that Jesus means His period of earthly life when He says "day" and by "the night cometh when no man can work," He means physical death, when He shall depart this earth. This harmonizes with the general idea that Jesus is trying to teach the disciples concerning the man's blindness. But the Lord's statement in verse 4 is true of all His followers. We all pass this way but once. We must make the most of our opportunities to carry out our divinely appointed commission to proclaim and live the word of Christ. When the time of our departure draws nigh, let us be ready to say with Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (II Tim. 4:6-8).

He has a special work to do while He is in the world. While He is here He is the light of the world in a special sense (cf. John 1:4-18). While He was here He was the "effulgence of his glory,

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and the very image of his [God's] substance" (cf. Heb. 1:3). Jesus was Emmanuel (God with us). He came to walk among men and reveal unto them the Father (cf. John 14:7-11). He is, of course, still the Light of the World through the written testimony of His Word, the Bible, and through the reflected glory of the lives of His followers, in whom His Spirit abides.

Two reasons are generally offered for Christ's anointing the man's eyes with mud made of spittle: (1) To challenge the Pharasaic tradition of prohibiting application of medications on the Sabbath, and/or (2) to give the blind man some symbolic or expressive action in order that he might know the power to heal his blindness comes from Jesus. Perhaps the second explanation is the more to be desired. Jesus used this method at other times (cf. Mark 7:33, 8:23) and so did the prophets (cf. II Kings 4:29; Isa. 8:18) to show that the miraculous healing was communicated through them.

Why did Jesus send the blind man to the pool of Siloam? The pool of Siloam was just inside the southeast portion of the city wall and quite a distance from the temple—there were probably facilities much handier where the man might wash. We believe there were two reasons for such a command: (a) He sent the man there to test his faith. Faith must be tested and expressed. Actually, neither the mud nor the water had any medicinal qualities except as Jesus used them miraculously. The Scriptures are replete with such tests of faith by demanding obedience to an arbitrary command—both Old Testament and New Testament. Just one example will illustrate—Naaman the Syrian captain cured of leprosy by dipping himself seven times in the muddy Jordan river (cf. II Kings 5:10); (b) This pool probably had some symbolic, typical, or spiritual Messianic significance (cf. Isa. 8:6 and our comments on this pool in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles, John 7:38). John could be hinting of this spiritual significance when he adds the interpretation of the pool as "Sent."

The pool of Siloam has an interesting history. The water supply for Jerusalem was mainly from outside the city walls and always subject to being cut off by her enemies in event of siege. King Hezekiah, realizing that Sennacherib was about to invade Judah, in about 701 B.C., had workers tunnel through solid rock a conduit from the Virgin's Fountain (or Spring Gihon) into a pool inside the city (cf. II Chron. 32:2-8, 30; Isa. 22:9-11; II Kings 20:20). The engineers began their cutting from both ends and met in the middle and tunneled through solid rock with the very inadequate equipment of that

day for a distance of 583 yards. In 1880 a tablet was discovered by two boys, while wading, which had been cut into the stone in Hezekiah's reign to commemorate the completion of the tunnel. This inscription would have been there when the blind beggar went to wash the mud from his eyelids.

Jesus, wishing to remain hidden from those who would have stoned Him in the temple, quietly left the scene of the miraculous healing. The beggar, now able to drink in the world with his eyes, would go quickly home to tell his parents the exciting news. And there was excitement, indeed, as the neighbors couldn't believe their eyes. Some of them were unable to believe that this was their former blind neighbor until he, himself, said, "I am he." Naturally they are eager to hear how he received his sight. The man knew very little, actually, of what had transpired. He simply related clearly and concisely what he knew—the man called Jesus put clay on his eyes, told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam; he did so and received his sight. Someone no doubt told the blind man that it was the man called Jesus who commanded him—perhaps even Jesus told him His name. But, as we shall see later, the former blind man had not yet come to know Jesus as the Christ. The beggar's neighbors must have been cohorts with the Pharisees. Their desire to know where Jesus could be found is only natural and arises out of the excitement of His apparent miracle upon their neighbor.

### *Quiz*

1. What teachings concerning sin and suffering might cause the disciples to ask their question in verse 2?
2. Why was the man born blind?
3. What does Jesus mean primarily in verse 4? Does it apply to everyone?
4. How was Jesus the "light of the world while He was in the world"?
5. Why did Jesus put clay on the man's eyes?
6. Why command the man to wash in the pool of Siloam?
7. Who built the conduit to the pool of Siloam? What archeological evidence is there to substantiate the antiquity of this pool?

### THE BLIND MAN INVESTIGATED

*Text 9:13-23*

- 13 They bring to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.  
14 Now it was the sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15 Again therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he received his sight. And he said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and I see.

16 Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them.

17 They say therefore unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, in that he opened thine eyes? And he said, He is a prophet.

18 The Jews therefore did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight,

19 and asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

20 His parents answered and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

21 but how he now seeth, we know not; or who opened his eyes, we know not; ask him; he is of age; he shall speak for himself.

22 These things said his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

### *Queries*

- a. Why the disagreement among the Pharisees (v. 16)?
- b. Why did the Jews refuse to believe that the man had been healed until they questioned his parents?
- c. Were the man's parents really ignorant of who had opened their son's eyes?

### *Paraphrase*

Then they conducted the former blind man to the Pharisees (and it should be remembered that it was on the sabbath day that Jesus made clay and opened the man's eyes). The man was being asked again, now by the Pharisees, how he had received his sight. So he said to them, He put clay on my eyes and I washed, and now I am seeing. Some of the Pharisees were saying, This fellow is no man sent from God, for he is not keeping the sabbath. Others were saying, How is a sinner-man able to do such great signs? And there was disagreement among them. Therefore they spoke again to the man, say-

ing, What do you say about him seeing that you have declared that he opened your eyes? The blind man replied, He is a prophet! However, the Jews would not believe the boggard that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the man's parents and questioned them, saying, Is this man your son, whom you are saying was born blind? How then is it that he now sees? The man's parents answered, We know that this is our son and we know that he was born blind. How he is now able to see, or who opened his eyes we do not know! Ask him; he is of age. He can speak for himself. His parents gave this answer because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jewish authorities had already agreed that anyone who acknowledged Jesus as the Christ should be excommunicated from the synagogue. And for this very reason his parents said, He is of age, ask him.

### *Summary*

The Pharisees will not even believe that the man was formerly blind. His parents testify that he was born blind. But the man's parents will not testify as to who their son's Healer is, for fear of excommunication. One thing is certain to the Pharisees: Jesus of Nazareth cannot be a God-sent miracle worker for he violates their Sabbath traditions.

### *Comment*

Who brought the former blind man before the Pharisees? We do not know. The best guess is that some of the helpers of the Pharisees were sent to find the beggar and bring him in for questioning. It is doubtful that any of the neighbors of the man would be so eager to involve him. The news of the miracle would certainly get back to the Pharisees rapidly for, as John says parenthetically, Jesus performed the miracle on the Sabbath! For Jesus to heal again on the Sabbath was like waving a red flag in the face of a herd of enraged bulls. (For a study of Jesus and controversy, see our Volume I, pages 214-217.)

This seems to have been a formal investigation by the Pharisees, called for the specific purpose of questioning the man and passing judgment upon the miracle and the miracle-worker. It was the duty of the religious leaders to investigate all such incidents. They were charged with investigating the claims and doctrines of all who professed a message from God (Matt. 23:2; John 1:19-24). For an excellent discussion of this matter see Hendriksen's commentary on this section. It was also the duty and responsibility of the Pharisees to

"judge righteous judgment." These men, however, had already passed judgment on the miracle-worker, Jesus, before they investigated the miracle. They had already made up their minds that Jesus was a blasphemer. This investigation could only be a mockery of truth.

The beggar answered the first question simply and precisely. It is interesting to note that the beggar used the present tense when he said, "I see." Instead of saying, "I was made to see," he says, "I am seeing." He wants to emphasize for the Pharisees that although they may never know *how* the miracle took place, they can be sure that it *did* take place!

The Pharisees, caring not one iota that a man had been delivered from the chains of darkness, are interested only in their sanctimonious Sabbath traditions. The real issue here, however, is not their Sabbath traditions, but finding some straw of an accusation with which to condemn Jesus of Nazareth and sentence Him to death.

Others of the Pharisees are less emotional. There stood the beggar—formerly blind from birth but now seeing. Their problem was: "How can a man that is an open sinner do such great signs?" The word used for sinner is *hamartolos*, used in most places as an intensifier (cf. Luke 7:37, 39; 13:2) and means an open sinner or flagrant sinner. Jesus claimed to work miracles greater than any other (cf. John 15:24) and the beggar claims this miracle to be extraordinary (v. 32). There may have been a division in their thinking here, but it is quickly resolved and in united action they both condemn Jesus and excommunicate the beggar (vs. 28, 29, 34).

For the moment, however, the judges cannot agree among themselves. They hope they have frightened the beggar by hauling him before their august court. If he is frightened enough, perhaps he will say exactly what they want him to say about Jesus—"He is a profaner of the Law." But the beggar is far from frightened. He is indeed a man of courage and conviction. He answers, "He is a prophet!" The Pharisees had already expressed their judgment of Jesus ("Sabbath breaker"), but with the bravery of conviction the beggar confessed Jesus to be a prophet. What a contrast! Men who had studied the Law and the Prophets all their lives could not see that Jesus was sent from God, while a man blind from birth—unable to have ever studied the Scriptures—can readily see that Jesus must be a prophet sent from God. The real contrast is between those who *would* not see and one who would see; it is a matter of wanting to see! The Pharisees were also wanting the beggar to commit himself to an opinion concerning Jesus that they might use it against him later. If they cannot harm Jesus, they will harm the man He healed. The hate of the Jewish

rulers for Jesus was so intense that they would go to any length to express it. Later they would seek to kill the resurrected Lazarus out of their hate for Jesus (cf. John 12:9-11).

Although the Pharisees had the testimony of the man himself and, perhaps, the testimony of those who brought the beggar to them, they refused to accept the fact that the man had been blind and had been miraculously given his sight. That should have been enough evidence. But let's give them the benefit of the doubt and judge their reaction after more evidence has been presented.

The parents of the beggar are called before the investigating committee. In answer to the question as to whether he is their son they answer affirmatively. In answer to the question concerning his congenital blindness, again the answer is, "Yes, he was born blind." Now the facts are incontrovertible. That a very notable miracle has been wrought is undeniable. Now if the Pharisees will not believe it is not a matter of insufficient evidence but of wilful rejection of the truth!

The parents could have used some of the courage and conviction of their son. They were evidently not telling the truth when they said, ". . . who opened his eyes, we know not . . ." for verse 22 implies that they did know. But, as Hendriksen points out, before we criticize them too severely we must consider what we would have done in similar circumstances. To be excommunicated for the Jew was even more fearful than modern-day excommunication from the Roman Catholic Church. The excommunicated Jew was literally cut off from all social, religious, economic, or fraternal associations. His family counted him as dead (cf. John 12:42 and 16:2). The excommunicated Jew was to become to his countrymen as a heathen (cf. Matt. 18:17).

The parents, fearing these terrible consequences, determined before facing the Pharisees that they would never confess Jesus as the Messiah. It should also be clear that the Pharisees did not call this investigation to determine the *truth*. They had already agreed among themselves and made a public declaration that anyone openly confessing Jesus as the Messiah would be excommunicated. This inquiry was made in hopes that they might get some evidence to make what they had already determined to do—kill Jesus—appear less evil.

There is a very expressive phrase in the Greek rendering of verse 23. The English "Therefore" of v. 23 is a translation of the Greek, *dia touto*, which would best be translated "Because of this," or "For

this very reason . . ." There was no doubt in John's mind that the parents' reluctance to confess Jesus as the one who had healed their son was for the very reason that they feared excommunication.

### *Quiz*

1. Is this investigation by the Pharisees a seeking after the truth? Why?
2. Why ask the beggar his opinion of Jesus?
3. Why did the Jews not believe that the beggar had formerly been blind?
4. After the answers of the parents, what must the Pharisees admit?
5. What was involved in being put out of the synagogue?
6. What was the real reason for the refusal of the parents to tell who had healed their son?

### THE QUESTIONED BECOMES QUESTIONER

#### *Text 9:24-34*

- 24 So they called a second time the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner.  
 25 He therefore answered, Whether he is a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.  
 26 They said therefore unto him, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?  
 27 He answered them, I told you even now, and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? would ye also become his disciples?  
 28 And they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are disciples of Moses.  
 29 We know that God hath spoken unto Moses: but as for this man, we know not whence he is.  
 30 The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened mine eyes.  
 31 We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth.  
 32 Since the world began it was never heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind.  
 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.  
 34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

*Queries*

- a. What do the Pharisees mean by saying, "Give glory to God"?
- b. What is meant by, "God heareth not sinners"?
- c. Why did the Pharisees say the beggar was "altogether born in sin"?

*Paraphrase*

So for the second time the Pharisees called the man that had been blind, and adjured him, Give glory to God; we know that this particular man is an open sinner. The beggar replied, Whether he is a sinner or not, I do not know; one thing I do know—I was blind and now I can see! So they said to him, What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes? Deliberately the man answered them, I have told you already and you would not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become his disciples, do you? They reviled him vociferously, sneering, You are that one's disciple; we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow we do not know where he has come from. The man replied, Well this is astonishing, that you say you do not know where he comes from and yet he has opened my eyes. We Jews know that God does not hear wilfull sinners, but if a man is a worshipper of God and seeks to do His will, to such a man God listens. Now, since the world began it was never heard that a man opened the eyes of a man born blind. It follows then that if this man were not from God, he would never be able to do anything like this—They interrupted vehemently, You were absolutely conceived and begotten in sin; and are you now presuming to teach us? And they cast him out!

*Summary*

The poor beggar is not awed by the presence of the Pharisees. He is a man with a good and honest heart upon which the truth has fallen and is slowly bringing forth fruit. The beggar is more amazed at the wilfull blindness of the Pharisees than anything else. By his sincere, innocent and capable logic he becomes the questioner and exposes the stiff-necked unreasonableness of the Pharisees. He is summarily excommunicated for his troubles.

*Comment*

The adjuration, "Give glory to God," could be either the administration of an oath or simply a statement that the man should give Jehovah the glory for His healing rather than Jesus whom they "know" to be a sinner. The commentators are disagreed. We prefer to think that this tribunal was attempting to intimidate their precocious opponent by the adjuration of an oath. There were many different formulae used to express the judicial oath among the Jews (cf. I Sam. 14:39, 44, 19:6, 20:3, 20:23; II Sam. 11:11, 14:19, 15:21; Matt. 5:34, 23:16, 26:63). This particular phrase is used in Joshua 7:19 when Achan was adjured to "Give glory to God," and tell the truth as to his guilt. The Pharisees, having been thus far confounded and put on the defensive, bring to bear all the ecclesiastical and judicial authority they possess. They must regain the offensive. This naive and common beggar has, in his sincere adherence to the facts, shown the Pharisees for what they really are—bigoted, ambiguous and dishonest. The rulers have already pronounced Jesus an open sinner, yet this beggar dares to call Him a prophet. To protect their proud position and to find an occasion for condemning Jesus to death, they threaten this man with an oath.

The arrogant, "we know" on the part of the Pharisees is not new. They were certain that they alone possessed knowledge. They were the intelligentsia and all others were ignorant (cf. John 7:14, 45-52). The rebuke of Job to his three friends, "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you," would be fitting for the Pharisees.

But the man was not awed—he would not be intimidated. The beggar had been presented irrefutable evidence that this Jesus was more than a mere man. His evidence is empirical—the highest type of evidence—that which appeals to the senses of man. Such evidence is so overwhelmingly factual he must stand in opposition to Pharisaeic opinion regardless of the consequences. Furthermore, the very nature of the evidence makes only "this one thing" outweigh all the force of Pharisaeic authority and prestige.

Now, having been bested in cross-examination and having their bigotry exposed, *the only way* they can think of to carry out their nefarious bluff is to repeat their question concerning the "how" of the alleged miracle. Perhaps they are hoping to trip the beggar into a contradiction in his account.

The beggar's bravery is exciting to behold! In view of the power residing in this tribunal of Pharisees the man's courage is challenging. It is no less than amazing that his ironic answer in verse 27 did not incite the ire of the Pharisees more than it did! Only their all-consuming concentration on killing Jesus saved the beggar from probable bodily harm at this moment. The apostle Paul was later struck in the mouth for alleged impertinence in the same type of situation (Acts 23:2). He has told them over and over again from his own personal experience—they have heard plainly enough, but refuse to accept the truth which is necessarily implied if they do acknowledge the miracle. The man's exasperation with these opinionated, self-righteous dogmatists is understandable. What man is able to retain his patience with those who deliberately and continually refuse to admit that which is undeniable.

Maliciously they turn upon the beggar with vile imprecations. The man has humiliated, outwitted and exposed these judges of Israel. He has further completely turned the tables in this investigation—the prosecutors have become the prosecuted! The only recourse imaginable to these Pharisees arises out of the very nature of their hearts—to revile the man.

They could hardly think of any malediction more vile than to say, "You are that one's disciple!" They would not even so much as speak the name of Jesus. He was judged by the rulers and teachers of Israel as a blasphemer—a servant of Satan. Jesus was also pronounced a heretic—advocating (according to the Jews) destruction of the Law of Moses. The rulers had decided that Jesus must be destroyed (because of envy) and regardless of His truth and righteousness, anyone defending Him was also no better than a heretic.

As for themselves, the Pharisees boasted, "we are the disciples of Moses." But Moses would never claim them! For Moses "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt . . ." Moses, through what he wrote, condemned these pseudo-disciples. Moses wrote of the great Prophet that was to be raised up from among them (cf. Deut. 18:15-19) and Jesus was that Prophet (cf. John 5:45-47; Luke 24:44; Acts 3:21-24). The warning of John the Baptist three years previous still applies (cf. Matt. 3:9), for God is not only able to raise up from stones children unto Abraham, but unto Moses as well.

Again the presumptuous, "we know." Yes, they knew that God had spoken to Moses, but they lacked the essential thing—*what* God

had really spoken to Moses. But here is the marvel—just as the blind man saw it—they “knew” so much about Moses which they had to accept on the testimony of the written record, yet they would not accept the first-hand testimony of this miracle which witnessed to Jesus! It simply astounded the guileless and straightforward beggar that men would so deliberately blind themselves to truth. This former blind man has a heart of the “good and honest” type, for to him Jesus’ origin is evident—He is from God!

Their esteemed Moses, great as he was, had never performed any such miracle as this—opening the eyes of one congenitally blind. In fact, it had never been heard of in all the annals of history until the beggar’s day and age. None of the prophets had done such a miracle.

As Hendriksen points out, the beggar is an excellent logician. His syllogism here is perfect:

Major Premise: God hears and answers and works through only those who worship Him and abide in His will and are sent from Him.

Minor Premise: This man Jesus performed an unheard of and astounding miracle—greater even than any Moses had wrought.

Conclusion: This man Jesus is just as definitely sent from God as was Moses. He cannot possibly be an open and flagrant sinner as the Pharisees accuse Him.

Not only does the beggar use logic to prove his point, but he evidently had in mind many of the Scriptures which the Pharisees should have remembered concerning God’s relationship to the wicked. God does not hear nor answer the prayers of the willfull and blatant sinner 15:29; Isa. 1:15, 59:2; Jer. 11:11, 14:12; Ezek. 8:18; Mic. 3:4; (cf. I Sam. 8:18; Job 27:9, 35:12; Psa. 18:41, 66:18; Prov. 1:28, Zech. 7:13; John 8:21; Acts 10:35).

This verse (31) has been abused. Some have taken it from its context and used it as a proof-text to declare that any person not affiliated with the Christian church cannot expect to have their prayers heard by God. It is very plain from Acts 10:35 that God hears the sincere and honest prayers of those who have not yet “been obedient to that form of doctrine.” In fact, in Cornelius’ case, God heard the prayer of one who had not yet even heard of the gospel of Christ! This, of course, may even be true of men and women today who have not yet heard the gospel, but are earnestly praying and seeking God’s will—God may hear and answer their prayers.

On the other hand, God will not listen nor will He answer the prayers of men and women who regard iniquity in their heart. Wilfull

sinners—persistent disobeyers—will not be heard, regardless of their outward affiliations with whatever religious group to which they may belong (cf. all the Major and Minor Prophets). To be heard of God we must hear Him—to receive of His bounty, we must be obedient and full of faith.

Note the beggar's growing faith and knowledge of Jesus. First, "the man that is called Jesus . . ." (v. 11); next, "he is a prophet . . ." (v. 17); next, ". . . from God . . ." (v. 33); and last, ". . . Lord, I believe . . ." (v. 38).

Here is a miracle that is a miracle indeed—and the Pharisees cannot deny the veracity of its accomplishment. They themselves can readily see that the man has his sight. Both the neighbors and the man's parents testified under fear of banishment that the man had been born blind. The man himself testified under oath that Jesus of Nazareth had performed a miracle. The Pharisees could not disprove it.

The only way they could think to maintain their self-begotten prestige was to attack the character of the beggar and to excommunicate him from the synagogue. They inferred what Jesus had denied (cf. v. 2)—that the beggar's blindness was an indication of his and his parents' wanton sinfulness. How dare he presume to teach the scholars of the Scriptures anything! This is normal procedure for the rulers of the Jews—if they cannot disprove the miracles attesting to Christ's message, they will threaten the messengers or do them bodily harm (cf. Acts 4:16-21).

### *Quiz*

1. What two reasons are given for the Pharisees saying, "Give glory to God"?
2. What is the highest type of evidence to attest to a fact?
3. Why is the beggar's bravery so exciting?
4. Why was their boast to be the disciples of Moses absurd?
5. Why did the beggar "marvel"?
6. What two ways did the beggar prove Jesus to be from God?
7. Does God ever hear the prayers of non-Christians? How do you know?

### BLINDNESS INDEED!

*Text 9:35-41*

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and finding him, he said, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

36 He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee.

38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

39 And Jesus said, For judgment came I into this world, that they that see not may see; and that they that see may become blind.

40 Those of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things, and said unto him, Are we also blind?

41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see: your sin remaineth.

### *Queries*

- a. How did the beggar "worship" Jesus?
- b. Why would Jesus come to make some blind?
- c. How would being blind help the Pharisees to be without sin?

### *Paraphrase*

Jesus heard that the rulers had cast the beggar out and had excommunicated him; so Jesus went searching for the man and, having found him, said to him, Do you believe in the Son of man — the Messiah? The beggar answered, saying, Who is he, Sir, Tell me in order that I may believe in him? Jesus answered and said, You have seen Him, in fact, He is talking to you right now. The beggar cried, Lord, I believe! and he fell down before Jesus and worshipped Him. And Jesus said, I came into this world and my coming has necessarily brought judgment, for my doctrine brings spiritual sight to those who recognize their spiritual blindness and my teaching, by its very nature, blinds those who are certain they have all spiritual sight. Some of the Pharisees who were near, hearing what He said, replied, We are not blind also, are we? Jesus answered them, If you would admit your spiritual blindness and believe on Me you would have your sins forgiven, but you are persisting in trusting your own self-righteousness when you say "we see—we know," therefore your sin remains unforgiven and you remain blind.

### *Summary*

Jesus finds the beggar who has been cut off from the Israel that is passing away and makes him a member of the new Israel that is coming. He gives the man who has already exhibited a spark of faith an opportunity to come to full faith in Him as the Messiah. The man, because of his faith, receives a great blessing. The Pharisees, because of their unbelief, become even more hardened.

*Comment*

The Greek word *heurisko* (find) may mean "to find, with previous search." This is the word used of Jesus' "finding" the beggar after he was cast out. The Good Shepherd does not find his precious lambs by accident—He searches for them until He does find them and takes them under His loving protection. Jesus intends to offer the beggar that which is far superior to what he has lost in being excommunicated. He is being offered the opportunity to believe in the One in whom all the law and the prophets is fulfilled!

The American Standard Version has translated the latter half of verse 35: ". . . the Son of God?" while the Nestle Greek text has ". . . *ton huion tou anthropou*" (the Son of man). The most ancient manuscripts (Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and Bezae) have "the Son of man." The latest great Codex on John, Bodmer II (P66), confirms the reading, "the Son of man" and the Revised Standard Version has this reading also.

The term "Son of man" is used by Jesus (exclusively by Him) in the Gospels at least eighty times—thirteen of which are found in the Fourth Gospel (cf. 1:51, 3:13, 3:14, 5:27, 6:27, 6:53, 6:62, 8:28, 9:35, 12:23, 12:34 (twice), 13:31). It was clearly a Messianic term and the people understood it as such (cf. 12:34). The prophet Daniel foretold of the Messiah, using the term "son of man," and Revelation 1:13 and 14:14 use the same term. Therefore, when the beggar heard the term "Son of man," he anticipated beholding the Messiah of Israel.

We can almost hear the eagerness in the man's reply . . . "Just tell me who he is, sir, in order that I may believe on him." We have translated the word *kurie* (Lord) in verse 36 to read "sir." The word *kurie* may be translated either "sir" or "lord" and is so translated (cf. John 4:11, 15, 19, 49; 5:7; 12:21; 20:15, where it has been translated in both the KJV and the ASV as "sir.") The beggar has not yet had it revealed to him just who Jesus is, but in verse 38 he knows Jesus as the Messiah and the same word, *kurie*, may be translated "Lord."

Only a very few times did the Lord reveal Himself so plainly as the Messiah. Most of the time He allowed the people to form their own conclusions and make their own statements as to His Messiahship. One other time that we recall, He said, "I that speak unto thee am he . . ." (John 4:26).

The Greek word *aphiemi* used for the word "said" in verse 38 is the same word used of Jesus when He "uttered a loud voice" (Mark 15:37) upon the cross. The word, according to Vine's Expository Dictionary is "used of uttering a cry." How the man must have been

startled to find that he stood in the presence of and had been healed by the very Messiah for whom the Jews had waited century upon century. The man uttered a cry, "Lord, I believe . . ." and probably fell upon his knees before Jesus as he worshipped Him. Notice, Jesus never refused the worship of men as did the apostles (Acts 10:26, 14:15), for Jesus deserved man's adoration! According to Vine's Expository Dictionary, page 235, "The Note to John 9:38 in the American Standard Version in this connection is most unsound; it implies that Christ was a creature." While the word *proskuneo* (used here for the beggar's worship toward Jesus) may also be used when one man does reverence or obeisance toward another man, it is "most unsound" to imply, as does the footnote in the ASV, that Jesus is a creature.

In verse 39 Jesus makes a claim that, at first glance, seems contradictory of John 3:17 and 12:47 where He claims that He did not come to judge. However, after careful study, they are found to complement one another rather than contradict (see our comments on John 3:17, Vol. I, pages 112-113). He came to convict men of their sins and to proclaim the one way of salvation. His coming resulted in two reactions by men—some refused to come to the light lest their works be shown for what they really are; others gladly came to the light (cf. our comments on John 3:19-20, Vol. I, pages 114-115). He came to declare the truth and man's reaction one way or another results in man's being judged—worthy or unworthy. The prophet Isaiah was commissioned to go and preach to Judah purposely to dull the understanding of those who would not understand, to close the ears of those who would not hear, and to close the eyes of those who would not see (cf. Isa. 6:9-10). Jesus quoted this same passage to explain that He taught in parables to bring about judgment upon those who refused to understand Him (cf. Matt. 13:10-15). And so the man who deliberately rejects or disobeys the doctrines of Christ necessarily judges himself. Christ's teachings, by their very nature of demanding faith and obedience and by their absolute finality, cannot be rejected without judgment. No man, once confronted with the Gospel of Christ, can remain neutral. Jesus demands a choice—either for or against Him (cf. Matt. 12:30).

Some of the Pharisees who were standing near, began to "get the message." They knew from their past experiences with Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles that He must be talking of them and their blindness.

Jesus furnished the Pharisees and all the world for all ages a truism which needs to be remembered. No man is so blind as one who will not see! If the Pharisees had realized their blindness and had been pure in heart they would have sought the Light which would have led them to Jesus, the true Light, which lighteth every man (cf. John 1:9). The man who knows his own ignorance and blindness, but who desires to know more, is the man whose vision can be increased and his knowledge enlarged. But the Pharisees boasted of their vision—"we know," again and again. They did not seek the Light for they did not think they needed the Light—they already possessed all the Light there was. Therefore, because they would not recognize their own spiritual destitution, they rejected the only source of grace and forgiveness. What a lesson this is for all of us today! May we never arrive at the place where we reject God's Word in favor of our own opinion or knowledge. Let us never be so presumptuous as to think that we, as a group or as individuals, can never be taught from God's Word because we know it all.

### *Quiz*

1. Did Jesus find the beggar by accident? Explain.
2. What did Jesus call Himself in verse 35? What did the title imply?
3. Does John 9:39 contradict John 3:17? Explain.
4. In what way were the Pharisees remaining in their sins?

## EXPOSITORY SERMON NO. NINE LIGHT FOR THE BLIND

John 9:1-41

### *Introduction*

#### I. JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES SEE THE BLIND BEGGAR SITTING, PERHAPS, AT THE TEMPLE GATE

- A. Can you sympathize with the blind man? He was born blind. He had never seen the lovelight in the eyes of his father or mother. He had never seen the green fields, the majestic mountains, the winding Jordan river. The brilliance of the sun by day had never shone upon his eyes, nor had he ever witnessed the dark blue sky at night sprinkled with twinkling stars. Yet, as we shall see, he saw more than all the others about him who had their eyesight.

## II. THE QUESTION OF THE DISCIPLES

- A. They raise the theological question about his infirmity being connected with sin—especially do they presume that his blindness has come as a punishment. In a sense, our sins are visited upon our offspring for generation upon generation. But in another sense, our sins are not borne by our children (cf. Ezek. 18:19-20). There was a purpose in the beggar's blindness and Jesus answers with that purpose—that the glory of God might be made manifest. All infirmities are for such a purpose. They are for discipline, chastisement, that the will of God might be perfected in those who believe and that God's justice and power might be shown. To the disciples this man posed a problem of the past—"How did he get that way?" But to Jesus he presented a challenge and an opportunity to work the works of God in the present!

*Discussion*

## I. BLINDNESS OF THE BEGGAR

Although his physical sight had never been given him, he was not really the blind one at all. Actually, it was probably his physical blindness that worked to bring his greatest blessing. It caused him to turn in utter dependence upon the mercy of God and anyone else who would help him. His sightless eyes thrust him upon the grace of God—they led him to hope.

Thus his faith was a faith that would obey Jesus' commands with unhesitating obedience. It seems that always the poor, infirm and outcasts, who found both themselves and others incapable of help, that professed the greatest faith in Jesus. They had nowhere else or no one else to turn to—the religious leaders of the day would not be their shepherds. The prosperous, healthy and self-righteous felt no necessity to trust in God. The church at Laodicea was told, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and *blind* and naked . . ." (Rev. 3:17. (Italics mine.) AND SO IT IS! THE MAN WHO HAS LOST HIS PHYSICAL SIGHT CAN NEVER BE SO BLIND AS THE MAN WHO HAS LOST HIS INDEPENDENCE UPON GOD!

This man had courage. He knew as well as any other Jew of that city and of that particular time what would happen to anyone who associated with Jesus. Not only had he associated with the hated Nazarene, he had allowed himself to be healed by Him on the Sabbath.

The beggar had an honest heart and when convinced of the truth, he followed the leading of the truth. He accepted the testimony that was presented to him and believed it. He might not be a student of theology, as were the rulers, but he could witness to what Jesus had done for him—this he knew. His honesty allowed Him to see far more than the Pharisees could see about Jesus. They said Jesus could not possibly be good for He healed on the Sabbath. The blind man said, "God would not work through a deliberate blasphemer." He knew more of the Old Testament than did the students of the Scriptures. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psa. 66:18). "When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood" (Isa. 1:15).

## II. THE BLINDNESS OF THE BEGGAR'S PARENTS

Theirs was the blindness of cowardice and fear. Even in everyday experience we know that fear can cause people to be blind to many things that would otherwise be easily seen. What did they fear? They feared loss of social liberty and prestige. If they should profess any belief in Jesus they would be boycotted socially and economically. Their friends would not come near them . . . they would not be sold anything in the markets. They also feared excommunication—religious condemnation. They would no longer be allowed to participate in the services of the temple or the synagogue. This has been used by other religious dictators in modern times as a means of forcing the dictates of men upon the superstitious and indifferent. The parents might also have been afraid of the responsibilities they would have to assume should they become followers of Christ. Many today are afraid of the truth because they might have to change their way of living—to give up some of their sinful, indulgent pleasures and so they have conveniently blinded themselves to the truth—they have seared their consciences.

The parents could not see beyond the level of this world. They could see only the persecution and criticism they would have to face. They could see only the things of this world which they might lose. Peter at Antioch is a good example of such blindness. His fear of the Jews actually blinded him to the truth that he himself had already preached concerning the reception of the Gentiles into the kingdom. When some Judaizers criticized him for eating with Gentiles, he defected and separated himself from the Gentiles. He had just preached that God is no respecter of persons—that the Gentiles are to be received into the church as brothers—now he gives in through fear. It

isn't easy to be a witness for Jesus today. Today's great philosophy is "Don't be different from the world—be a conformist—don't be abnormally religious." I sometimes believe it is more difficult to witness for Christ in times of peace and prosperity and security than in times of persecution and hardship. But cowardice and fear brings a blindness that covers our spiritual eyes so that we cannot see the truth—we do not see facts and ideas in their proper perspective. If all we can see are the consequences and losses in this world by following Christ, we are no better than this beggar's parents. The heroes of the O. T. were not even permitted to see the Christ and yet they could see better than these parents through their spiritual eyes for "these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were pilgrims on the earth . . . for they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country . . ." (Heb. 11:13-14). THE BLIND BEGGAR WAS LOOKING AT THE HEAVENLY CITY, WHILE HIS PARENTS GROPED BLINDLY FOR THIS WORLD AND LOST BOTH THIS WORLD AND HEAVEN!

### III. THE BLINDNESS OF THE PHARISEES

Theirs was a blindness of prejudice and hate and bigotry. Do you hear any of them rejoicing even that the man born blind was healed? They were interested in nothing but revenge for having one of their traditions broken. They were interested only in trapping Jesus. Woe unto them, for "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil." There are men and women even in our day who are so filled with hate and prejudice that they can see no good in anything but their own ideas and their own ways of living.

Their blindness was to be found in that they said, "We see." Over and over they insisted, "We know this man is a sinner . . .", or, "We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man we know not whence he is . . ." They knew everything, and the people did not know anything. They were the teachers and everyone else were the ignoramuses. Paul points out the blindness of the Jewish teachers in Romans, the second chapter. The Jews gloried and were secure in the belief that they were the guides of the blind, yet they themselves did not practice what they taught as light.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians (II Cor. 3) that even in his day the Jews were still blinded by the veil of prejudice—they refused to see that the Old Covenant was done away in Christ. ". . . the god of

this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ should not dawn upon them." Jesus wisely pointed out these self-righteous men as "blind guides trying to lead the blind . . ." and both would fall into the pit. NO MAN IS SO BLIND AS ONE WHO WILL NOT SEE! HOW MANY TIMES MIRACLES WERE WROUGHT BEFORE THE VERY EYES OF THE PHARISEES, BUT THEY WOULD NOT SEE!

### *Conclusion*

#### I. WHAT CAUSES SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS?

- A. Materialism (cf. Isa. 56:10, 59:10). The Jewish national eye was so full of materialism that it was utterly blind to God. Take any American weekend or, more especially, national holiday, and you can see the same blindness. Our eyes are so full of tinsel, gifts, food and wanton pleasure that we cannot possibly see God. God's solemn warning to the Jews before they possessed the promised land was, "Beware lest after you have eaten, builded fine houses, increased your flocks and silver and gold . . . beware lest your heart be lifted up and you forget Jehovah thy God."
- B. Fear! Fear of what will be done to us or fear of what we will have to do if we allow our conscience to be convicted and follow Jesus. Herod's fear of the truth caused him to put John the Baptist in prison and to death. Felix's fear of the truth caused him to put off listening to Paul (Acts 24:25). Agrippa's fear of becoming a Christian and giving in to the truth and giving up his sensual way of life caused him to reject Paul's message.
- C. Self-righteousness and prejudice and hate! "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now you say, "We see: your sin remaineth." "The whole have no need of a Physician, but the sick do . . . I came not to call the righteous unto repentance but the sinners . . ."

#### II. HOW MAY ONE HAVE SPIRITUAL SIGHT?

- A. Purity and humility! "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The blind beggar was honest, pure, innocent, guileless and thus his spiritual eyes were opened along with his physical eyes.
- B. Faith! "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27). Moses saw even that which was invisible through eyes of faith!

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- C. Courage! One thing is certainly true of the blind beggar—he was a brave man. He knew quite well the consequences of declaring Jesus to be a good man—a prophet. But he made his statement and took his stand. It was as if he said: "I am bound to believe in Him, I am bound to take my stand by Him because of all that He has done for me . . ." We are reminded of Martin Luther when summoned before the Catholic hierarchy and commanded to recant and return to the Roman church—Luther said, "Here I stand, I can do no other, God help me."
- D. Loyalty to Christ always brings greater revelation and spiritual insight. This man was rewarded for his faith by a further revelation of Jesus. When the Jews had cast him out of the temple, the Lord of the temple went searching for him and found him. IF ANY MAN'S CHRISTIAN WITNESS SEPARATES HIM FROM THE WORLD, IT ALWAYS BRINGS HIM CLOSER TO JESUS CHRIST. It is to the man who is true to Him that Jesus most fully reveals Himself. Loyalty to Jesus may well bring persecution and scorn at the hands of men, but the reward of loyalty is a closer walk with Christ and an increasing knowledge of the wonder of Christ.

### III. THIS CLOSER WALK CAN BE YOURS . . . THIS SPIRITUAL SIGHT CAN BE YOURS

- A. By obedience to His will (cf. John 7:17). The more we know Jesus by doing His will, the greater He becomes to us personally. Why do you tarry, my friend?

## CHAPTER TEN

The first half of Chapter Ten undoubtedly takes place just after the incident with the Pharisees and the man born blind—especially the beggar's excommunication in Chapter Nine. The discourses on the Door and the Good Shepherd are chronologically a continuation of the Feast of Tabernacles' discourses. But there is a very evident lapse of time near the middle of Chapter Ten. At verse 22 of this chapter we are suddenly transferred in time about three months forward to the Feast of Dedication. Between the Feast of Tabernacles (September) and Dedication (December), Jesus conducts an extensive ministry in and around Jerusalem (cf. Map #5, page 12). Between 10:21 and 10:22 Jesus sends the Seventy on an evangelistic campaign; visits the

home of Mary and Martha; retires to an oft-used place for prayer; dines in a Pharisee's home; preaches soul-stirring evangelistic sermons recorded in Luke 12 and 13; heals a woman bowed double in a synagogue, and teaches many parables. We continue our general outline:

II. The Word Manifested to the Jews and their rejection of Him,  
1:19—12:50

D. Public Ministry, Third Year

2. Later Judean Ministry, 7:1—10:21, The Feast of Tabernacles
  - a. The Door of the sheep, 10:1-10
  - b. The Good Shepherd, 10:11-21
3. Later Judean Ministry, 10:22—10:42, The Feast of Dedication
  - a. Claims to Deity, 10:22-31
  - b. Evidence for Deity, 10:32-42

In the first half of Chapter Ten we have two allegories—the Door of the Sheep and The Good Shepherd. The word (10:6) by which John classifies the figure of speech used by Jesus is the Greek word, *paroimia*. This is not the Greek word used in other places in the New Testament for parable (*parabole*). Neither is *paroimia* the same in its form of expression as *parabole*. The *paroimia* is more like an allegory. D. R. Dungan, in his Hermeneutics textbook says, on pages 258-259, "The distinction in Scripture between a parable and an allegory is said to be, that a parable is a supposed history, and an allegory is a figurative application of real facts." A parable is an extended simile (expressed comparison), while an allegory is an extended metaphor (implied comparison).

In the interpretation of allegories the tendency is usually, as with all figurative language, over-interpretation rather than under-interpretation. That is, most interpreters tend to manufacture and extend points of analogy which the author did not intend to include in the lesson of his allegory. Any good hermeneutics book will give a number of rules to follow in interpreting allegories. We mention just a few of the most important ones:

- a. Be very careful not to demand too many points of analogy.
- b. Let the author give his own interpretation.
- c. Remember, figures of speech are not always used with the same meaning everywhere in Scripture.
- d. Let the literal facts of everyday life be made to assist in the interpretation of figurative language.

- e. Allegories may explain allegories (which is exactly what we have in John 10:1-21—two allegories; the first evidently misunderstood and the second given in an attempt to clarify the message of the first).

The very evident purpose and message of these two allegories is a strong contrast between Jesus as the Door of security and peace and the Good Shepherd of compassionate trustworthiness with the false, insecure, unloving, untrustworthy Pharisees who claimed to be shepherds of the sheep. Such a contrast—between Jesus and those who claim to be shepherds—is very appropriate for our day.

### THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP

#### *Text 10:1-10*

- 1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.
- 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the (or, *a*) shepherd of the sheep.
- 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.
- 4 When he hath put forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.
- 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.
- 6 This parable (or, *proverb*) spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.
- 7 Jesus therefore said unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.
- 8 All that came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.
- 9 I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture.
- 10 The thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.

#### *Queries*

- a. Why does Jesus use this particular figure (The Door) to teach at this particular time?
- b. Is Jesus referring to Himself as both the Door and the Shepherd in the first two verses?
- c. Does the "salvation of verse 9 and the "pasture" have any connection with the "life . . . abundantly" of verse 10?

*Paraphrase*

I assure you most solemnly that the one who does not lead the sheep into the sheepfold through the Door, but enters deceitfully by climbing into the fold some other way, that one is a thief and a robber. But the one leading the sheep through the Door is a true shepherd of the sheep. Unto him the door-keeper opens the door and the sheep heed his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has firmly started all of his own on the way to pasture, he goes in front of them leading them and the sheep follow him because they recognize him as a true shepherd. They will never follow a stranger, but to the contrary, they will flee from him because they do not want to know or give heed to the voice of strangers. This allegory Jesus told them, but they did not understand what He was saying to them. So Jesus said again to them, I assure you most solemnly, I Myself am the Door of the sheep. All others who come elevating themselves before me in eminence are thieves and robbers, but the true sheep heed them not. I Myself am the Door. If anyone enters into the sheepfold through Me he shall be saved, and he shall go in and out freely enjoying peace and security and he shall find pasture upon which to feed his soul. The thief comes only in order that he may steal and kill and destroy; I came that the sheep may have life and that they may have it in overflowing abundance.

*Summary*

Jesus first hints that those claiming to be shepherds of Israel are not entering by the Door and are thus not true shepherds but strangers, thieves and robbers. Then He states plainly that He is the Door and those entering the fold through Him shall be secure and find substance.

*Comment*

The figures (Shepherd, Sheep, Sheepfold, Hireling) used by Jesus in these allegories should have been familiar enough to the Jews. Read these Old Testament references for yourself to see why Jesus could expect the Jews to understand His allegory: Num. 27:17; I Sam. 17:34-36; II Sam. 12:3; I Kings 22:17; Psa. 23, 79:13, 80:1, 95:7; Isa. 40:11; Jere. 23:1; Ezek. 34; Zech. 10:2, 11:17, 13:7, and others to be found in your concordance.

There are a number of reasons why we believe Jesus was not referring to Himself as The Shepherd in these first ten verses of Chapter 10. First, the main idea is to show that those rulers who had excommunicated the beggar (chapter 9) were not, as they claimed to be, true shepherds of God's flock—because they refused to lead the

sheep through the true Door! Secondly, as the marginal note of the A. S. V. text shows, the definite article *the* (verse 2) before the word *shepherd* may be supplanted by the indefinite article *a*—making verse 2 to read ". . . he that entereth in by the door is *a shepherd* of the sheep." In fact, the definite article is omitted in the best Greek manuscripts. Thirdly, Jesus makes a point of referring to Himself as the Door in verses 1 through 10 and then makes a point of emphasizing Himself as The Shepherd in verses 11 through 21.

Usually the sheepfolds were community edifices wherein each shepherd of the community would shelter his flock by night. They were large enclosures walled by stone walls and sometimes large briars or thorns were secured to the top of the wall to fend off thieves. These folds were protected by a strong door of which only the porter (door-keeper), who was either paid or took turns with other shepherds, held the key. The porter knew the various shepherds and would immediately open the door for the shepherds who has led their sheep in through the door. Each shepherd knew each of his own sheep by name—and all his sheep knew their shepherd's voice from any other! The true shepherd, then, must first lead the sheep into the fold by the door; the true shepherd is also recognized by his own sheep. The one who proposes to get into the fold by some other way than the Door is very evidently a stranger, thief and robber. He is both crafty and violent, and the sheep flee from him. Sometimes there were sheepfolds of a less imposing structure out in the fields and upon the hills. They had lower walls and were without doors. The shepherds themselves lay down across the entrance gap at night and literally became the door of the sheep. The point, we reiterate, is this: there is no rightful access into the fold except by the door, and any who enter any other way are strangers and have no intention but to steal or destroy.

Jesus had for two years boldly presented Himself as the Way to God—the Way to Life. The Pharisees and rulers of the Jews who claimed to be the spiritual shepherds of God's people violently rejected Him and deceitfully went among the flock stealing and destroying. A prime example of such rejection of the Door was just experienced by Jesus when the blind beggar was excommunicated because he dared to confess Jesus as one sent from God. The beggar was manifestly one of the true sheep for he saw through the hypocrisy and false shepherding of the Pharisees—he knew not their voice, for they, with one voice, contradicted plain evidence of Jesus' Divine nature.

Thus as Jesus speaks to the crowds at the Feast of Tabernacles, He distinguishes both the true shepherds and the true sheep. The true shepherds of God's flock "go before" the flock—that is, they lead—they do not drive. However, as is intimated in verse 4, it is sometimes necessary for the shepherd to be firm with unwilling sheep for the sheep's own good.

The sheep, on the other hand, are to recognize the shepherd's voice and follow him. They are also to beware the false shepherd and robber and are to flee from him.

Now this writer believes that definite application may be made of these allegories to both the elders of the New Testament church and the members of the church. A quick survey of the duties and responsibilities of both elders (Acts 20:28-32; I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11; Heb. 13:17) and the responsibilities of the members of the church toward the elders (Heb. 13:7, 17) will substantiate this application. The elders must, to be true shepherds of God's flock, lead the people into the fold through the Door. True elders should take individual interest in each member, knowing them by name and by need. He should be firm with the sheep when necessary. The members are to willingly submit to the leadership of the shepherds because they know them and trust them.

The people standing about Jesus as He taught did not understand His allegory, so He said plainly, "I, Myself, am the Door of the sheep." He is, indeed, the only access men have to the Father's fold. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and no one comes to the Father but through Him (cf. John 14:6). Through Him we have access unto the Father (cf. Eph. 2:18, 3:12; Rom. 5:2).

In verse 8 there is no reference to Moses or the Prophets as being thieves simply because they came before Jesus in the matter of time, for they believed in the Christ and sought to lead men to faith in the Christ (cf. Heb. 10:24-27; I Pet. 1:10-12). Jesus is naming *all* those who make themselves and their schemes pre-eminent to Him as thieves and robbers. The Lord is primarily aiming this condemnation toward the self-seeking, materialistic, self-righteous Pharisees and Sadducees who sought to intimidate the sheep and destroy the flock and all this by "climbing up some other way" than through the Door.

We cannot agree with Lenski that verse 9 refers only to the shepherds entering in, finding salvation and going in and out to pasture. In the first place, Jesus says, "If *any* man enter in . . ." Secondly, in the sentence immediately preceding verse 9, Jesus is concerned with the safety of the sheep (v. 8).

And so Jesus assures His listeners that if *any* man will come to the Father through Him, that man shall be saved. He will be given life and that presently and in abundance. In his everyday "goings in and goings out" such a man will be led into green pastures and beside the still waters. The poor beggar had just been cast out of the synagogue and deprived of spiritual security, but Jesus was showing him and others the "new and living way." The thieving shepherds come to steal, kill and destroy the sheep, but Jesus came as the Door of the sheep to bring life and more than life—life overflowing. The word used for "abundantly" is *perisson* and is related to the word used in John 6:13 to speak of the abundance left over from feeding of the five thousand. Barnes explains it this way, "They shall not merely have life—simple, bare existence—but they shall have all those super-added things which are needful to make life eminently blessed and happy." Hendriksen comments, "These sheep receive freedom from the guilt, the misery, and the punishment of sin. Abundance—the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, the peace of God that passes all understanding—is their portion, here in principle, by and by in perfection." See our comments on John 5:24 concerning the enjoyment of eternal life in this present world (Gospel of John, Vol. I, page 188). Remember the Beatitudes for the promises of happiness and blessedness for those who come to God on Jesus' terms (cf. Matt. 5:1-12).

### *Quiz*

1. What lapse of time occurs in chapter 10?
2. What is an allegory and what is the biggest danger in interpreting one?
3. Give at least three Old Testament references to the figure of shepherds and sheep and give the gist of each reference.
4. How do we know that Jesus is not referring to Himself as the shepherd in these first ten verses?
5. What is the great contrast presented by this first allegory—the Door?
6. What application may be made of this allegory to the N.T. church?
7. What is the meaning of ". . . have life, and have it abundantly"?

### THE GOOD SHEPHERD

*Text 10:11-21*

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep.

12 He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholde the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth them:

13 he fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me,

15 even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, (or, *lead*), and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become (or, *there shall be . . .*) one flock, one shepherd.

17 Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again.

18 No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power (or *right*) to take it again. This commandment received I from my Father.

19 There arose a division again among the Jews because of these words.

20 And many of them said, He hath a demon, and is mad; why hear ye him?

21 Others said, These are not the sayings of one possessed with a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?

### *Queries*

- a. Why the contrast between the good shepherd and the hireling?
- b. Who are the "other" sheep, not of that fold?
- c. What is so important about Jesus' laying down His life that causes the Father to love Him?

### *Paraphrase*

I, Myself, am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd willingly lays down his very soul on behalf of the sheep. The hireling, who is neither the true shepherd nor the owner of the sheep, when he sees the wolf coming, deserts the sheep and runs away—and the wolf attacks the flock and scatters them—because the hireling is what he is—one who cares not for the welfare of the sheep. I, Myself, am the Good Shepherd; I know those that belong to Me, and those that are mine know Me, just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father. My life I willingly lay down on behalf of the sheep. Now I have other sheep which are not of this particular fold; unto them also must I become Shepherd and they shall hear and heed my voice and all

who heed my voice will become in equality one Flock on the basis of their heeding and obeying one Shepherd. This is the reason why the Father loves Me—because I willingly suffer death in order that I might be resurrected from the dead! No one has the power to take it from Me, but to the contrary I, Myself, voluntarily give it up. I only have authority to lay it down and I only have authority to take it up again. I received this charge from My Father.

There came a division again among the Jews on account of the words which Jesus had spoken. Many of them were saying, He has a demon in him and is insane—why do you listen to Him? But others were saying, at the same time, These are not the words of one being possessed of demons. A demon-possessed person does not have the power to open the eyes of one born blind, does he?

### Summary

The Lord has, in the previous section, contrasted the evil shepherds with good shepherds in general. Now He makes the contrast even more vivid by casting alongside the hireling the One and Only, Good Shepherd of the sheep—Himself. His relationship to the sheep is like that of His Father to Himself. He willingly sacrifices Himself for the sheep.

### Comment

The syntactical arrangement of the first sentence of verse 11 in the original is good Greek idiom to stress both the pronoun and the adjective. In other words, the original Greek would be translated literally, "I, Myself, am the shepherd, the good shepherd . . ." Both "I" and "good" are stressed. In the preceding section (vs. 1-10) Jesus contrasted the evil shepherds (the Pharisees) with good shepherds in general—but now the distinction is made even more vivid by contrasting all who propose to be shepherds with The One Good and Faithful Shepherd.

The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. After meditation upon this statement, we begin to see that there is more involved here than the mere sacrificing of a ransom—as profoundly sublime as that is itself! Inherent in His goodness as *The Shepherd* is the fact that *only His* life as a ransom would be efficacious. Other shepherds of the flock might indeed willingly lay down their lives, but none would bring salvation and safety to the flock through their sacrifice!

Now the hireling is described. Hireling is simply "one who receives wages for his labor." He may be a good hireling or an evil hireling

Moses and Paul were under-shepherds of God's flock who received wages for their labors and they were hired men with a large measure of the love and concern of the Good Shepherd in their hearts for the sheep. But the Pharisees and Sadducees were mercenary, evil hirelings whose primary concern was not for the sheep but for the wages. The sheep do not belong to the hireling—he has no personal relationship to them, nor will he tender any personal commitments to them. The hireling is not willing to give up himself for the sheep when they are attacked, but "looks out for 'number one'"—flees to preserve his own safety. Read Ezekiel 34:1-10 for God's condemnation of the hireling shepherds.

We quote here from an anonymous Palestinian traveler of many years ago—a beautiful illustration of a good shepherd:

"It was while riding through the low hills covered with this vegetation, and coming out on the blighted flats of the Dead Sea, that one of those pictures passed before me which are ever after hung up in the mind's gallery among the choicest of the spoils of Eastern travel. By some chance I was alone, riding a few hundred yards in front of the caravan, when, turning the corner of a hill, I met a man coming toward me, the only one we had seen for several hours since we had passed a few black tents some eight or ten miles away. He was a noble-looking young Shepherd, dressed in his camel's-hair robe, and with the lithesome, powerful limbs and elastic step of the children of the desert. But the interest which attached to him was the errand on which he had manifestly been engaged on these Dead Sea plains from which he was returning. Round his neck, and with its little limbs held gently by his hand, lay a lamb he had rescued, and was doubtless carrying home. The little creature lay as if perfectly content and happy, and the man looked pleased as he strode along lightly with his burden; and as I saluted him with the usual gesture of pointing to heart and head, and the 'Salaam alik!' (Peace be with you!), he responded with a smile and a kindly glance at the lamb, to which he saw my eyes were directed. It was actually the beautiful parable of the Gospel acted out before my sight. Every particular was true to the story; the Shepherd had doubtless left his 'ninety and nine in the wilderness,' round the black tents we had seen so far away, and had sought for the lost lamb till he found it, where it must quickly have perished without his help, among those blighted plains. Literally, too, 'when he had found it, he laid it on his shoulders rejoicing.'"

What a high ideal the Good Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd (I Pet. 5:4), has set for all his under-shepherds! Elders are, by divine appointment, shepherds of God's flock under His Chief-Shepherdship. In our opinion, deacons, evangelists and teachers should be considered in some sense shepherds, inasmuch as they feed (teach) and minister to the flock. Those who desire the awesome responsibility of shepherd-ing God's flock need to remember that they "watch in behalf of the souls of the sheep as they that shall give account" (cf. Heb. 13:17). The under-shepherd is to "feed the flock of God" and protect it against wolves both from within and from without (cf. Acts 20:26-32); he is to accept the oversight willingly and not by constraint, to do it eagerly and not for love of money, not to use the position for the exercise of power, and to be an example to the flock (I Pet. 5:2-3). One of the qualifications for elders is that they must "not be greedy of filthy lucre." The ministry or the eldership is not to be considered as a calling on the basis of "pay scale." The Lord is not interested in hirelings (those interested primarily in their wages). This does not mean, however, that ministers should not be paid a living wage. When the Lord *ordained* "that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel" (I Cor. 9:14), He intended that the man who labors in the kingdom is "worthy of his hire." We should never think of the minister's salary as simply a gift—if he labors he earns, and is worthy of, his hire.

Another characteristic of the Divine Shepherd is held up for an example in verses 14 and 15. The Good Shepherd knows His own sheep and His sheep know Him, just as the Son knows the Father and the Father knows the Son. And what is this *knowing* relationship between the Father and the Son which is to be exemplified in under-shepherds and the flock? It is a union of wills, purpose and works (cf. John 5:19-23 and our comments, Vol. I, pp. 184-186). There is absolute harmony and oneness. The Father was constantly aware of His Son's needs and sustained Him every moment—when Jesus felt pain or hunger the Father's heart went out to Him. When Jesus knew joy, the Father rejoiced. On the other hand, the Son knew the Father's will and found exceeding joy in doing His will (cf. John 8:29). Now, the Good Shepherd knows His sheep individually and knows their needs better than they themselves—He is constantly sustaining them. Those who are true sheep of the Good Shepherd hear His voice and are united with Him in will, purpose and work—they obey Him for they trust Him as the Shepherd of their souls. This characteristic is

applicable, also, to under-shepherds (elders and ministers) and to the flocks which they serve. The matter of shepherding the Lord's flock and being a member of the Lord's flock is a reciprocal arrangement. The under-shepherds should *know* their flock as much as possible, like Jesus knows them. The members of the flock should *know* the voice of their under-shepherds the same as Jesus was in harmony with His Father's will! "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17). When elders are to be chosen to act as Christ's under-shepherds, this allegory of the Good Shepherd, the hireling, the Door of the Sheep ought to be studied and applied:

"... the flock suffers from a double danger. It is always liable to attack from outside from the wolves and the robbers and the marauders. It is always liable to trouble from the inside from the false shepherd. The Church runs a double danger. It is always under attack from outside. It often suffers from the tragedy of bad leadership, from the disaster of shepherds who see their calling as a career and not as a means of service. The second danger is by far the worse; because, if the shepherd is faithful and good, there is a strong defense from the attack from outside; but if the shepherd is faithless and a hireling, then the foes from outside can penetrate into and destroy the flock. The Church's first essential is a leadership which is based on the example of Jesus Christ." (The Gospel of John, Vol. II, Daily Study Bible, by William Barclay.)

It is very evident in the incident of the man born blind and the Pharisees (John 9) that the supposed shepherds of Israel did not *know* the sheep (the blind man) as the Good Shepherd would have them know—they were hirelings. Further, once the stubborn unbelief and obstinate ungodliness of the Pharisees was revealed, the blind man recognized them as false shepherds and did not know them (obey them) as his spiritual shepherds.

His contrast throughout this allegory has been between evil shepherds and good shepherds, and finally, *The Good Shepherd*. A big difference between the two has been their concept of who are and who are not true sheep. Now in verse 16 Jesus looks ahead a few short months when the "middle wall of partition" will have been broken down and the Gentiles will be led into the "one flock." The

Jewish spiritual leaders refused to accept this idea from the very beginning of Jesus' ministry (cf. Luke 4:16-30). The uniting of Jew and Gentile into one flock was plainly foretold in their prophets (cf. Isa. 56:8 and Ezek. 34:23). The Gentiles were not to be gathered into the Old Covenant "fold," but both Jew and Gentile would be led into a New Covenant "flock." It was not intended that the Gentiles be led into the "fold" of Judaism—the Old Covenant was intended exclusively for the Hebrews (cf. Deut. 5:1-3; Rom. 3:19; Eph. 2:11-18).

When Jesus said "I have," He is manifesting divine foreknowledge. It is not a predestination in the sense that He has made an absolute and irrevocable choice of some and passed over others. The sovereign will of man is not violated in foreknowledge. His foreknowledge and man's will is exemplified in Judas, the traitor, whom Jesus foreknew, while Judas very evidently exercised his own free will in betraying Him.

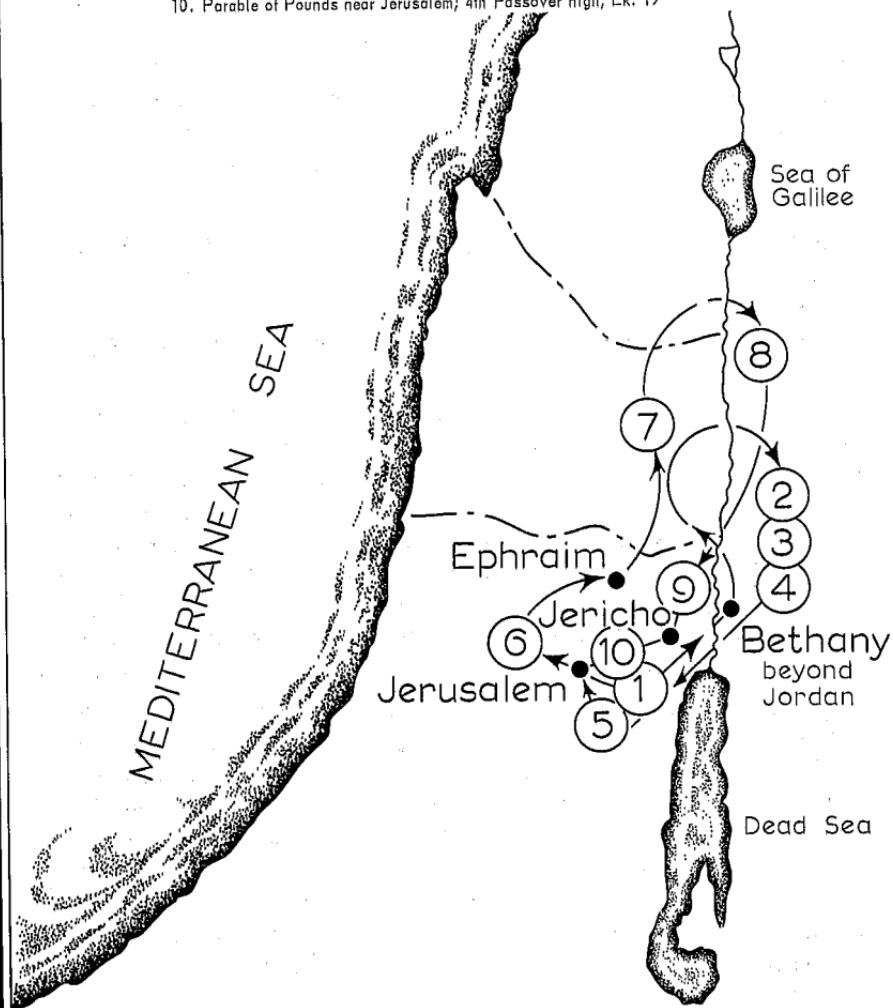
And so Jesus, through His apostles, went out into the wilderness of heathendom and led the strays and the outcasts into the one flock (cf. Acts 9:15, 22:21). They did gladly hear His voice through the apostles and many thousands obeyed (cf. Rom. 1:5, 8; Eph. 1:15; Phil. 1:9; Col. 1:3-4).

The important phrase of verse 16 is: ". . . and they shall become one flock, one shepherd." Jesus sees the unity of the future church. Most commentators on this verse hold to a mystical, invisible unity only as the inference of "one flock, one shepherd." It is true that Christians are one in Christ, held together by a spiritual bond which is stronger and higher than any visible structure. But it is also true that this spiritual unity must, by its very nature, express itself in a visible unity of doctrine and worship according to the divine standard in the New Testament (cf. Eph. 4:1-16).

This is not an enforced unity—held together by a great superstructure or "World Church" organization. This is a unity based on faith and love where all the true sheep hear, answer and obey one shepherd. This oneness is based on loyalty to Jesus Christ and His person. The very foundation for Christian unity is in all the "sheep" hearing and obeying "one Shepherd," even Jesus. It is as simple as this: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15), and, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). An intelligent, believing, obeying, sacrificing love for Christ and His Body will result in unity!

MAP NO. 6—THIRD YEAR, LATER PEREAN MINISTRY (about 3 months)

1. Feast of Dedication, Jerusalem; attempts to kill Jesus; retires to Bethabara (place of His baptism), Jn. 10
2. Perea; journey through cities and villages; few saved, Jn. 10
3. Home of a Pharisee; rules for feasting, Lk. 14
4. Place unknown; parables of lost sheep; lost coin; lost son; Lazarus and Rich man; Lawyer's question, Lk. 15 & 16
5. Receives call to come to Bethany; raises Lazarus; Jews seek to kill both, Jn. 11
6. Retirement to Ephraim with 12 disciples, Jn. 11
7. Journey through borders of Samaria; Galilee, Perea; heals ten lepers, Lk. 17
8. Sermon on time of Kingdom; teaching on Divorce; little children; Pharisee and publican; rich young ruler; parable of laborers in vineyard; plainest prediction of crucifixion; James & John seek chief honors, Mt. 19-20; Mk. 10, Lk. 17-18
9. Jericho; two blind men healed; Zacchaeus, Lk. 19
10. Parable of Pounds near Jerusalem; 4th Passover night, Lk. 19





Verses 17 and 18 are full of meaning. Jesus willingly lays down His life for the very purpose that He may take it up again. We like the statement of Hendriksen in this connection, "The dying and rising again are *deeds*, not merely *experiences*." Jesus was not helplessly caught up in a mesh of circumstances over which He had no power. There was purpose behind His death and that purpose was the resurrection! He did not lose His life: He gave it. He was not killed: He chose to die. Every word and every deed of Jesus had a purpose within the plan of redemption and none of it was accidental (e.g., John 7:30, 8:20, 12:23-28, 13:1, 17:1, 18:4-11, 37, 19:11).

The Son willingly "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (cf. Phil. 2:5-8). As an earthly father's love is the more drawn out when his child willingly and lovingly obeys—so "on account of this" willing obedience by Jesus, His Father's love is the more drawn out. "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name;" (Phil. 2:9-11).

Jesus possessed the prerogatives of Divine Omnipotence. No one had power or authority to take His life. When He died it was because He allowed it (Matt. 26:53; Jn. 19:11)! And He permitted wicked men to kill Him for the very purpose of Himself taking up His life again in three days! The Father presented the Son with this charge or commission ("commandment"), the Divine plan for man's salvation (cf. Jn. 3:14, 8:28, 12:32). This death and resurrection of the Incarnate Word was the Father's scheme of redemption for man because God's wisdom and love decreed it so; it was the only way to win man's heart! The Son, being the Son, is in perfect accord (in knowledge, love, authority) with the Father (cf. our comments on Jn. 5:19-23, Vol. I, pp. 183-186). Although equal with the Father and free to do that which He wills to do, He wills to lay down His life and take it up again. His will is motivated, directed and controlled by His divine love and trust in His Father and by His love for mankind.

All of this dissertation concerning the Good Shepherd (especially the power to lay down life and take it up again) has been sort of a parabolic statement of divine equality with God by Jesus. Evidently many of the Jews present understood clearly that Jesus was claiming what would be preposterous for any mortal to claim—divine power over life and death. This could only mean to the Jews that He was

claiming to be God; in their eyes blasphemous, demonical or insanity. Many of them did indeed speak out and call Him insane and possessed of demons. Others, remembering the great miracle they had witnessed could not, inspite of the consequences of disagreeing with the rulers, deny what they had seen. The choice still remains today; the claims which Jesus makes through the historical records of the Gospel writers are either the claims of a deluded maniac, a deliberate liar, or the Divine Son of God. In light of the empirical, historical and absolutely trustworthy evidence, the first two alternatives are absurd! We shall discuss the evidence for His deity more fully in the next section. Suffice it to say here, there is overwhelming evidence of verifiable nature sufficient to convince any honest-hearted searcher that Jesus is all He claims to be!

### *Quiz*

1. What is the evident purpose for declaring Himself to be The Good Shepherd?
2. What is the essential characteristic of the "hireling"?
3. What application may be made in the church from this allegory of the Good Shepherd and the sheep and the hireling?
4. What responsibilities do the elders have to the flock? The flock to the elders?
5. What is the very foundation stone to unity? How is unity expressed?
6. Was Jesus' death a mistake? Explain!
7. What alternatives present themselves in light of Jesus' claims?

### CLAIMS TO DEITY

*Text 10:22-31*

- 22 And it was the feast of the dedication at Jerusalem:
- 23 it was winter; and Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's porch.
- 24 The Jews therefore came round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly.
- 25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believe me not: the works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me.
- 26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.
- 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:
- 28 and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.

29 My Father, who hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

30 I and the Father are one.

31 The Jews took up stones again to stone him.

### *Queries*

- a. Why the inferences of a particular season (vs. 22-23)?
- b. Why did the Jews say, "... tell us plainly"?
- c. Is Jesus declaring "eternal security" in verses 28-29?

### *Paraphrase*

And the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple was in progress at Jerusalem. It was winter-time and Jesus was walking in the temple in the colonnade which is called Solomon's Porch. So the Jews encircled Him and demanded, How much longer are you going to keep us hanging in suspense? If you really are the Messiah, tell us so in plain words! Jesus answered them, I told you before and you do not believe. The miraculous works that I do in My Father's name bear sufficient testimony to prove my Messiahship. However, you do not believe because you are not willing to surrender to the implications of these works and become my obedient sheep. My sheep hear and obey my voice and I, in turn, recognize them as my own. My sheep follow me wherever I lead them, and I give them eternal life now. Furthermore, they will never, never lose this life for all eternity for no one is able to snatch them from the safety of my hand. My Father and I are equal; He gave me the sheep and He is certainly greater than all the enemies of the sheep—no one is able to snatch them from His hand. I and the Father are One!

At this declaration the Jews ran and picked up stones carrying them to Solomon's Porch to stone Jesus to death.

### *Summary*

The hostile Jews demand an unequivocal statement from Jesus as to His Messiahship. He states plainly that He and the Father are One, especially in omnipotence. The Jews, unwilling to have a Messiah who is God in the flesh, prepare to kill Him. The awfulness of unbelief!

### *Comment*

This section (10:22-31) takes us from the Feast of Tabernacles (September) to the Feast of Dedication (December). Three months of the ministry of Jesus is omitted by John between 10:21 and 10:22, but recorded by the Synoptics (cf. Map #5, page 12). The Feast

of Dedication came on the 25th of Chislev (December). This is the beginning of winter in Jerusalem. The weather is stormy, with the rainy season well under way; snow has been known to fall on the mountain-tops of Judea at this time of the year. The seasonal note of verse 2 with the accompanying phrase picturing Jesus walking under the protection of the roof of Solomon's porch is very graphic.

The Feast of Dedication was founded on this wise: Upon the death of Alexander the Great, his Grecian world empire was divided three ways. Seleucus I, one of Alexander's army officers, obtained the satrapy of Babylonia. By later conquests, he became the ruler of Syria and the greater part of Asia Minor and founded the Seleucid era which lasted from about 312 B.C. to 65 B.C. (when Pompey reduced the kingdom of Syria to a Roman province).

During the era of the Seleucid rulers, one Antiochus Epiphanes came to the throne at a time (175-164 B.C.) when all the Near East was under Seleucid rule. Antiochus Epiphanes was a lover and devotee of Greek culture and very passionately so. He made up his mind that he would do away with Jewish religion and culture for good and introduce Greek culture and religion into Palestine. Some of the Jews welcomed Hellenization, but others were so patriotic and faithful to the Hebrew religion that many forfeited their lives in resistance. This great struggle, incidentally, gave birth to the sect of the Pharisees (also known as Separatists) who were men dedicated by vows to resist any heathen encroachment upon the Hebrew customs and religion. At first Antiochus tried to introduce his cultural renovation by peaceful methods, but found the resistance too strong. In 170 B.C., Antiochus attacked Jerusalem and it is said that 80,000 Jews perished and almost as many were taken away into slavery. About \$2,000,000 was stolen from the temple treasury. It became a capital offense to possess a copy of the Hebrew law, or to circumcise a child; and mothers who did circumcise their children were crucified with their children hanging around their necks. The temple courts were profaned with heathen intrusions; the temple chambers were turned into brothels; and the ultimate insult was when Antiochus ordered a sow (swine) sacrificed upon the altar of burnt offering in the temple of the Jews. This was the "straw that broke the camel's back," so to speak, and Judas Maccabaeus, with his brothers and an outnumbered and ill-equipped, but courageous army, arose to fight a war of six long, bloody years for independence. In 164 B.C., the first time for

about 400 years, the Jews were an independent kingdom. In this year the Temple was cleansed and purified of all heathen defilements. The altar was rebuilt; the robes and the utensils which had been stolen were replaced. The Temple was re-dedicated! It was to commemorate this re-dedication that the Feast of Dedication was instituted. I Maccabees 4:59 reads, ". . . the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year, by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month of Chislev, with gladness and joy." Most historians point out the close similarity in the ritual of this feast with the Feast of Tabernacles (lighting of the great candleabra, singing of the Hallel, etc.).

There is a great nationalistic heritage connected with this festival. Furthermore, it was recent enough in Jewish history at Jesus' time to be extremely significant. Time and events in Jesus' day were pregnant with meaning. Many of the elders of the Jews could remember in their own lifetime the last days of the Maccabean freedom—then came the Roman oppression and domination. Then there came among the Jews a John the Baptist preaching repentance for the kingdom of God is near at hand; following him comes a miracle-working Nazarene claiming to be the Messiah.

Therefore, the intenseness of the challenge by the Jews in verse 24 is not difficult to understand. Political freedom and social reform is uppermost in their minds as they participate in this Feast of Dedication and hear hints and rumors concerning a Messiah.

B. F. Westcott says that the tense of the verb *ekuklosan* (encircled) indicates a definite, decisive act. They "had Him cornered" in a public place and this time He would not escape until they had what they wanted from Him—an unequivocal statement that He was the Messiah.

It is hardly in keeping with the context of this incident to maintain, as do some commentators, that the Jews surrounding Him were sincere in their question as to His claims. The multitudes, it is true, were hanging on His every word and calling Him the prophet (cf. Luke 12:1, 13:17). But John almost always means the rulers when he says "the Jews . . ." and the animosity of the rulers was coming to a fevered pitch (cf. John, Chapters 7 through 10:21 and see also Luke 11:53). All this makes us believe that these "Jews" who "encircled" Jesus were the rulers and their subordinates—all with a definite plan to trap Him and kill Him.

If they could not kill Him, they might at least discredit and denounce Him publicly. A literal rendering of the question of the Jews

in verse 24 would read, "Until when do you lift up our soul?" What these enemies probably aim at is a plain, straight-forward, not-to-be misunderstood statement, "I am the Messiah!" He was not behaving as they thought He ought—politically, militaristic—if He was the Messiah. Yet, though Jesus did not fulfill the popular concept of the Messiah, the multitudes were stirred up and of divided opinion concerning Him. Some were even opposing the rulers in favor of the Nazarene (cf. Jn. 7:12, 31, 43; 10:19-21). The rulers are actually challenging Jesus to either stop His meddling in morals, ethics, and doctrine, or come out and declare Himself plainly as their type of Messiah.

Jesus replies, "I did tell you, but you did not believe me!" Although He never said as plainly as they demanded, "I am the Christ," (except in two instances to individuals, cf. Jn. 4:26, 9:37), His works accomplished always in the name of the Father were plain enough—Nicodemus recognized Him as sent from God (cf. Jn. 3:2). Over and over again, Jesus told them that He and the Father were one (cf. Jn. 5:17-47; 8:16-19; 26-29, 42, 56-58; 10:11-18), and substantiated it with His miracles. The evidence was of the highest nature of credibility and verification—empirical! Their failure to accept Him as the Son of God was not due to insufficient evidence—it was their own sin! Greed and false pride led them into bigotry, prejudice and spiritual blindness. They did not believe because they did not *want* to believe! They were not like the humble, obedient, trusting sheep who listened to Jesus' voice (e.g., the Samaritan woman, John 4, and the blind beggar, John 9).

We have dealt with the subject of sheep and Shepherd in our comments on 10:11-18. However, there is one aspect of that relationship emphasized here in verses 27-29 that was not stressed in the previous section. Those who become obedient, trusting, and following sheep to the Good Shepherd will be *given* eternal life. The verb *didomi* (give) is in the present tense, indicating that one is given eternal life at the moment he becomes one of Jesus' sheep. Those who are believing in Jesus are possessing eternal life (cf. our comments, Jn. 5:24, Vol. I, p. 188). John the Apostle later wrote his First Epistle to give Christians assurance that they "might know that they have eternal life" (cf. I Jn. 5:13). They will never perish! Perish here does not mean annihilation, but eternal separation from the presence of God. The Greek idiom to express *never* is emphatic! Trans-

lated literally verse 28b would read, ". . . and they shall not perish, no, not even unto eternity!"

The main idea Jesus propagates in the last phrase of verse 28 ("and no one shall snatch them out of my hand") is the equality of power to protect the sheep He shares with the Father, Jehovah-God. He is leading up to the sublime, unfathomable, and astounding statement, "I and the Father are one." He wants these Jews to know that along with His promise of eternal life He promises omnipotent protection. He can promise divine security because the Father is omnipotent and He and the Father are one! The Father gave Him the sheep and sent Him into the world with all His power and authority (again we refer you to John 5:17-47). Lenski says, "Does the promise of Jesus, standing there in human form before the Jews, sound preposterous, that no one shall snatch his sheep out of his hand? To snatch them out of *his* hand is the same as snatching them out of *the Father's* hand." Paul speaks of the safety of our newly given life in Colossians 3:3, "For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

These two verses (28-29) certainly do not offer proof texts for the unscriptural doctrine of "once in grace, always in grace," or the more dignified, "eternal security." Westcott says concisely, "If man falls at any stage in his spiritual life, it is not from want of divine grace, nor from the overwhelming power of adversaries, but from his neglect to use that which he may or may not use. We cannot be protected against ourselves in spite of ourselves . . . The sense of the divine protection is at any moment sufficient to inspire confidence, but not to render effort unnecessary." Paul states plainly that salvation is given by God, but requires a continuing effort of faith and works on the part of man (cf. Eph. 2:8-10; Phil. 2:12-13). Romans, the eighth chapter, combines the two ideas that when man submits to the leading of the Holy Spirit and puts to death the deeds of the body, there is no principality, power, nor any other creature which is able to separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. As the old adage has it, "No one can snatch us out of the Lord's hand, but we can certainly jump out ourselves!" Perhaps Jesus has in mind the poor blind beggar who, three months before, had been excommunicated from the temple. The Jewish rulers might cast him out, but no one would be able to snatch him out of the Good Shepherd's hand, for he was one of the true sheep.

Having inferred His equality with the Father in the matter of protection for the true believer, Jesus says straight out in verse 30, "I and the Father are one." Commentators go to great lengths to argue whether this oneness is oneness of wills and works or oneness in essence. Some even attempt to explain how the Father and Son may be two persons yet be One. It is useless to bring earthly analogies into play to try to explain this unique relationship. All are untrue and fall far short of explaining this unity. We are forced to see that Jesus speaks distinctly about two persons and yet, they are one! Here we must walk by faith and not by sight. It is better to accept the profound statements of Scripture on this subject, e.g., ". . . for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily . . ." (Col. 2:9) and concern ourselves with interpreting His will for our lives. Of one thing we may be certain, the Son and the Father are equally God (cf. John 1:1, 14, 18; 5:17-23; 14:8-11).

This declaration was certainly plain enough! Perhaps it was too much! Perhaps if Jesus had said, "I am your Messiah," they would not have been so violent. It seems that the Jews, in spite of clear prophecy to the contrary, had an idea that the Messiah would be simply a powerful, personable, politically oriented human being. They certainly were not looking for Immanuel ("God with us"). When one stood before them in mortal flesh and claimed, "I am equal with the Father," they would have none of it. They had no time for God among them, convicting them of their sins and preaching a spiritual kingdom—they wanted a Messiah that would give them food in their stomachs (cf. Jn. 6:26). Therefore, they ran (as the Greek verb implies) to some section of the temple where there were stones, probably piled for repairs, and carried them to Solomon's Porch ready to stone Him to death for alleged blasphemy.

### *Quiz*

1. What is the history behind the Feast of Dedication?
2. Why did the Jews "encircle" Jesus near Solomon's Porch?
3. How did Jesus tell the Jews that He was the Christ?
4. Does verse 28 teach "once saved, always saved"?
5. Can you explain how The Father and The Son are One, yet two persons?
6. Why would these Jews suddenly become so violent as to want to kill Jesus for the simple statement, "I and the Father are one"?

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN  
EVIDENCE FOR DEITY  
*Text* 10:32-42

10:32-42

32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from the Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

33 The Jews answered him, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?

35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken),

36 say ye of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

38 But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.

39 They sought again to take him: and he went forth out of their hand.

40 And he went away again beyond the Jordan into the place where John was at the first baptizing; and there he abode.

41 And many came unto him; and they said, John indeed did no sign: but all things whatsoever John spake of this man were true.

42 And many believed on him there.

*Queries*

- a. Were the Jews *really* concerned that Jesus might be blaspheming or were they about to stone Him for other reasons?
- b. Who were those whom God called "gods" (v. 35)? And why does Jesus use this in His defense?
- c. Why the strong appeal to His works (vs. 37-38)?

*Paraphrase*

Jesus spoke to them calmly, I have shown you many miracles of mercy and goodness from the Father; for which of those good deeds do you now propose to stone me to death? The Jews replied angrily, We are not going to stone you for a good deed, but because you blaspheme the name of God—you are a man and yet you make yourself out to be God! Again Jesus spoke, It is written in your law, is it not, "I said, Ye are gods?" If, then, Jehovah called those judges of Israel gods, unto whom Jehovah gave authority to administer His

word (and the Scripture cannot be altered by man), why are you saying of Him whom the Father manifestly set apart and commissioned to a divine task, "You are a blasphemer," when I say, "I am the Son of God"? If I am not doing the works equal to God, my Father, do not believe me. But, on the other hand, If I do such works, although you can not believe in me through my teaching, you ought to believe in me because of my works so that you may know and recognize that the Father is in me and I am in the Father. They again tried to lay hands on him but he went out from their midst.

So he went away across the Jordan river to Bethany beyond the Jordan, the place where John the Baptist had first been baptizing, and there He stayed awhile. Many people followed Him and came to Him there saying, John the Baptist did no miraculous signs, it is true, but all the things he testified concerning Jesus of Nazareth were indeed true! And many people expressed their belief in Him there.

### *Summary*

Jesus appeals to the best type of evidence for His deity—empirical, experiential evidence. First, He reminds the Jews of the inviolability of Scripture. Second, He calls upon them to believe through what they themselves have seen. Then He attempts to retire from the public to prepare spiritually and physically for the final and terrible ordeal.

### *Comment*

As the Jews came running with stones in their hands, surrounding Jesus in the Temple court, He reminded them calmly and deliberately of the many miracles of mercy and goodness which He had done. There are at least thirteen recorded miracles of mercy performed by Jesus before this time. He raised the dead, opened blind eyes, cleansed lepers, cast out demons and healed many other physical infirmities. But the whole point of the statement is, as Jesus said, these many good works were "from the Father." The question of Jesus, "for which of those works do ye stone me?" is designed as a challenge; a challenge for the Jews to stop and think about their accusations. Jesus is not resting His claim on philosophical abstractions, but on empirical evidence.

How blinded by bigotry and envy were these Jews! Their jealousy for their cherished traditions and commandments of men made them not only blind to evidence of deity, but cruel and impervious to suffering. When the lame were made to walk and the blind to see on

the Sabbath, the Jews had not the least joy in their hearts for the healed ones—they were only enraged that their Sabbath traditions had been ignored. And so here the Jews not only gave no thought to the compassionate nature of His miracles, but they also missed their primary value—evidence for His Divine nature. Furthermore, the political undertones of the time probably agitated their desire to arrest Jesus and later accuse Him as a revolutionary (cf. Jn. 11:47-53)—they needed a scapegoat.

Jesus' answer to the charge of blasphemy is twofold. He appeals to the authority of Scripture and then to empirical testimony of His miraculous works. The Scripture which Jesus quotes and calls "law" is in Psalms 82:6. Our Lord used a varied terminology to speak of the Scriptures as a whole, or in part. Sometimes He said, "the law and the prophets"; sometimes "the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms"; sometimes "it is written"; sometimes "ye have heard that it hath been said."

In Psalms 82:6 God is speaking through the psalmist of impending judgment upon those whom He had appointed judges by Divine commission. These judges and magistrates God called "gods." They administered justice as direct representatives of God Himself and the Word of God had come to them—thus God called them "gods." Jesus reminds them that their highly cherished "torah" called men "gods" and they had never protested that! Furthermore, the Scripture cannot be broken! That which had been written must be accepted as authoritative—the Scriptures themselves had spoken of some men as gods. How then could the Jews have the right to accuse Jesus of blasphemy when He says, "I am the Son of God . . ." especially since all of His miraculous works indicate that He has been sanctified and sent into the world by the Father.

The parenthetical statement of Jesus ("and the Scripture cannot be broken") has far-reaching implications. It is the unequivocal, dogmatic assertion by the Incarnate Word that the revealed, recorded and canonical Word is divinely inspired, authoritative and imperishable. Edward J. Young says, "The Scriptures . . . possess an authority so great that they cannot be broken. What they say will stand and cannot be annulled or set aside. If the Scripture speaks, the issue is settled once and for all . . ." (*Thy Word Is Truth*, by Edward J. Young, p. 27, pub. by Eerdmans.) The contemporary existential and subjective validation of the Word is crushed by this statement of Jesus. However, we must be careful in our application of this principle.

"Cannot be broken" does *not* mean that a portion of Scripture may not be fulfilled, abrogated, or made unapplicable to man by God Himself; e.g., the Law of Moses as law and covenant was abrogated and replaced by a new covenant. "Cannot be broken" *does* mean that the Scripture cannot be altered as to historical factuality, and applicability in its own dispensation!

In verse 37 Jesus turns to an appeal to empirically verifiable evidence. The works that He has done can be tested by men themselves through their own senses. God placed the spirit of man within a fleshly tabernacle at man's creation. It was, therefore, necessary that God reveal Himself (to a degree sufficient to establish faith) in a sensory perceptible form. Thus, all through the ages God made Himself and His will known by miracles and signs which man could see and hear and feel and touch. At the end of the age, God Himself became Incarnate in His Son and did His works among men that men might know (cf. I John 1:1-4).

Jesus makes an emphatic appeal to His works in verse 38. His works were of such a nature that there were only two alternatives for the Jews. If they could not accept Him as God-sent on the basis of His teaching, then they must accept Him on the basis of His works. Either accept His works as divine and then learn that His teaching is also divine, or be found rejecting the Messiah. Of course, as we have tried to point out before, there is the moral element to faith as well as the intellectual. That is, a man must want to believe in order to believe. He must exercise his will in belief as well as his mind. All the evidence in the world will not convert a man and cause him to believe in Jesus Christ if he doesn't want to believe. There has to be a balance of three characteristics in man before real faith comes; will, reason and obedience or action. Every proclaimer of truth and righteousness has found this to be the primary barrier to bringing men to living faith—the desire, the will to believe in Jesus and surrender to Him! This was one of the purposes of the spectacle of the cross. The divine love evinced there was intended to break stubborn wills and turn them to God . . . "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

This moral rebelliousness had so hardened the hearts of the rulers of the Jews that they would not even consider the miraculous and merciful works of Jesus. All they could think of was taking Him and using Him for their evil purposes.

But Jesus "went forth out of their hand." How this was accomplished is purely conjectural on our part and so we simply accept the statement of the gospel writer. He retired to the place where John the Baptist was at the first baptizing which was probably Bethany beyond the Jordan (cf. Map #1, Vol. 1, p. 17). He evidently stayed there for a considerable length of time seeking rest, private communion with the Father in the environment of one of His momentous spiritual experiences—His own baptism and audible approval by the Father. He was not there long, however, until the crowds of the common people who always followed Him found Him and came to Him.

The memories of the people were also vividly aroused as they gathered here and heard Jesus teach and saw His signs. They remembered all that the great man, John the Baptist, had said about this One. They remembered that the Baptist in all his greatness had done no signs—yet it was evident that he was God-sent. Thus the wisdom of Jesus' words and the divine nature of His works confirmed the testimony of the Baptist and many believed on Jesus there. Jesus then went on to exercise a short ministry in Perea before He returned to Judea at the call of the sisters of Lazarus (cf. Map #6, p. 117-A).

### *Quiz*

1. Upon what kind of evidence does Jesus rest His claim to deity?
2. Why were the Jews blind to the evidence of His works?
3. What does ". . . and the scripture cannot be broken" mean?
4. Why was it necessary that God give evidence for His nature and will that man could see, hear, feel and touch?
5. What are the three characteristics of man that must be exercised in true belief?
6. Which of these three is of primary importance?

## **EXPOSITORY SERMON NO. TEN** **THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP**

John 10:1-16

### *Introduction*

#### I. WHY DID JESUS USE THIS ALLEGORY?

- A. The Jewish rulers and Pharisees had just exhibited themselves as hirelings when they were supposed to be shepherds by casting out the blind man (John 9) (cf. also Ezek. 34:1).

- B. This was a term which Jesus used elsewhere to refer to the rulers and the people (cf. Matt. 9:36; Mk. 6:34).
- C. The Old Testament is filled with this beautiful picture (cf. Psa. 23; Ezek. 34, etc.). Many prophetic passages depict the Messiah coming as a shepherd (cf. Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:23).  
FOR THESE REASONS JESUS USED THIS ALLEGORY.

## II. THIS ALLEGORICAL PICTURE WAS FAMILIAR TO THE PEOPLE

- A. For us to fully understand the depth of this allegory we need to study just how the shepherds of that place and time worked.
- B. Life was very hard for these shepherds. They were never off duty. There was little grass and the sheep were bound to wander often. There were no protecting fences and the sheep had to be watched every moment lest they get lost or be attacked by wild animals or robbers.
- C. Constant vigilance, fearless courage, patient love for his flock were the necessary characteristics of the Palestinian shepherd.

### *Discussion*

#### I. THE SHEPHERD

- A. He knows his sheep. In Palestine the sheep are often with the shepherd for years. Often the sheep have names by which the shepherd calls them. They are each one known by name and by their individuality.
  - 1. Jesus knows every one of His sheep by name, occupation and address (cf. Saul of Tarsus, Ananias of Damascus; Simon the tanner of Joppa; Cornelius, etc.). He knows all men and needs not that any one bear witness to man for He Himself made man.
  - 2. He knows what man needs—knows that man has higher aspirations and needs higher goals and aims than mere animal satisfactions. He knows that man is both reasonable and emotional and appeals to both sides of man's nature. He knows that man needs a power beyond himself. JESUS SUPPLIES ALL THESE NEEDS. HE GIVES AN EXAMPLE OF PERFECTION TOWARD WHICH MAN MUST STRIVE; HE APPEALS BOTH TO THE REASON

AND EMOTIONS OF MAN THROUGH HIS WORD; HE GIVES MAN A POWER THAT IS ABLE TO SAVE HIS SOUL AND REGENERATE HIS LIFE THROUGH THE REVEALED WORD OF GOD.

3. The Great Shepherd knows us better than we know ourselves. Our trouble is that we do not trust Him enough to let Him have His way with us. He knows every man's problems and has the answer for each (He has the answer for broken homes; death; despondency; fear; anxiety; anger). He knows the secret hurts, secret longings and secret evils harbored in our hearts. He knows how we are tempted—He knows the strong desires of the flesh as they war against the spirit. He also knows that it is possible to resist the flesh (cf. Matt. 4:1-11)!
  4. He does not shepherd us en masse, but as individuals. He guarded His little flock of twelve as individuals. He knew Peter's impetuosity, Thomas' incredulity, the fire of James and John, the guilelessness of Nathanael, the thievery of Judas, the political zeal of Simon. INDEED THE SHEPHERD KNOWS YOU LIKE NO ONE ELSE KNOWS YOU—BETTER EVEN THAN YOU KNOW YOURSELF.
- B. The Shepherd leads His sheep. He goes before the sheep. In Palestine the shepherd always went before his sheep and the sheep followed. The shepherd went first to see that the path was safe and that there were no hidden dangers. Sometimes the sheep had to be encouraged to follow. A traveler tells how he saw a shepherd leading his flock come to a ford in the stream. The sheep were unwilling to cross. The shepherd finally solved the problem by carrying one of the lambs across. When the mother of the lamb saw her lamb on the other side she crossed, too, and soon all the rest of the flock had followed her.
1. Our Shepherd has said, "Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Me," and so He took up His cross and led the way. He has said, "Be baptized," and He walked over 70 miles to be baptized of John the Baptist as He led the way. He has said, "Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier . . ." and He has led the way in suffering. He has said, "You will receive joy and abundance of joy" and He has shown the way. He has said, "Have compassion, forgive, love"

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

and He has led the way. WHATEVER BE THE ROAD YOU MUST TRAVEL, THE SHEPHERD HAS BEEN THERE BEFORE YOU TO SHOW THE WAY!

2. We glibly sing, "Where He leads me I will follow," but seldom follow where He leads. He leads to green pastures and feeds us fully on His Word (not on material luxuries). He leads beside the still and placid waters of safety and peace of soul (but not peace as this world thinks of peace). He also leads through the valley of the shadow often. The chastening of these dark valleys are sometimes necessary, for we learn to follow and depend upon the Shepherd more completely through these vales of tears, suffering and sorrows. He knows us well enough to know that at times this is the only way we will follow Him. Paul looked through a veil of tears and suffering all of his life here as a Christian. Notice how tenderly and patiently (rebuking when necessary) Jesus led the twelve disciples.
- C. There are hireling shepherds. They enter the fold not by the Door—Christ and His teachings. The hireling disregards God's authority. He does not really believe—he simply accommodates himself to the situation. The hireling has no concern for the sheep. He will not lay down his life for them. When the flock is endangered he surrenders or flees. When the sheep stray he is unconcerned and lets them go their own way without correcting them. When the wolves from without and from within attack the flock he loses his courage and runs.
  1. The hireling is the preacher who has no spine and will not stand for the truth. When threatened with dismissal, he will compromise the Gospel rather than lose his pay check.
  2. The hireling is the elder or deacon who resigns rather than face the troubles and troublemakers of the church. Such hirelings see in the eldership only position, and prestige, while service, loving service, is the demand for shepherds of God's flock. The hireling is the Sunday School teacher who waters down the demands of the Gospel plan of salvation or holy living rather than allow a class member to think he is narrow-minded.
- D. The wolf against whom the flock of God is to be protected is more fierce than any animal. He is supernatural—he has powers we do not have. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood." How eternally important it is that we have a Divine Shepherd.

## II. THE SHEEP

A. They know the Shepherd. Many people today have deluded themselves into thinking they are the flock of Christ when they do not even know the Shepherd. God's people of the Old Testament lost their relationship to Him as Shepherd because they did not know Him. Hosea said the people were "perishing" because of lack of knowledge of their Shepherd (cf. also I Kings 22:17 Zech. 10:2). They refused to be fed by God their Shepherd. They sought the earthly pleasures offered by the hireling shepherds.

1. There is an alarming ignorance of Christ and His word, even among those who are professed believers. It is no wonder the world is in such a state of affairs. It is no wonder that the church loses about as many converts as she gains. The sheep must be fed. Elders, shepherds of the flock, must see to it that the members have opportunities and motivation to feed on the Bread of Life. Elders and evangelists (preachers) have no right to say, "We offer it, if they don't take it, it is not our fault." If these shepherds of the flock had a sick son or daughter, dying of malnutrition, they would try every way possible to coax them to eat. As shepherds of the flock "as those that shall give account," you have brothers and sisters in Christ dying of spiritual malnutrition—FEED THEM!
2. We know Him through His word, through what He has revealed to us. But how many of the sheep read their Bibles even thirty minutes each day in order to know Him better? Some take over three hours each day to eat bread and potatoes, but not even three minutes per day to partake of the food that perishes not.
3. We know Him by speaking to Him in prayer. But how many of the sheep spend fifteen minutes per day in prayer? Most people spend more time than that talking on the telephone each day. God has *never* heard the voice of many people ever lifted to Him in prayer!
4. We know Him by doing His will—by following Him. One of the best ways to know and trust the Shepherd is to do what He says and learn of the wisdom of His commands.

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But how many of the sheep "seek first the kingdom of God," trusting Him to add all the necessities of life? How many trust Him enough to test His commands to go out and sow the seed and then expect fruits?

5. "If any man willeth to do my will, he will know . . ." WHEN WE HAVE WALKED WITH HIM BY OBEDIENCE — WHEN WE HAVE TALKED WITH HIM THROUGH THE BIBLE — THEN WE BEGIN TO KNOW THE SHEPHERD AS WE OUGHT TO KNOW HIM!

B. The Sheep know His voice. It is true of Palestinian sheep that they know the tone of their shepherd's voice. Not only so, but they will follow only that voice and will flee when they hear a stranger's voice.

1. The true sheep of Christ know the difference between the true Shepherd and false shepherds. They know false doctrines whenever and by whomever they are taught.

2. No man need think he will remain long in the flock of God if he cannot distinguish the Shepherd's voice from the voice of the thief and robber.

C. They follow Him. Knowing the shepherd's voice and following it are two different things. Some who know the Bible thoroughly do not obey it. We cannot be one of God's flock without obeying God's Shepherd, Jesus Christ. There is but *ONE FLOCK* and *ONE SHEPHERD*.

### *Conclusion*

#### I. THE SHEPHERD

- A. He knows—temptations, needs, obedience.
- B. He leads—the way of the cross, into joy, through trials.
- C. He has all the answers for our lives . . . He can satisfy as none other.

#### II. THE SHEEP

- A. Know Him—walk, talk and listen to Him.
- B. Follow Him—they imitate Him, obey His voice.

#### III. ONE DARK VALLEY MUST BE CROSSED BY ALL

- A. The valley of the shadow of death.
- B. When you approach this valley, will you be able to see Jesus, your Shepherd, there with His hand outstretched, saying, *Follow me?*

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HE HAS WALKED THE VALLEY BEFORE YOU . . . YOU CAN TRUST HIM. YOU CAN TAKE HIS HAND, FOR HE WILL LEAD YOU THROUGH TO THE OTHER SIDE WHERE THERE ARE GREEN PASTURES, THE TREE OF LIFE, AND THE RIVER OF WATER OF LIFE.

BUT IF HE IS NOT YOUR SHEPHERD, WHOM CAN YOU TRUST? WHO WILL BE THERE TO TAKE YOU THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH? HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS BEEN THERE AND IS ABLE TO LEAD YOU THROUGH.

LISTEN TO HIS PLEADING, COAXING VOICE TODAY. TENDERLY HE'S CALLING, HEAR HIS VOICE AND FOLLOW THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

### EXAMINATION, CHAPTERS 9 and 10

#### *What Did These Say*

##### *About the Blind Man:*

1. The disciples:
2. Jesus:
3. The neighbors:
4. The parents:
5. The Pharisees:

#### *Explain These Statements*

1. Jesus: "We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."
2. The blind beggar: "I told you even now, and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? would ye also become his disciples?"
3. The blind beggar: "We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth."
4. Jesus: "For judgment came I into this world, that they that see not may see; and that they that see may become blind."
5. Jesus: "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see: your sin remaineth."

#### *True or False?*

1. An allegory is the same as a parable.
2. Jesus is referring strictly to Himself as the shepherd in 10:2.
3. The "one flock" of 10:16 refers to the New Testament church.
4. There is an extensive interval of time between 10:21 and 10:22.
5. The Old Testament gives directions for the Feast of Dedication in the book of Leviticus.

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### *Make a List of*

1. Four things Jesus says about both a shepherd and the Good Shepherd.
2. Three things Jesus says about the hireling.
3. Five things Jesus says about His sheep.
4. Two things to which Jesus appealed to substantiate His claim to be the Son of God.

### *Locate These Places*

1. Pool of Siloam.
2. Solomon's porch.
3. The place where John was at the first baptizing.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

"I am the Resurrection and the Life"—this chapter must have no other title but this written over it. It is filled with comfort and strength in its revelation that Jesus holds death and life in His hands. It is a touchstone of evidence for the deity of Jesus. It shows the emotions of the very heart of the Master as He weeps for those whom He loves. Used as the text for countless thousands of funeral sermons it still remains the most vital and appropriate text for such occasions. We also see the frustration and malice of the Jewish rulers as they hold their murderous council.

The eleventh chapter tells of one incident among many in a Later Perean Ministry of about three months. After the Feast of Dedication Jesus retired into the region of Perea (cf. Jn. 10:40-42). In the interval between the feast and the raising of Lazarus He makes an evangelistic tour of Perea; dines in the home of a Pharisee; delivers the parables of the lost sheep, coin and son; parables of unjust steward, Lazarus and rich man and unprofitable servants. After the raising of Lazarus, many other incidents transpire before Jesus approaches (Jn. 12) Jerusalem for the final Passover (cf. Map #6, page 117A).

Let us, then, outline chapter eleven, following our general outline of the entire gospel of John, in this manner:

II The Word Manifested to the Jews and their Rejection of Him,

1:19—12:50

D. Public Ministry, Third Year

4. Later Perean Ministry, 11:1—11:57
  - a. A Man Dies for a Purpose, 11:7-16
  - b. The Purpose explained, 11:7-16
  - c. I Am The Resurrection and the Life, 11:17-27
  - d. Jesus Wept, 11:28-37
  - e. He That Was Dead Came Forth, 11:38-46
  - f. Politics and Murder, 11:47-57

## A MAN DIES FOR A PURPOSE

*Text 11:1-6*

1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, of the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 And it was that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

3 The sisters therefore sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 But when Jesus heard it, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

6 When therefore he heard that he was sick, he abode at that time two days in the place where he was.

*Queries*

- a. When did Mary anoint the head of Jesus?
- b. Why say the sickness was not unto death?
- c. Why wait two days after receiving the bad news?

*Paraphrase*

Now there was a certain man who became seriously ill; this man was Lazarus of Bethany, the village where Mary and her sister Martha lived. (This is the same Mary who would anoint the Lord with perfume and wipe his feet with her hair, and Lazarus, the man who was ill, was her brother.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus saying, Lord, look! the one whom you love is seriously ill. When Jesus heard this message he replied, Death will not be the final result of this sickness. This sickness will ultimately end in the glory of God and especially will the glory of the Son of God be shown through it. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. But after he heard of Lazarus' illness he stayed two more days where he was in Perea.

*Summary*

Lazarus, of whom Jesus was especially fond as a friend, is seriously ill even at the point of death. But Jesus, with His divine foreknowledge, knows that although Lazarus will die he will be resurrected to the glory of the Father and the Son.

*Comment*

The gospel writer, John, is careful to identify the people involved in this glorious event. The Lazarus is distinguished from others (cf. Lk. 16:20) of the same name. The name Lazarus means "he whom God helped." Even this village of Bethany is distinguished from the "Bethany beyond the Jordan." This village is the Bethany where Mary

and Martha lived—the small village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, a "suburb" of Jerusalem. There are so many Marys in the gospels that John must also identify this Mary as the one who anointed the Lord with perfume. The word *anointed* is in the aorist tense in the Greek. The aorist tense is the "snap-shot" tense and does not necessarily mean the anointing happened in the past. We believe John simply uses an anachronism (statement of an event out of its historical sequence) here as he does with the betrayal of Judas later. The anointing by Mary took place just before the Triumphal Entry (Jn. 12) but John, writing years later, mentions it out of sequence to identify Mary. This anointing is not to be confused with the event of the sinful woman who wiped Jesus' feet with her hair (cf. Lk. 7:36-50), but is the same anointing that is described by Matthew (Matt. 26:6-13), and Mark (Mk. 14:3-9).

The emphatic nature of the language used and the sending of the messenger the long distance into Perea indicates urgency. Lazarus was seriously ill and probably not expected to recover unless the Great Healer came at once! The messenger was instructed to be emphatic so he said, "Behold! the one whom you dearly love is at the point of death!" The word the sisters use for love is *phileo* which has a different shade of meaning in some instances than *agapao*. The words are also used interchangeably. We shall discuss them further in John 20.

The brevity of the Lord's answer (at least the brevity with which it is recorded) seems to be a cold shrugging-off of the urgency of the sisters. No doubt the disciples understood Him to mean that the illness was not as serious as the messenger believed. But the Son of God was never more in command of the situation—never more tender and compassionate in His plans for all concerned. All that He will offer at the moment in the way of consolation is the prediction that the sickness of Lazarus will not end finally in death (although Jesus knew Lazarus would die), but in the ultimate glory of God the Father and God the Son.

John now inserts the important parenthetical statement, "Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus." This is to inform the reader of his gospel record that Jesus was not turning His back upon their plea for help by His brief answer and intentional delay in Perea for two days. Something of significance seems to be inferred from the emphasis on Jesus' love for Lazarus, Mary and Martha here. Jesus was both divine and human. On the human side He had very few really close friends in whom He might confide, and trust. Members of His own family were unbelievers and not even His disciples seem to have been sym-

pathetic with all His needs for such close friendship. Mary had some deep intimations within her of His approaching death (which is more than the disciples understood) when she anointed Him. What a great source of comfort this family must have been to the One with the shadow of the cross upon Him.

As Foster points out, the verse (v. 5) may mean that because Jesus loved them, He tarried, having something greater in store for them all than the mere healing of a sick man.

The primary objective in His delay was that upon Lazarus' death the Father and the Son would be glorified when the Son should raise him from the tomb (especially after the body had begun to deteriorate). But another purpose is stated in 11:15, the strengthening of the faith of the disciples. This resurrection, of course, would result also in the strengthening of the faith of the family of Lazarus. As Hendriksen says, "Hence, what may have looked like a cruel delay was in reality the tenderest concern for the spiritual welfare of true disciples." What would be the best way to give all concerned a faith and hope in Him as the resurrection and life?—to heal a sick man or to raise one from the dead whose body was already decaying? Which would give more glory to God? Raising of Lazarus from the dead, of course!

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;

"His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower."

### *Quiz*

1. Why does John mention the anointing by Mary out of its historical sequence?
2. What does the repetition of the fact that Jesus loved Lazarus, Mary and Martha indicate as to Jesus' human nature?
3. What two things did Jesus have in mind by waiting until Lazarus was dead before He answered the plea of the sisters?
4. What may we learn from these recorded instances of the "mysterious" ways in which the Lord works?

## THE PURPOSE EXPLAINED

*Text 11:7-16*

7 Then after this he saith to the disciples, Let us go into Judea again.

8 The disciples say unto him, Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him.

11 These things spake he: and after this he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

12 The disciples therefore said unto him, Lord, if he is fallen asleep, he will recover.

13 Now Jesus had spoken of his death: but they thought that he spake of taking rest in sleep.

14 Then Jesus therefore said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

16 Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

*Queries*

- a. Why the dissertation on "walking in the daylight"?
- b. Why was Jesus "glad" at not being present when Lazarus died?
- c. With whom did Thomas plan to die?

*Paraphrase*

At the end of two days Jesus said to His disciples, Let us return to Judea. The disciples were shocked and said to Him, Master, the Jews are even at this very hour seeking to stone you to death—and you are going to return to Judea? Jesus answered, Are there not a certain number of allotted hours of light for the day wherein a man is to work and walk? If a man walks in these allotted hours of light he need not fear obstacles or enemies. But if a man does not avail himself of the God-allotted light and walks in darkness he will stumble and be overcome because the light does not illuminate his path. After speaking these words Jesus said to His disciples, Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep and I am returning to Judea in order to awaken him out of this sleep. Hearing this the disciples replied, Lord, if he has merely fallen asleep he will all the better recover from his sickness.

(Now Jesus was speaking of Lazarus' death; however, the disciples thought He was speaking about the repose of sleep.) Then Jesus said to them plainly and openly, Lazarus is dead! For your sakes I am glad that I was not present when he died in order that what subsequently transpires may strengthen your faith in Me. Let us then go to Judea and to Lazarus. Then Thomas, who is called Twin, spoke boldly to his fellow-disciples, If our Master is determined to return to Judea, let us also go that we may die with him!

### *Summary*

After a delay Jesus now announces His determination to return to Judea. The disciples warn Him of the animosity of the Jews. Jesus tries to allay their fears by telling them that His intended return is within the divine plan of His Father and for the purpose of strengthening their faith. Thomas exhorts his fellow-disciples to courageously prepare to die with Jesus.

### *Comment*

The disciples had never been given cause to doubt the bravery and courage of their Master. In fact, He displayed the most dauntless courage time after time. But now His expressed intention to return to Judea is looked upon by the disciples as foolhardiness.

Verses 9 and 10 is another of the Lord's enigmatic figures by which He sought to stimulate the spiritual discernment of the disciples. Taken in its context and considering another statement (Jn. 9:4-5) of parallel figurativeness, we understand Jesus to be telling the disciples *by this figure* that it is safe to return to Judea because His hour has not yet come. Just as there is a certain amount of daylight hours allotted by God in which man can walk and work without fear of obstacles and enemies because he has light, so there is an allotted time in which the Son of God must accomplish His earthly ministry. The disciples have expressed urgent concern for His safety, but Jesus counters with this figurative affirmation that the time within the divine plan of the Father for His death is not yet, therefore they may safely return to Judea. Notice the similarity of thought between verses 9 and 10 here and John 9:4-5: "We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. When I am in the world, I am the light of the world." As Lenski puts it, "To walk and not to stumble means to go on with our life's work"; (as God has given to each one of us an allotted day in which to work) "to stumble means to come to the end of our life's work . . ." (Interp. of St. John's Gospel, p. 787, R. C. H. Lenski) (parenthesis mine).

Jesus goes from one figure to another immediately. Again He uses the enigmatic metaphor of "sleep" for "death" to excite their spiritual understanding. There may be two reasons for speaking of death thus: (a) to soften the harshness of the reality of death, and, (b) to re-emphasize His first statement, "This sickness is not unto death . . .," i.e., to hint more strongly at a resurrection from death. Throughout the Scriptures the word "sleep" is applied to death to intimate that death will not be final. It is used to comfort believers and remove all that is stark and dreadful about death. Below are a few of the other comforting references to believer's death:

- a. Precious in the sight of Jehovah, Psa. 116:15
- b. Carried away by the angels, Lk. 16:22
- c. Being in Paradise with Jesus, Lk. 23:43
- d. Going to a place with many dwelling places, Jn. 14:2
- e. A longed for departure, Phi. 1:23; II Tim. 4:6
- f. To be with Christ—at home with the Lord, Phil. 1:23; II Cor. 5:8
- g. A very far better gain, Phil. 1:21, 23
- h. A rest from labors, Rev. 14:13

It is well to mention here that the mere reference to death as "sleep" does not teach the doctrine of "soul-sleeping." As Hendriksen comments, "Though the soul is asleep to the world which it has left it is awake with respect to its own world" (cf. Lk. 16:19-31; 23:43; II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21-23; Rev. 7:15-17; 20:4).

But the disciples took Jesus literally. If Lazarus was sick and had finally found *restful repose*, their opinion was that he would recover for it was said among the Jews that "sleep in sickness is a sign of recovery, because it shows that the violence of the disease has abated." (Lightfoot)

So Jesus now felt the time was right to speak openly and plainly to the disciples. He wants to let them know that He knows Lazarus is dead and that his death is going to result in further evidence for their belief in Jesus. This, then, is the higher purpose that will be served by the death of Lazarus (cf. 11:4). Jesus was preparing these men to witness His greatest miracle (excepting, of course, His own resurrection). As one commentator has said, ". . . a miracle comes to be wrought that exceeds in its revelation of the glory of the Father and the Son all the other miracles of Jesus, that brings the most wonderful blessings to those that behold and believe."

Seeing the determination of Jesus to return into the face of the enraged rulers in Judea, Thomas resigns himself to go with his Master even if it means death by stoning. There is no reason to think Thomas is referring to Lazarus as the one with whom he is resigned to die. He is probably not certain yet whether Lazarus is sick or dead—but he is sure, as are the others, that if Jesus returns to Judea He faces certain death. The apostles were courageous men. One wonders if, when Jesus was about to be arrested, He had called upon them to fight they would not have fought valiantly (cf. Jn. 18:10-11). Peter was ready to die with Jesus (cf. Matt. 26:35)—but when Jesus submitted willingly to the humiliating torture and mockery, the disciples fled. This was not their idea of a Messiah—if He had fought they were ready and were courageous—they were not cowards. But humiliation—that was another story.

The groundwork has been laid well. The disciples are certain they face death in Judea. But Jesus knows they will see Him in all His glory as The Resurrection and the Life.

### *Quiz*

1. What is the message behind the enigmatic statement of verses 9 and 10?
2. When Jesus said that Lazarus was "asleep" did He mean that the soul is unconscious after death? Prove your answer by Scripture references.
3. What is the significance of the Lord's use of the word "sleep" to refer to death?
4. What is the ultimate purpose of the raising of Lazarus?
5. What of Thomas' statement, ". . . that we may die with him." Was it bravery, cowardice or pessimism?

### I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

*Text 11:17-27*

17 So when Jesus came, he found that he had been in the tomb four days already.

18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off;

19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother.

20 Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary still sat in the house.

21 Martha therefore said unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22 And even now I know that, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee.

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me though he die, yet shall he live;

26 and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world.

### *Queries*

- a. Who were the Jews "consoling" Martha and Mary?
- b. What is Martha's attitude toward Jesus in verses 21-22?
- c. Does Jesus adequately answer Martha's longing in verses 23-26?

### *Paraphrase*

So when Jesus arrived in Bethany, He found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Quite a number of the Jews of the city of Jerusalem had come out to Martha and Mary, Bethany being only about two miles from Jerusalem, to console them and mourn with them over their brother's death. When Martha was told that Jesus was on His way, she went out alone to meet Him—Mary stayed in the house. When Martha met Jesus she said to Him, Master, if you had only been able to get here in time my brother would not have died from his sickness. But even now, with my brother dead, I am sure that whatever you might ask of God, God will grant it. Jesus said to her, Your brother will rise again. Martha replied, Yes, Master, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. At this, Jesus said to her, I am even now the source of resurrection and the life that is eternal. Though a man may die physically, if he has believed in Me and obeyed Me he will live forever. Yes, whoever lives a life of obedient faith in Me never really dies. Do you believe this, Martha? She replied, Yes, Master, I have believed that you are the Messiah, the Son of God—even the One whom the prophets foretold would come into the world.

### *Summary*

Jesus finally arrives near Bethany four days after Lazarus' burial. Martha, informed of His approach, goes forth to meet Him. She expresses faith in Jesus, but in her sorrow her faith needs to be strengthened. Jesus challenges her to complete trust in Him—she confesses her faith in His deity as the Son of God.

*Comment*

There is no need to speculate on when Lazarus died (whether before the messenger arrived where Jesus was in Perea, or whether he died after the messenger returned to Bethany). We know that Jesus purposely waited until he was dead (cf. Jn. 11:14-15), that Jesus knew *when* Lazarus was dead; we therefore assume that He purposely did not hurry from Perea to Bethany, waiting until the body of Lazarus would start its decomposition in order that the miraculous raising would have even greater significance.

The statement of verse 19 that many of the Jews had come to the home of Mary and Martha may indicate two things. First, it may infer that Lazarus and his sisters were well thought of by many people. Second, it may mean that his funeral was a "big" funeral. Those families who could afford it usually hired mourners for Jewish funerals (cf. Eccl. 12:5; Jere. 9:17; Am. 5:16). Generally a meal was prepared for those attending the funeral after the entombment when they would "eat the bread of mourners" (cf. II Sam. 3:35; Hos. 9:4; Ezek. 24:17, 24). We know that all those attending the funeral were not friends of Lazarus. Some had undoubtedly been sent there by the rulers of the Jews to see if Jesus would come from His "hiding place" at the death of His beloved friend. Others of the Jews, neither avowed enemies nor avowed friends of Jesus, may have been there out of mere curiosity. Knowing, however, our Lord's estimation of Lazarus, we believe the greater portion of those at the home of the sisters were there out of their respect for the deceased who was undoubtedly a man of compassion and good works. John's explanation for one of the causes for a great crowd was the relatively short distance (15 stadia) of Bethany from Jerusalem—about two miles.

Martha, upon hearing that Jesus was arriving, probably hurried to meet Him outside the village in order that she might speak to Him privately. Her first words were, "If you had been here (or gotten here in time) my brother would not have died." Martha, knowing His past miracles of healing the sick, believed firmly in Jesus' ability to heal her sick brother—if only He had been there before Lazarus had died.

The next statement, verse 22, hints of her belief that even in the face of her brother's death Jesus will somehow rectify the situation. This short conversation of Martha with Jesus indicates that Martha had a beautiful, tenacious faith in Jesus as the Messiah. It had not yet blossomed into full trust in Him as the Resurrection and the Life and it was to this end that Jesus coaxed and fanned the flame of faith

within her heart. She certainly recognized that God was working through Jesus. Martha may have been the one who was before "cumbered about much serving," but she certainly maintained a strong belief in Jesus.

Watch now as Jesus seeks to lead Martha to a more perfect faith in His deity. It is as R. C. Foster says in his Syllabus, "A good teacher does not work everything out for the pupil, but gives just enough help to stimulate the utmost intellectual effort." So with the Great Teacher. He began to give obscure replies to her, as to His disciples beyond the Jordan. It was ever thus that He sought to draw out and enlarge the faith of those whom He would help." So Jesus simply said, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha quickly responded with her affirmation of belief in the final resurrection, verse 24. There are some of the liberal schools of theology who maintain that the Jews in the Old Testament did not believe in the future life. Or, if they did, they received their beliefs of the future life from heathen philosophies. For an excellent refutation of this impossible theory we refer you to Bro. R. C. Foster's essay entitled, "The Future Life." A few sample references from the Old Testament should suffice: I Kings 17:22; II Kings 4:35, 13:21, 2:11; Psa. 23; Isa. 14:9, 25:8, 26:19, 53:10-12, 66:24; Dan. 12:2. Further, Hebrews, 11th chapter, teaches that the O. T. saints looked forward to heaven.

Jesus takes another step. He is slowly but firmly laying the groundwork for the stupendous miracle that will soon take place. His statement, "I am the resurrection and the life," is one of the most significant and comprehensive statements He made. Here the Lord Jesus identifies Himself as the source of the resurrection—even of life itself (cf. John 1:4; Col. 1:16-17). Jesus is saying to Martha, in a veiled way, that even though her brother is physically dead he is alive. Death for the believer (physical death, which is the mere separation of the soul from the body) is the mere beginning of life that is life indeed (cf. Phil. 1:21-23; II Cor. 5:1-8). Jesus claimed the same power months before at the Passover (John 5:19-29). Certainly He is the resurrection and life at the last day—but He is even now the granter of life to her brother because of her brother's belief in Him. This is what Jesus challenges Martha to believe by asking, "Believest thou this?"

We doubt that Martha fully understood the significance of Jesus' claim (even as we do not fully understand it), but there can be little doubt as to her unreserved surrender to Jesus. To the challenge to

simply trust Him she answers, "Yes, Lord, I believe . . ." Considering the state of mind Martha must have been in, this confession expresses a great faith. Further consider that the miracle of her brother's resurrection had not yet occurred. How her faith and love for Jesus must have increased after the miracle.

### *Quiz*

1. Why the mention of the fact that Lazarus had been dead four days?
2. How may the "many people" at Martha's home be explained?
3. What does verse 22 hint concerning Martha's faith in Jesus?
4. Why does Jesus make the obscure statement of verse 23?
5. Does the Old Testament teach a belief in the resurrection?
6. What is the significance of the statement, "I am the resurrection and the life"?
7. What of Martha's confession?

### JESUS WEPT

*Text 11:28-37*

28 And when she had said this, she went away, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Teacher is here, and calleth thee.

29 And she, when she heard it, arose quickly, and went unto him.

30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met him.

31 The Jews then who were with her in the house, and were consoling her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up quickly and went out, followed her, supposing that she was going unto the tomb to weep there.

32 Mary therefore, when she came where Jesus was, and saw him, fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping who came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.

34 and said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 Jesus wept.

36 The Jews therefore said, Behold how he loved him!

37 But some of them said, Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die?

### *Queries*

- a. Why did Jesus call Mary out to meet Him?
- b. Why would Mary fall down at Jesus' feet?

c. What caused Jesus to weep?

*Paraphrase*

After Martha expressed her belief in Jesus she returned to the house and went in alone to her sister Mary and whispered to her secretly, The Teacher is here and is asking for you to come out and meet Him. Immediately upon getting this message Mary arose and started out to meet Him. (Now Jesus had not yet entered the village but was remaining at the place where Martha had met him.) When the Jews who were mourning with Mary in the house noticed that she had gone out in such a hurry, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep for her brother there. When Mary arrived at the place where Jesus was waiting, and saw Him, she fell at His feet sobbing, Lord if you had only been here my brother would not have died of his sickness. When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had followed her also weeping, He was deeply moved in the spirit and visibly distressed but He asked gently, Where have you buried him? Then some of them said, Lord, come and we will show you. Jesus wept openly. Some of the Jews beholding this said, to one another, See how much he loved Lazarus! Others of the Jews said, But He opened the eyes of the blind man—why could He not have kept this man from dying?

*Summary*

Jesus, sending for Mary to meet Him, evidently wants to talk with her apart from the crowds. Aware of the deep grief of Mary and those who mourned for her brother, Jesus wept openly. The Divine Son of God and the Son of man manifested in Jesus—we behold His participation in the sufferings of our agonies.

*Comment*

As close as Jesus was to this family, Mary, Martha and Lazarus, we can understand why He sent Martha to tell Mary that He wished to see her apart from the crowds of mourners. This family had no doubt tenderly cared for and befriended Jesus when it seemed as if the whole nation was against Him (cf. Luke 10:38-42). Further, Mary, at least, was sympathetic with the tragic end which would culminate His ministry (cf. John 11:1 and 12:1-8; cf. also Matt. 26:6-13; Mk. 14:3-9)—when even the closest of the disciples could not foresee it. So Jesus wanted to speak with these beloved friends in privacy and strengthen their faith and comfort them.

Mary, hearing that the Master was asking for her, fled to His side. How we all ought to hear Him call and flee to His side when our hearts are broken with grief. Hear Him call, "Come unto me all ye

that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). They met somewhere outside the village-proper. But their meeting was not as private as Jesus had wished for the Jews who had been with Mary in the house thought that she was going to the cemetery to mourn by her brother's tomb. We do not know why they followed her—perhaps out of curiosity, but more likely out of sympathy. Someone should be at her side there in the graveyard. A woman, so overcome with grief, should not be left all alone.

When Mary arrived where Jesus and His disciples were waiting, just outside the city, she fell down at His feet repeating what her sister had said to Him. "If you had only been here, my brother would not have died of his illness—you would have healed him." We believe this is expressive of the great faith of Mary in the Teacher. Of course, her faith was not yet strong enough to keep her from grief or from uttering the same lament that her sister had made. But which of us has such perfect faith? We believe that this manifestation of utter dependence upon Jesus in her hour of deep sorrow shows that Mary had as much faith in Him as Martha had just confessed.

Verses 33-35 picture the Son of God weeping unashamedly. Oh, sweet and comforting picture! The heart of God going out to suffering, sorrowing mankind in the tears of His Only Son. Our Saviour is not aloof and cold and unfeeling . . . "For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Seeing the woe and deep grief which sin caused among men, Jesus was visibly troubled of spirit—so visibly overwrought that John remembered it and recorded it here. There were other times when Jesus was visibly troubled within because of sin and unbelief. He was "grieved" at the unbelief of the Jews (Mk. 3:5). He was troubled at the last supper over the one who was about to betray Him (Jn. 13:21). He was troubled of soul when the Greeks were brought to Him and He was made vividly aware of the cruel suffering He was about to endure (Jn. 12:27).

But there is more than agitation of spirit here. His heart was touched with their grief! He wept with those who were weeping (cf. Rom. 12:15). Soon He would shed tears of grief and sympathy for the rebellious people of Jerusalem (cf. Lk. 19:41-44) because, seeing pro-

phetically the future holocaust of the city's destruction in 70 A.D., He knew the terrible grief that would be theirs. We also know that He must have wept many times as He prayed (Heb. 5:7-9).

Does Jesus care,  
when I've said good-by  
To the dearest on earth to me,

And my sad heart aches,  
till it nearly breaks—  
Is it aught to Him? Does He see?

O yes, He cares, I know He cares,  
His heart is touched with my grief;  
When the days are weary, the long nights dreary,  
I know my Saviour cares.

This heart-touching demonstration of love by Jesus as He wept with Mary was not lost upon the Jews. They marvelled at His love for Lazarus. But many of them were critical of Him. No doubt some of the Jews knew that Martha and Mary had sent for Him when Lazarus was only ill—perhaps they felt that He should have come sooner and healed Lazarus. After all, He had just a few months before opened the eyes of the man born blind. On the other hand, perhaps this was not a criticism, but an expression of a halting faith.

In this section we have another of John's word-pictures of the Divine Son expressing His participation in the infirmities of His brethren of flesh and blood (cf. Heb. 2:14-18). When Jesus wept, He wept with Mary and Martha—but He also wept with all humanity.

### *Quiz*

1. How close was the relationship of Jesus to this family—on the human side?
2. How does Mary express her dependence upon the Master here?
3. May we all have the same dependence upon Jesus?
4. Why was Jesus troubled in His soul? Can you give other incidents when He was thus troubled?
5. What is the significance of His tears? Did He cry at any other time? When?
6. What did the Jews say about His tears?
7. Were Jesus' tears only for Mary and Martha? Explain.

## HE THAT WAS DEAD CAME FORTH

*Text 11:38-46*

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

39 Jesus saith, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time, the body decayeth; for he hath been dead four days.

40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hearest me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me.

43 And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

45 Many therefore of the Jews, who came to Mary and beheld that which he did, believed on him.

46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done.

*Queries*

- a. Why did Jesus continue to groan?
- b. Why did Jesus say Martha would see the "glory of God"?
- c. What was the purpose of the "loud" cry, v. 43?

*Paraphrase*

Upon hearing these expressions of grief and doubt Jesus again groaned deeply within Himself as He approached the tomb. Now the tomb of Lazarus was a cave-type tomb hewn out of the rock of the hillside and a huge round stone was rolled against its opening. Jesus then commanded some of the people, Roll away the stone from the tomb! But Martha, sister of the dead man, said, Lord, by now there will be the stench of decomposition for he has been in the tomb four days! Jesus replied, Did I not say to you, Martha, that if you have faith in Me you will see the glory of God manifested? While some were rolling the stone away from the tomb Jesus looked toward the heavens and prayed, Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I know that You always hear Me, but I have prayed this especially

for the sake of these people standing here in order that they may believe that You have sent Me. And when He had prayed, Jesus called with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out! Then out came the man who had been dead, his hands and feet bound with burial linen and with a burial napkin bound around his face. Jesus then commanded, Free him of the burial wrappings and let him go.

Upon seeing what Jesus had done, many of the Jews who had accompanied Mary to the tomb believed on Him. But some of them hurried off to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

### *Summary*

Jesus performs one of His greatest miracles. Both friends and enemies witness it. In many, faith in Jesus as the Son of God is strengthened. In others the miracle becomes an occasion for betraying Him to those who have vowed to kill Him.

### *Comment*

After hearing the doubt expressed by the bystanders (v. 37) and coming to the tomb, the agitation of spirit that gripped His soul before (v. 33) caused Him to groan within again. Our Lord was deeply moved during this experience with His beloved friends of Bethany.

John inserts another of his incidental, but graphic, notes which helps to familiarize us with this family. The family burial place (Lazarus' tomb) was one probably hewn out of stone. It was cave-like—in the side of a hill, not a hole in the ground. The cave-type tombs were usually available only to the rich for only the rich could afford to have them hewn out of the rock. There are other indications that this family was one of above average financial means (cf. Jn. 12:1-3). These tombs cut into the side of a hill were usually sealed off with a huge circular (but flat) stone which rested in a sort of trough—along which it was rolled back and forth as necessary to gain entrance.

Jesus had no more than finished commanding, "Remove the stone from the entrance," when Martha, in a moment of mixed emotions, protested. No doubt the impropriety of opening the tomb allowing curious eyes to look upon the already decaying body, prompted, in part, her protest. But the reply of Jesus indicates that her faith was also wavering. In the Palestinian climate, and in view of the mechanics of burial in that day, it did not take long for decomposition to set in upon dead bodies. The dead were buried almost immediately upon death. Of course, the Hebrews (and all other peoples since) were never able to duplicate the embalming arts of the Egyptians. Egyptians knew a secret method of preserving bodies for centuries (even for milleniums) that has eluded man ever since their civilization melted into the dust.

According to Lenski, "The Egyptians disemboweled the body and removed the brain and then soaked the body in a chemical solution for seventy days and thus prevented decay." The Hebrews merely anointed the body, wrapped it in linen strips with fragrant spices sprinkled in the folds (cf. II Chron. 16:14).

However, the primary purpose behind John's recording Martha's statement is to increase for his readers the magnificence of the miracle that is about to take place. The resurrection of one who has been dead four days—even after decomposition has set in—precludes any possibility of enemies claiming that Lazarus was not really dead! Lazarus had not merely lapsed into a coma. The reader will please *take careful notice* that when the enemies of Jesus counseled about their strategy in answer to this miracle, not one minute inference can be found that Lazarus was not really dead—nor indeed, that the miracle had not really happened (cf. Jn. 11:47-53; 12:9-10, 17-19)!

So the Lord turns to Martha rebuking her mildly for her wavering faith after she had so positively expressed her confession of Him (v. 27).

As the stone was being rolled away, Jesus looked toward the heavens reverently and prayed. There is a noticeable contrast between our Lord's public prayers and the public prayers of many religious men today. His were brief; theirs long and extended. His were simple and conversational—though not at all disrespectful; theirs filled with impressive vocabulary and oratorical eloquence; (cf. Matt. 11:25-26; Lk. 10:21; 24:30; Jn. 12:27-28). The absolute and perfect faith Jesus has in His Father is shown in His prayer. He thanks the Father for answering Him through the miracle even before the miracle takes place. The prayer also shows the perfect oneness of Son and Father. But again, the prayer was not necessarily for Christ's benefit, but for the people standing there in His presence. He made sure that they would recognize His unique relationship to Jehovah by praying to Him just before the miracle. The emphasis is that He is working the miracle in complete harmony with God—He has been given a unique commission from the Father (cf. Jn. 5:19-36).

When He had thus prayed, He cried with a loud voice. He did not merely speak loudly, but, as the Greek verb *ekraungasen* indicates, He *cried loudly*. Again, the loud cry was for the benefit of the many people present. Jesus needed no loud cry to bring back the dead . . . just a touch or thought would have done. But to insure that all present would know Him as the source of the miracle He cried loudly.

He that was dead came forth! How cryptic! How our hearts burn within us for more detail concerning this great miracle—but nothing more is said. We are not even told how Lazarus was able to come out of the tomb bound, as he was, hand and foot with grave wrappings! Did he hop out? Did he float out? Where was he while his body lay decomposing in the tomb? What did he experience in the world of the spirits? Did he feel—did he know? How was his spirit united again with his body? BUT WE ARE NOT INDULGED IN OUR IDLE CURIOSITIES! As John so emphatically says—"these things are written that we might believe" (Jn. 20:30-31), not that we might theorize or theologize. How differently did the Holy Spirit inspired apostles record the gospel story than finite eloquence-minded and curiosity-minded man would have recorded it! The *brevity* of the gospel accounts testify to their God-breathed origin!

Not even any vividness in reporting the reaction of the crowds is indulged in! Surely they must have gasped, stared with mouths agape.

As we have stated before, the reaction of the Lord's enemies to this miracle establishes its authenticity. We cannot allegorize or spiritualize the account of this miracle and sidestep the implications of its attestation to His deity. The account of his miracle is plain and forthright enough in its claim to be a historical even that we must accept it as historical fact or reject it, the consequence being that Jesus and His disciples are the most demonical liars that ever lived.

The evidence was and is sufficient that rejection of this miracle cannot be intellectual. The only other reason for denial is moral! The Pharisees admitted the historicity of it, but denied it because they simply did not want to surrender to its implication—Jesus Christ, Divine Son of God, King and Commander of man's entire being—so men deny it today from the same motive.

### *Quiz*

1. What does the mention of Lazarus' tomb being "cave" tell us about his financial status?
2. Why did Martha object to having the stone taken away from the opening of the tomb?
3. What is the primary purpose of mentioning of Lazarus being dead four days and his body beginning to decompose?
4. How does the reaction of the enemies of Jesus to this miracle help prove its historicity?
5. What does the prayer of Jesus teach concerning His relationship to the Father? Why did He pray at this time?
6. Is there any significance to the brevity of the account of this stupendous miracle?

7. If the evidence for the miracle is historically undeniable, why do men seek to explain away its historicity?

## POLITICS AND MURDER

*Text 11:47-57*

47 The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many signs.

48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.

49 But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said unto him, Ye know nothing at all,

50 nor do ye take account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

51 Now this he said not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation;

52 and not for the nation only, but that he might also gather together into one the children of God that are scattered abroad.

53 So from that day forth they took counsel that they might put him to death.

54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but departed thence into the country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there he tarried with the disciples.

55 Now the passover of the Jews was at hand: and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the passover, to purify themselves.

56 They sought therefore for Jesus, and spake one with another, as they stood in the temple, What think ye? That he will not come to the feast?

57 Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given commandment, that, if any man knew where he was, he should show it, that they might take him.

*Queries*

- a. What caused the excited concern of the council?
- b. How was Caiaphas a prophet?
- c. Why go up before the passover to purify themselves?

*Paraphrase*

Upon hearing of this stupendous miracle the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Council and began to say to one another excitedly, What's being done—what can we do about this

man—something must be done because he is doing many marvelous miracles. If we let him go on like this and do not stop him, he will gather such a tremendous following among all the people that the Romans, suspicious of sedition, will come and remove us from office for our incompetence, take away our temple and destroy us as a nation.

But one of the Council, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to those gathered, It is evident that none of you know what to do! None of you are smart enough to see what is going to have to be done. In view of the situation we must put to death some man as a political scapegoat in order to keep the Roman armies from coming and subduing our nation and killing many of our people. He made this statement not merely as a personal opinion but being high priest that year he made it as an official pronouncement that Jesus should die for the nation; and not for the people in Palestine only but that by his death all the Jews scattered all over the world might be drawn into closer national unity. So from that day forward the Council made definite plans as to how they might put Jesus to death and make it appear to be a political necessity.

Jesus, knowing the murderous plotting of the Council, did not walk publicly and openly any more among the Jews. He left Bethany and went into the uninhabited country north of Jerusalem and entered into a village called Ephraim and there He rested with His disciples. Now the passover of the Jews was approaching and many pilgrims were going up to Jerusalem from all over the countryside in order to make the necessary preliminary purifications before the feast. The Jewish rulers, looking for Jesus among the crowds of the pilgrims, were saying to one another, What do you think—do you think he will stay away from the feast? The reason they were asking these questions was because the Council had issued an order that, if any person knew where Jesus of Nazareth was, they should tell the authorities that they might arrest Him.

### *Summary*

The astounding miracle of raising Lazarus from the tomb has caused such furor and so great a following for Jesus that the Jewish rulers fear catastrophic political repercussions from Rome. The high priest resolves the solution by giving official pronouncement that Jesus must die as a political scapegoat.

### *Comment*

The miracles of Jesus in and around Jerusalem since the Feast of Tabernacles (some three months previous) has caused a national crisis. There is frenzied confusion among the religious and political heads

of the nation. The ruling Council (comparable to our Congress) has been called into emergency session to declare war on the enemy—a meek, gentle, loving, compassionate spokesman for God. So many people have become enamored of the Galilean that the leaders fear for their positions and their national existence.

They were excited over the possibility of His popularity turning into a political revolt. Most of the Sadducees and some of the Pharisees were satisfied with the political status quo. That is, as long as the Romans allowed them to maintain their political and religious stranglehold on their own people they were satisfied. They endured the bitter occupation of their land by Roman soldiers and procurators as long as they themselves were allowed to control their religious customs for these were lucrative businesses. Furthermore, they knew well the history of their nation when it had rebelled against world empires. They were taken into captivity by Assyria and Babylon. Their ancestors during these rebellions had been scattered among foreign nations, their temple was destroyed and foreign peoples inhabited their beloved homeland. Jesus had openly claimed to be the Messiah, yet He made no political overtures. The great popularity He was now attracting coupled with His claims, might filter all the way to Rome and Caesar and then the Romans would do for them what Nebuchadnezzar had done for their ancestors. Can't you just see the council members wringing their hands in nervous anxiety?

But there is one evil schemer among them who has not let fear overcome his reason. He rudely insults the members, saying, "You are all bereft of any knowledge." The haughty one is none other than Caiaphas, present high priest, son-in-law to Annas, former high priest. Caiaphas was an opportunist who could be either uncompromising or compromising as the circumstances might dictate. He would not stop at bloodshed to serve his own ends. See these passages for clues to his personality (Matt. 26:3, 57; Luke 3:2; John 11:49; 18:13, 14, 24, 28; Acts 4:6).

Caiaphas' statement in verse 50 is a very shrewd political, but cunningly unscrupulous, solution to their problem. Actually, the high priest and his cohorts were not especially interested in either the temple, the nation, or the people except insofar as they must be concerned in order to protect their religious rackets. Jesus prophesied that the exact opposite would happen to the nation should they reject Him (cf. Luke 19:41-44; 21:10-28; Matt. 23:27-39). And it came to pass as it was prophesied by Jesus and as the Jews wished it to be when they cried, "Crucify him, crucify him, his blood be upon us and upon our children" (Matt. 27:25).

The traditional interpretation of verses 50-52 makes Caiaphas utter his scheme with full expression of his own free will and for evil purposes, but God also turned them into a prophecy concerning the atonement of Jesus for the Jews and for all nations. We quote Hendriksen, "Caiaphas was left entirely free, was not prevented in any way from saying what his wicked heart urged him to say. Nevertheless, God's will, without becoming even in the least degree defiled, so directed the choice of phraseology that the words which issue from the lips of this coldblooded murderer were exactly the ones that were needed to give expression to the most sublime and glorious truth regarding God's redemptive love. Without becoming aware of it, the villain had become the prophet!" Perhaps this is still the best interpretation. God could certainly cause unwilling subjects or unknowing subjects to become His mouthpieces (cf. Balaam, Numbers 22-24; Saul, I Sam. 19:20-24; the prophets of old who did not understand all they prophesied, I Pet. 1:10-12).

We believe (as our Paraphrase of these verses indicates) that another interpretation may possibly fit the context better. Caiaphas decided that in view of the situation, and secretly to serve his own personal ends, Jesus must be put to death as a political scapegoat. Why could not the phrase of verse 51 ("Now this he said not to himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation"), mean simply that he was making an official pronouncement? His statement was not merely a personal opinion as to what ought to be done—but it was in effect an order from the chief authority, the high priest, that Jesus is to be put to death. Notice the repeated reference to his position (vs. 49, 51). Verse 57 also shows that an official pronouncement had been published. Why does the word "prophesied" have to mean that it was divinely inspired? It does not always mean that. Perhaps he also told the council that by this political intrigue and machination they might further bring all the Jews of the dispersion, in other lands, under closer national unity and thus more under their control. "Perhaps" is all that we can offer—all interpretations of this passage hinge on the word "prophesied."

This sounded like an excellent solution to the crisis so the council voted the death penalty for Jesus and began definite plans to arrest Him as a subversive and kill Him for treason.

Verses 54-56 are all actions resulting from the public order issued by the Council for the arrest of Jesus in verse 57. From henceforth He became "public enemy number one," a fugitive from the authorities. Actually, Jesus was not a fugitive for He did not deliberately run

and hide from the authorities for His own personal safety. He retired to Ephraim for seclusion and privacy in order to rest up physically and strengthen both Himself and His disciples spiritually for the tremendously burdening events about to transpire. When the appointed hour set by the Father arrived, He faced the authorities and death with divine courage.

Ephraim was a village located probably northeast of Jerusalem about fourteen miles. After resting here a while, Jesus seems to have gone on a brief preaching tour "through the borders of Samaria, Galilee and Perea" (cf. Map #6, page 117A). Between verses 54 and 55 this tour takes place and in verse 55 the passover is probably only a week or two away. Jesus would be near Jericho and the pilgrims were flocking into the city to make sure they could be ceremonially purified before the passover arrived (cf. Ex. 10:10-15; Num. 9:9-14; II Chron. 30:17-18; Jn. 18:28). The Sanhedrin undoubtedly had their subordinates out searching among the crowds of pilgrims for the Galilean and His disciples. They nervously asked one another whether He would come to the feast or stay away.

Yes, He would come all right—in fact, He was probably already on the Jericho road. And, He would die for the nation and His death would ultimately gather together the scattered sheep, even sheep not of "this fold" (cf. Jn. 10:1-16). But His death would not fulfill the evil and covetous aspirations of Caiaphas and his cohorts.

### *Quiz*

1. Why did the Council call an emergency session? What did they fear?
2. Why were the rulers interested in the temple and the people?
3. What is Caiaphas' solution? What did happen to the nation for killing Jesus?
4. Did Caiaphas become an unwilling prophet of God or did he merely make an authoritative pronouncement in verses 51-52?
5. Why did Jesus retire to Ephraim?
6. What did His death accomplish for the nation and those scattered abroad?

## **EXPOSITORY SERMON NO. ELEVEN THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE**

John 11:1-53

### *Introduction*

#### I. SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS INCIDENT

- A. This miracle second only to Christ's own resurrection.
- B. It has played a significant role in leading many to belief in Christ.

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- C. It has given strength and comfort to believers of every age.
- D. It precipitated such a fierce animosity by the rulers against Jesus as to become their "point of no return."
  - 1. The multitudes were so taken to Jesus by this miracle that the rulers cast aside craftiness and secrecy in their scheme to murder Him (cf. Jn. 12:9-19).
- E. It is also the climactic miracle of His ministry of miracles.

### II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS FAMILY

- A. They were some of the dearest friends of Jesus.
- B. From other visits Jesus made in their home it seems that He went there especially to rest and be strengthened through the sympathetic reception He received.
  - 1. His half-brothers, His twelve disciples, the multitudes might all misunderstand Him, but here He was loved and cared for and His teachings were believed, at least by Mary and perhaps by Lazarus.
- C. Relate the accounts of Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1-8.

### III. WHAT IS SEEN HERE ABOUT JESUS, THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE?

- A. His desire to be our Resurrection and Life.
- B. His proof that He is our Resurrection and Life.
- C. How He becomes our Resurrection and Life.

#### *Discussion*

##### I. HIS DESIRE TO BE OUR RESURRECTION AND LIFE

A. His great love and compassion led Him to the tomb of Lazarus (cf. 11:3, 5, 33, 35, 36). It was His great love that led Him from the ivory palaces into a world of woe (John 3:16). He saw all the sorrow of the whole world that Satan wrought through death. His heart went out to man and He Himself partook of flesh and blood that . . . He might bring to naught him that had the power of death . . . and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (cf. Heb. 2:14ff). Our God is indeed marvelous and divine. Even though He knows He has the remedy for our tears and anguish, He weeps over the fact that we must even suffer the bitterness of death.

*Illustration:* A father, sitting in his study one evening, looked up just in time to see his tiny daughter get her fingers caught in the door as she tried to come into the room. The father was very busy and called to the mother, "You'd better come and look after this little girl." The mother came hurriedly, took her up in her arms and asked,

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"Does it hurt?" "Oh, it hurts real bad," replied the tiny tot, "but the worst is that Daddy didn't even kiss it." Our hurts seem easier to bear when we know friends are truly sympathetic. WHAT A GREAT CONSOLATION TO KNOW OUR GOD LOVES US AND FEELS FOR US.

B. There was a higher reason Jesus had for wanting to go to Bethany. He went to Bethany to do more than merely weep with the sisters—to do even more than bring Lazarus back to life. He went to perform a deed that would show beyond doubt His desire and ability to become The Resurrection and the Life. He expressed it a strange way. To thus give this gift of love He stayed away from Bethany until Lazarus had been dead a number of days. He stayed away *because* of His love for the family of Lazarus and because of His love for His disciples. An unbeliever calls Christ immoral to let Lazarus die just to glorify Himself later. But look at the great and glorious blessing Jesus gave to Mary, Martha, Lazarus, His disciples and the whole world—He revealed Himself absolutely as the divine Saviour with power of death.

### II. HIS PROOF THAT HE IS OUR RESURRECTION AND LIFE

A. To claim what Jesus claimed is easy (cf. 11:25). But to prove it is another thing! A Christian missionary and Hindu priest were each presenting the case for their religion. The Hindu priest had gone to great lengths to explain the mysticism and philosophies of concentration, reason and introspection. When opportunity came for the missionary to speak he said simply, "Could the founder of your religion say, 'I am the resurrection and the life?'" "Yes," replied the priest, "he has said that . . ." "But," asked the missionary, "has he ever proved it to eyewitnesses like my Jesus?"

B. Take a look at the evidence for this miraculous resurrection. There is no possibility of deception. (a) The friends of the family of Lazarus knew Lazarus was dead and thus their presence precludes the possibility of deception; (b) Lazarus was four days dead—his body was stinking from decomposition—this was not a case of "suspended animation," "swooning," etc.; (c) Jesus was away at his death and thus there were no schemes cooked up between them to deceive the people; (d) It would have been impossible to deceive Lazarus' sisters into believing that he was really resurrected if he had not been; (e) All present were convinced, believers and unbelievers alike.

There was no concealment, no secrecy connected with this miracle. It was done publicly, in open daylight and was witnessed by a great

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many people. The enemies of Jesus saw it and went immediately to report it to the Pharisees. Notice, however, they did not deny that Jesus had actually raised Lazarus to life. They could not deny it and, as a matter of fact, the very reason for their alarm was that Jesus had really performed such a miracle. The Pharisees did not investigate it, which they surely would have done had there been any question at all (cf. John 9). Instead, they later decided that Lazarus must be killed in order to do away with the overwhelming evidence for Jesus' claims.

C. Notice the very apparent restraint of the account of this miracle. This certainly goes to substantiate the claim for Holy Spirit guidance in the gospel record. Had any writer reported this astounding event without the guidance of the Holy Spirit we would have had pages and pages rather than a few verses. We would no doubt have had some report from Lazarus about his experiences in death, entombment, the other world, etc., etc. There would have been interviews, reports of the excitement about the tomb and words from the sisters. But ALL OF THAT IS OF NO IMPORTANCE TO THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL RECORDS.

D. The conclusion is inevitable! Every circumstance in this account is plain, simple, consistent, factual and truthful. Jesus demonstrated His power over death and life. His claims are validated—His religion is the only religion—there is salvation in no other name but His—He IS the Resurrection and the Life!

### III. HOW HE BECOMES OUR RESURRECTION AND LIFE

A. He becomes the Resurrection and Life by faith—your faith in Him (cf. Jn. 11:25, 26). It is more than mere acknowledgment of Jesus as the "one that cometh into the world" (11:27). It is a *personal* trust and full surrender to Jesus as Lord and Saviour. It is saying with Peter, "Lord to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

B. Faith is equally reason and will. Faith is wanting to believe as much as it is knowing enough to believe.

C. The rulers, although they had plenty of evidence for faith did not want to believe. If they should surrender to Jesus their wills—it meant they would have to change their deeds and motives and lives. They would rather cling to the performance of a few ceremonies and thus fulfill their religious obligations. This left them free (they supposed) to be morally as corrupt as they wished.

D. Faith means obedience. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life to all those who will obey Him (cf. Heb. 5:9, and others).

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### *Conclusion*

#### I JESUS DESIRES TO BECOME OUR RESURRECTION AND LIFE

- A. His great love and compassion led Him to Bethany and then to Calvary.

#### II THE EVIDENCE THAT *HE CAN* BE OUR RESURRECTION AND LIFE IS UNDENIABLE

- A. The conclusion that Jesus is all He claims to be is inevitable.

#### III WHETHER HE BECOMES YOUR RESURRECTION AND LIFE IS UP TO YOU

- A. This blessing of all blessings can be appropriated only by faith.
- B. What glorious words — what sweet and lovely words — founded on undeniable evidence! "I am the Resurrection and the Life, He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."
- C. The story is told of a missionary who had gone to Korea to preach. He preached faithfully for a number of years and then, while she was in the flower of her life, he lost his wife to one of the dread diseases of the Orient. Her last words to her husband, while the tears streamed down his cheeks, were, "Do not grieve for me, dear, you'll get me back." A month passed and again this missionary father sat beside a death bed —this time his little boy was dying. Again he heard these words . . . "Don't cry Daddy, Mommy said you'll get us back." Two Korean women were present and one was weeping softly. The other woman said to the one weeping, "Why do you weep?" She replied, "I am weeping for this poor father." The first one advised, "Do not weep for these Christians—they have a way of getting their dead back. Weep for yourself for you have lost a son and you shall never get him back." The missionary, overhearing this hopeless sigh, was challenged to many more years of zealous, fruitful preaching of the Gospel to the Korean people.

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### CHAPTER TWELVE

Between chapters eleven and twelve of John's Gospel Jesus takes a preaching tour through the borders of Samaria, Galilee and Perea recorded only in the synoptic gospels. Jesus no doubt took this tour for various reasons. First, He desired another opportunity to preach concerning His kingdom to the people of the countryside. Second, there was a reward being offered for information leading to His whereabouts and arrest. His time was not yet come and He avoids arousing increased animosity of the rulers, which He would most certainly have done had He gone directly to Jerusalem. Thus He proceeds north from Ephraim (11:54) through Samaria into the southern border of Galilee and joins the multitudes of pilgrims coming to the Passover as they travel down the eastern side of the Jordan in Perea.

There is no way to be certain how long a period was involved in this preaching tour—perhaps a month, perhaps more, perhaps less. During this time some very important instances in the earthly ministry of our Lord took place:

- a. Healing ten lepers (Lk. 17).
- b. Teaching on divorce (Mt. 19; Mk. 10).
- c. Parables of unjust judge, Pharisee and publican, laborers in vineyard (Lk. 18; Mt. 20).
- d. Jesus blesses little children.
- e. Healing two blind men and meeting Zacchaeus in Jericho (Lk. 19).

These and other incidents take place before the final and terrible last week (cf. Map #6, page 117 ).

The activities mentioned in John 12 seem to cover about four days if our chronology is comparatively accurate. We shall discuss this further in our comments.

The theme that runs throughout chapter twelve may well be summed up in an utterance of Jesus Himself when He cried aloud, "Now is my soul troubled . . ." The ominous shadows of the cross are becoming larger and darker. Everywhere He turns He is reminded of the agonizing torture just ahead—in Mary's anointing, in the entry into Jerusalem, in the coming of the Greeks. This will be His last opportunity to witness to the multitudes—from henceforth (John 13:21) He manifests Himself primarily to His chosen disciples.

Our outline continues:

II The Word Manifested to the Jews and their Rejection of Him,  
1:19—12:50.

## D. Public Ministry, Third Year

5. Last Public Presentation of the Word (Beginning of the Last Week), 12:1—12:50
- An Act of Love with Ominous Overtones, 12:1-11
  - Thy King Cometh, 12:12-19
  - The Great Paradox—Death Brings Life, 12:20-26
  - The Magnetic Cross, 12:27-36
  - A Perpetual Prophecy, 12:37-43
  - The Imperative Words, 12:44-50

## AN ACT OF LOVE—WITH OMINOUS OVERTONES

*Text* 12:1-11

- 1 Jesus therefore six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus raised from the dead.
- 2 So they made him a supper there: and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with him.
- 3 Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of pure nard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.
- 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, that should betray him, saith,
- 5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings, and given to the poor?
- 6 Now this he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein.
7. Jesus therefore said, Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying.
- 8 For the poor ye have always with you; but me ye have not always.
- 9 The common people therefore of the Jews learned that he was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.
- 10 But the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death;
- 11 because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

*Queries*

- Why did Mary do such an extravagant thing?
- What motive was behind Judas' proposal (v. 5)?
- What is the meaning of Jesus' answer (vs. 7, 8)?

*Paraphrase (and harmony)\*\*\**

Friday afternoon, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany which is just outside of Jerusalem. Lazarus, the beloved friend whom Jesus had raised from the dead, was living here with his sisters, Mary and Martha. There, in the house of one of the faithful disciples, Simon the leper, they made a supper for Jesus out of love and gratitude to Him. And the resurrected Lazarus was one of those who reclined at the table with Jesus. Martha, as usual, was cooking and serving.

Sometime during the supper Mary approached Jesus with an alabaster jar containing a pound of very rare and costly perfume. Deliberately she broke the neck off the jar and began to pour the ointment upon Jesus' head. Then she poured the last of the ointment upon His feet and wiped the excess from His feet with her hair. The perfume was very precious and expensive and thus highly fragrant; so fragrant that its odor filled the whole house.

Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' disciples (the one who was later to betray Him for money), stirred up the other disciples, saying, Why all this waste? This perfume could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor. And so all the disciples began to reproach her. Judas, however, did not say this because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief. He carried the general funds of the twelve disciples and was stealing from them continually. Jesus replied, Leave her alone! Why are you troubling her? She has done a beautiful deed to me. You are not to criticize her for thus having kept this treasure with which to anoint me. You always have the poor with you and there are always opportunities to good for them. But you will not always have opportunity to perform loving deeds for me, for you will not always have me with you as I am now with you and need your loving concern. Mary, realizing that I will soon be departing in death, has shown her love for me before my departure by preparing my body for burial with this anointment. And I say to you most emphatically that, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what Mary has done will be told in memory of her great love for me and faith in me.

\*\*\*Note: We have taken the liberty of harmonizing John's account of Mary's anointing with those of Matthew and Mark in our paraphrase in order that the reader may receive the full beauty and significance of it.

When the great crowd of the Jews gathered for the Passover heard that Jesus was in Bethany many of them came to Bethany. They came, not only because Jesus was there, but also to see Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So it was, then, that the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus, along with Jesus, because he was the reason many of the Jews were deserting the rulers to follow Jesus.

### *Summary*

On His way to the final and tragic last Passover, Jesus pays a last visit with certain of His beloved friends in Bethany. Out of their love for Him they prepare a supper for Him. Mary, the devoted and discerning one, spontaneously expresses her adoration by anointing Jesus with very expensive perfume. Judas agitates the other disciples to criticize her, wishing he could have gotten control of the money represented by the perfume. Jesus commends her and predicts that her deed will be memorialized. The multitudes flock out to see both Jesus and Lazarus, the dead man returned to life, and the rulers plan to kill both Lazarus and Jesus.

### *Comment*

We have already discussed incidents which take place in the interval of time between chapters eleven and twelve (see the introduction to chapter twelve and Map #6, p. 117-A). Although this anointing does not occur exactly within the last week, for convenience' sake we have placed it on our map of the last week (cf. Map #7, page 263).

Jesus probably arrived in Bethany on Friday afternoon—the Friday of the week before the last Passover week. We believe He arrived Friday because we count backward six days *before* Thursday (excluding Thursday). Thursday happened to be the 14th of Nisan for this particular Passover (the day on which the lamb was slain and eaten) and we reckon this as the day upon which the Passover began. Furthermore, we believe that Jesus would, at this time, make a point of *not* traveling on the Sabbath. The Sabbath began, according to the Jews, Friday night just after sunset and upon the appearance of the first three stars in the heavens. Although as R. C. Foster says, "There is never a single instance in the N. T. where it is affirmed Jesus obeyed this tradition" (of not traveling over seven-eighths of a mile on the Sabbath), we think He must have exercised a cautious expediency here that the Jewish rulers not be any more agitated than they were. He had just before (11ff54) withdrawn from sharply antagonistic environments to avoid precipitous clashes with the rulers.

And so it seems most probable to us that Jesus hurried to arrive in Bethany Friday afternoon to avoid breaking the Sabbath tradition and provoking the rulers before He might have an opportunity to rest.

Arriving late in the afternoon Jesus finds that some of His closest friends have gathered at the home of Simon the leper and are there preparing a supper in His honor. It is the other gospel writers that tell us the supper was held in the home of Simon (cf. Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9). Simon's leprosy, whether present or past, seems so incidental that the gospel writers do not bother to inform us. We assume that he had been previously healed by Jesus. The gospel writers do inform us that Lazarus, the one whom Jesus had raised from the dead, was there, and that his sister Martha served and his other sister Mary gave Jesus a very costly gift. All of this indicates the supper and was being expressed by all present in their own way and gratitude on the part of Lazarus and his sisters and perhaps on the part of Simon.

The word "therefore" in verse 3 gives us a hint into the spontaneity of Mary's deed. The spirit of love and gratitude that pervaded the supper and was being expressed by all present in their own way was dwelling also in the heart of Mary. What could she do to express her gratefulness to Jesus—she was not as good at cooking and serving as Martha. Suddenly she thought of the very precious and expensive perfume which she had purchased for use at the Master's burial. The Greek word used here is *nardou* (*nard*) which is a fragrant oil, procured from the stem of a plant that grows in India. One pound of it, due to its genuine (*pistikes*) essence and the great distance from which it was imported, was worth three hundred denarii (cf. verse 5) (about \$51.00 then, or, multiplied by 100, about \$5,100 now) which is about a year's wages!

According to both Matthew and Mark, she began to pour the precious *litran murou* (Greek for litre of myrrh) upon the Lord's head. This was usually the extent of customary anointing. Yet, so John supplements the synoptics, she used the entire pound (a large amount of perfume) and anointed His feet also. Abandoning the proprieties of the day, she let her hair down in public and wiped the excess of the ointment from Jesus' feet. It was bad enough to violate the custom of the day and loosen her tresses in public, but to wipe a man's feet with it was unthinkable! Her love and gratitude was uninhibited and unreserved indeed! She gave, not a part,

but all of her treasure. She would not cease until she had also laid her pride and honor at His feet in worship and adoration.

One can well imagine why perfume of such quality and quantity is described as filling the entire house with its fragrance. If Judas and the others had not seen Mary's deed, they certainly would have known when the jar was broken and its contents poured out. Perhaps it was the fragrance of the *nard* that caused Judas to estimate its value.

Whereas the two other gospel writers tell us that all the disciples were indignant and complained of what they called waste, John informs us that Judas was the instigator of the murmuring. Judas had persuaded the others to criticize Mary as being extravagantly wasteful. He even suggested that the money should have been given to the poor. But Judas was not at all interested in the poor! He was interested in Judas. He was the treasurer for the general fund of the Master and His twelve disciples. It seems that good people everywhere were eager to help Jesus in His ministry (cf. Luke 8:1-3) or, through Him and His disciples, give their alms to the poor. Judas was appointed treasurer of the little band. It is recorded here by John that Judas was stealing from the purse all the while he was keeping it. He allowed his heart to be obsessed with the inordinate desire for money — that was all his mind dwelt on. The very moment Mary began to anoint Jesus with the precious perfume, Judas began to estimate the value of the perfume and enviously criticize because he had no opportunity to get his hands on the money. We wonder why Jesus, knowing Judas to be a thief all along, allowed him to continue as the treasurer. Why does the Lord allow men to go on stubbornly in their own willful ways today—why does He not strike them dead as He did Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5)? For the same reason He allowed Judas to continue. He is longsuffering toward all men, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Judas was given a superabundance of grace and divine motivation to change, but he would not. Judas was not forced to steal. He was given every opportunity to exercise his free will to choose between good and evil. He simply chose to sell his soul to the devil for a few pieces of money. Judas was not only a thief, but he was a hypocrite. He pretended to be concerned for the welfare of the poor when he was not the least interested in them. Judas is not only criticizing Mary but is pointing his inuendo at Jesus, also, inferring that Jesus is allowing to be lavished upon Himself what should have been given to the poor. It is the way of sinners, should each of us admit

it, to seek to justify one's own sins by finding fault with another (cf. II Cor. 10:12).

Jesus rebukes the disciples for their carping at Mary. Mark reports that Jesus ordered them, "Leave her alone." Both Matthew and Mark report Him as saying, "Why do you trouble her?" The phrase, "Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying," probably means, "Do not criticize her and destroy her happiness but allow her the joy of knowing that the purpose for which she has kept this precious ointment, the anointing of my body for burial, is now being accomplished." Jesus certainly did not mean that she was to be allowed to keep part of it for a later anointing of His dead body, for she did not keep any of it, but broke the jar and poured it all out upon Him here.

Evidently, Mary had purchased this costly perfume for the very purpose of preparing the Lord's body for burial. The plain predictions Jesus Himself made concerning His death (cf. Matt. 16:21; 20:17; Mark 10:32, 33; Luke 18:31-34; John 7:33; 8:21-23; 10:11, 17, 18) and the very evident hostility of the Jewish rulers gave Mary cause to expect His death soon. The other two gospel writers tell us that Jesus said she was "anointing His body beforehand for burial." Perhaps she felt, in view of the hostility of the rulers, she would be unable to perform the loving deed of caring for His body after death—so she would throw propriety to the winds and perform this beautiful deed upon Him now before His death.

The second part of the Lord's reply is also interesting. Mark records it this way, "For ye have the poor always with you, and whenever ye will ye can do them good but me ye have not always." Jesus would not always be with them in the flesh—but while He was with them in the flesh He desired their companionship, their support and their loving concern as He faced the horror of the cross. There would always be opportunities to help the poor, but there would only be a few opportunities to help the Son of God bear the burden of the cross. Yes, He would be with them always, even after His death by His Spirit, but during His earthly ministry He was with them in a special dispensation and needed their fellowship in a special way. As Hendriksen puts it, "He is telling them that just now anointing him in anticipation of His burial is more important than the care of the poor." It is always correct to worship and adore Jesus — it is never out of place. No gift given to Him is ever too extravagant. As one writer has said, "Where Jesus is anointed the

poor will never suffer." If all the Judases would become Marys the Lord's church could take care of the poor.

How the disciples must have regretted their actions here in later days. How they must have felt the shame of criticizing Mary when they themselves allowed these precious opportunities of showing loving concern pass by. All are guilty of it—especially Christians.

There is a story about Thomas Carlyle which illustrates this so very well. Thomas Carlyle loved Jane Welsh Carlyle, but he was a cross-tempered, irritable creature and he never made life happy for her. She died very unexpectedly one day. A biographer tells us of Carlyle's feelings when he lost her. "He was looking through her papers, he notebooks and journals and old scenes came mercilessly back to him in the vistas of mournful memory. In his long sleepless nights, he recognized too late what she had felt and suffered under his childish irritabilities. His faults rose up in remorseless judgment, and as he had thought too little of them before, so now he exaggerated them to himself in his helpless repentance . . . 'Oh!' he cried again and again, 'if I could see her but once more, were it but for five minutes, to let her know that I always loved her through all that. She never did know it, never.' " There is a time for doing and for saying things; and, when that time is past, they can never be said and they can never be done. My friend, is this you? Is it me? Are we like the carping, childish disciples letting golden opportunities to worship and serve the Lord slip by, or are we like the devoted and faithful Mary, giving ourselves and our treasures extravagantly, unreservedly out of our deep love for His salvation. If you have something to do for the Lord that you are putting off—do it today!

This anointing by Mary certainly expressed a greater comprehension and understanding of the Lord's teaching on her part than the disciples manifested. When He plainly predicted His death to them they refused to believe Him. They stumbled at the idea of a cross for their Messiah (cf. I Cor. 1:23). But Mary believed Him and did what she could to express her loving concern .

Matthew and Mark tell us Jesus promised that Mary would be memorialized throughout the world because of her deed of faith and love. And indeed she has been, for her story, as John recorded it, has been told in the four corners of the earth and men and women have been drawn to Christ through it.

Great numbers of the pilgrims going up to the Feast of Passover and of those already in Jerusalem learned that Jesus the miracle-

worker and Lazarus, object of His most astounding miracle, were in Bethany. So they came, in great numbers, to see both of these men whose names and deeds were on the lips of the hundreds of thousands gathered for the feast. They were intensely interested, as one might imagine, in seeing and, if possible, talking to Lazarus who had been called back from the realm of the dead. You would be that interested, too—especially if the former dead man had been restored to life by one claiming to be Messiah, King, Saviour. There before their eyes stood irrefutable proof to substantiate Jesus' claims.

Word of the swelling tide of popularity toward Jesus and the increasing following He was gaining quickly reached the ears of the chief priests. Immediately they met in their council-chambers and made plans to kill Lazarus just as they had before put into action their plan to kill Jesus. The evidence presented for Jesus by the presence of a living Lazarus was so powerful that great multitudes of the common people were aligning themselves with Jesus. The rulers could see only one solution—kill Lazarus and get rid of the evidence. As Bro. Seth Wilson puts it, "Can you imagine trying to kill a man (Lazarus) who will not stay dead?" Lazarus has been dead once—usually enough for most men—but now he is alive again and the chief priests plan to put him to death again!

The same procedure is used, in a less violent manner, by the enemies of Christianity today. Rather than surrender to the overwhelming quantity and irrefutable quality of evidence for Christ and His claims, unbelievers spend fortunes and talents of a lifetime trying to discredit the evidence.

Before closing this section we quote a few outlines of this anointing by various authors:

*"Reasons for recording this?"* by R. C. Foster

- (1) It was an extraordinary example of supreme devotion to Jesus.
- (2) The particular fitness of the event (preparation for burial).
- (3) It offers explanation for the fall of Judas (cf Matt. 26:14-16; Mark 14:10-11). (Matthew and Mark introduce the anointing where they do, out of chronological order, for the purpose of giving a connected account of the conduct of Judas.) (All parentheses mine.)

*"Mary's Noble Act"* by Wm. Hendriksen

#### I. Its Character.

- A. It was prompted by thankfulness . . . love answered love.
- B. It was unique in its understandingness.
- C. It was regal in its lavishness.

D. It was beautiful in its timeliness . . . Now was the proper time for Mary's noble act.

## II. Its Evaluation.

A. By Judas: "To what purpose is this waste?" (Matt. 26:8)

B. By Jesus: "She has performed a noble deed" (a beautiful work, Mark 14:6). ". . . what this woman has done will be told for a memorial of her" (Matt. 26:13).

*"In this action of Mary we see three things about love."*  
by Wm. Barclay.

- (a) We see love's extravagance.
- (b) We see love's humility.
- (c) We see love's entire unselfconsciousness.

## Quiz

1. Upon what day did Jesus most probably arrive in Bethany? Why?
2. What is nard? Where does it come from? How expensive was the jar of nard which Mary had purchased?
3. What is the significance of the fact that Mary anointed both His head and His feet? What is the significance of Mary's wiping the feet of Jesus with her hair?
4. Was Judas the only one who objected to the anointing? Why did he criticize? What was the "bag" that Judas carried?
5. Jesus knew that Judas was stealing—why allow him to continue with the band of disciples?
6. Why did Jesus say, ". . . but me ye have not always."?
7. Why did the chief priests plan to kill Lazarus?

## THY KING COMETH *Text 12:12-19*

12 On the morrow a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13 took the branches of the palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried out, Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.

14 And Jesus, having found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,

15 Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

17 The multitude therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, bare witness.

18 For this cause also the multitude went and met him, for that they heard that he had done this sign.

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him.

### *Queries*

- a. What day did Jesus enter Jerusalem riding on the colt?
- b. Why the great excitement and popularity toward Jesus?
- c. Why did Jesus ride upon a colt to enter the city?

### *Paraphrase (and harmony)*

On the next day, which was Sunday, a great crowd of pilgrims on their way to the feast heard that Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. This multitude had been lodging in Bethany and the environs of Jerusalem and they took the branches of palm trees and went out to join Him as He walked toward Jerusalem, shouting, Save us now! Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord—God bless the King of Israel!

And shortly, when they drew near to Bethphage, a small village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of His disciples into the village, saying, Go into the village of Bethphage and straightway you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her upon which no one has ever ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone asks you, Why are you taking this colt, you shall reply, The Lord has need of them. The owner will not question you further, but will send them to me at once. The disciples went into the village and found the donkey and her colt tied at the courtyard door, out in the open street. As they were untying them the owner questioned them, saying, Why are you untying our colt? Then the disciples repeated what Jesus had said, The Lord has need of it! The owners then allowed them to take the animals. And so the disciples returned to Jesus bringing the colt and its mother along with it. When they got to where Jesus was waiting with the crowd some threw their cloaks upon the donkey and some upon the colt, not knowing which animal the Master would ride. Then some of the disciples assisted Him as He began to mount the colt.

All of this took place in fulfillment of that which was spoken by the prophet Zechariah, who said, Tell the daughter of Zion, Fear not, for behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Now His disciples did not realize the significance of what was happening at the time nor that prophecy

was being fulfilled, but after the resurrection and glorification of Jesus, then they recalled that these things had been written about Him and that they had participated in the fulfillment of prophecy.)

And as He rode along, most of the crowd spread their garments on the road and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road before Him. And among the multitudes following Him were many who had been with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb. They kept telling others about this astounding miracle and witnessing to His power so excitedly that a great crowd came out from Jerusalem also and met Him as He approached the city.

The crowds that came out to meet Him turned and went before Him toward the city and the multitudes from Bethany were following Him. Together they raised a tremendous ovation and cried, Send us, now, salvation! Jehovah bless the one who is coming in the name of the Lord! Jehovah bless the kingdom of our father David which is about to come! Save us now from on High!

As Jesus drew nearer to Jerusalem, at the place where the road begins to descend the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of thousands began to shout for joy and praise God with even more enthusiasm and clamoring as they recounted loudly the many mighty miracles they had seen Jesus do. They shouted with one voice, Blessed be the King who is coming in the name of the Lord! There is peace in heaven and glory in the highest! And some of the Pharisees among the multitude, beside themselves with envy, commanded Jesus, saying, Teacher, rebuke your disciples and tell them to stop this blasphemous tumult! Jesus replied, I tell you that if these people were to cease acclaiming my Messiahship, the very stones would cry out in acclamation! The whole creation should be acclaiming my Lordship.

And as He drew nearer still to the city, He looked upon its magnificence and wept over it, sobbing, Ah, if you only knew, even at this final hour, on what your peace depends—but your eyes are blinded by worldliness and you cannot see it. The time is soon coming when your enemies will encircle your city with battlements and they will surround you and besiege you on every side. Your enemies will dash you and your children to the ground and they will so devastate your city that one stone will not be left standing upon another! This is going to happen to you because you did not know when God Himself was visiting you!

When He entered Jerusalem, with the multitude of thousands accompanying Him, the entire city was stirred with great excitement and people were asking everywhere, Who is this one to whom the multitudes are shouting and acclaiming king? The multitudes who

had accompanied Him were answering back, This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee!

Then the Pharisees began to say to one another, You see? There is nothing that any of us can do now! The whole world is running after Him!

But Jesus proceeded directly to the temple and entered its courts. He looked around at everything going on in the temple and then, since it was already late in the evening, he went out to Bethany taking the twelve disciples with Him.

### *Summary*

Jesus heads for Jerusalem planning to deliberately force the issue of His spiritual Messiahship. The multitudes of Passover pilgrims, excitedly recounting His miracles, shout acclamations of Messianic triumph. The rulers, momentarily frustrated in their scheme to murder Jesus, can only watch helplessly and bide their time. Jesus enters the temple, surveys the activities there and then returns to Bethany for the night.

### *Comment*

"On the morrow" in verse twelve means Sunday—the day after the Sabbath. Jesus arrived in Bethany on Friday afternoon (cf. 12:1) and His friends prepared a supper in His honor, either that evening or the next evening (Sabbath). The supper was most probably on Friday evening while Jesus and the twelve disciples observed Saturday as a day of rest. Then on the first day of the week, about mid-day, Jesus started walking toward Jerusalem.

We believe, from a composite study of all four gospel accounts of the Triumphal Entry, that those whom John says "went forth to meet him," were the multitudes of Passover pilgrims temporarily housed in Bethany and other suburban villages of Jerusalem. At the Passover festival there were some two and a half to three million pilgrims and it would be almost impossible to provide lodging for that many people within the walls of Jerusalem proper. And so, many would find lodging just outside the walls in the villages. All pilgrims must, of course, go to the temple, obtain a lamb or have their own approved and sacrificially slain, purify themselves and do all the other ceremonial necessities connected with the feast. There seems to have been a multitude of people accompanying Jesus as He proceeded toward Jerusalem and later a great throng that went out from the city to meet Him and they also accompanied Him into the city. We have followed this interpretation in our paraphrase (which is also a harmony of the four accounts).

Some of those leaving Bethany with Jesus were eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Lazarus. They were telling over and over among the multitude the marvelousness of this mighty miracle. The news of this miracle had spread even into the city and eventually was the cause for the exodus of a great crowd from the city to meet Him (v. 18). Enthusiasm swept through the throng following Him up the dusty road. It was a happy, festive time. The common people were well aware of the claims of the Man from Nazareth. He had called Himself the Son of God—He had talked much about His kingdom. And if this Jesus was able to raise a man from the tomb who had been dead four days, one could expect Him to make all His other claims assured. Who could resist His power? He had not said emphatically that He is going to Jerusalem to assume the throne, but some of the crowd had heard Him talking in parables about the kingdom (cf. Luke 19:11-28).

The emotional tension was contagious! The entire crowd was caught up in the exuberance of the hour. Some of the more daring climbed the lofty palms along the road and flung down branches which others took up, waving them in His train. Palm branches were waved for rejoicing in triumph and victory (cf. Lev. 23:40; Rev. 7:9). Conquering kings and princes were usually honored in this manner at their triumphal entry—evergreen branches and garlands of flowers were strewn along the parade route. Josephus says that Alexander and Agrippa were received at Jerusalem in this manner. Simon Maccabeaus and later his brother, Judas, were both accorded this honor (cf. I Macc. 13:51; II Macc. 10:7).

"Hosanna!" they shouted. Hosanna means literally, "save now, we pray." It seems to have been used as a prayer or shout of praise for help from on high. This is the way it is used in Psalm 118:25. This was a part (Psa. 118) of the great Hallel (Psa. 113—118) which was sung at all the great festivals commemorating triumph and victory (especially at the Feast of Tabernacles). Psalm 118 is emphatically a Messianic Psalm! The shouts of the people are replete with quotations from this Psalm. There can be little doubt that this multitude is anticipating in Jesus the long-awaited Messiah who is about to set up His throne in Jerusalem in all the earthly splendor of David (cf. John 12:13b; Mark 11:9-10). In essence, this is what the crowd was shouting: "Hosanna, now is the long-awaited hour of salvation and prosperity about to be realized through establishment of the kingdom of our father David. God bless this One who is coming with the authority of Jehovah.

Far from stifling this charged situation, Jesus gave approval and impetus to its continuation by riding the rest of the way into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. Although the ass was symbolic of peace (cf. Judg. 10:4; 12:14; II Sam. 17:23; 19:26; Isa. 1:3), whereas the horse is symbolic of war (cf. Ex. 15:1, 19, 21; Psa. 33:17; 76:6; 147:10; Prov. 21:31; Jer. 8:6; Rev. 6:4), still by the very fact that He entered the city riding emphasized more strongly His Messianic claims. Furthermore, God had predicted such an event hundreds of years before through His prophets (cf. Zech. 9:9 Isa. 62:11). Hendriksen points out that the entire section of Zechariah from which this particular prophecy in verse 15 is taken is all Messianic. Says Hendriksen, "The daughter of Zion is told that its king, its spiritual Messiah, the One who will open a fountain for sin and for uncleanness (Zech. 13:1), is coming. To emphasize the peaceful character of his approach and of his reign it is added that he is mounted upon the colt of an ass. He comes as the Prince of Peace, not as a war-lord. Hence, the daughter of Zion should stop being afraid."

However, a meek (cf. Matt. 21:5) and spiritual Messiah was the farthest idea from their minds. As Jesus rode up the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives a multitude of people from within the city had come out to meet this palm-waving, shouting procession. Thus with a multitude following Him and one in front of Him (cf. Matt. 21:9; Mark 11:9), Jesus proceeds toward Jerusalem surrounded by exuberant, festive thousands, hailing Him as their Messiah-Deliverer. The ovations of, "Hosanna! Blessed be He who comes in the name of the Lord! God bless the kingdom of our father David which is about to come to us! Hosanna in the highest!" increase in enthusiasm and volume until the hills of Judea echo them back. The people by the hundreds strip the cloaks from their backs and throw them in the dusty road for the colt upon which Jesus rides to walk. Many also ran and cut branches from nearby trees (olive and palm?) and spread them in the roadway ahead of Jesus.

As always, there were the Pharisees, spying on Jesus and His disciples (cf. Luke 19:37-40). This was more than they could bear and so they commanded Jesus to rebuke this multitude for what they undoubtedly termed blasphemous conduct. They demanded that He silence them. Jesus replied, "I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the very stones would cry out!" There is more here than simply a highly figurative way of saying, "It is impossible to restrain them." It is a stern rebuke by Jesus toward the Pharisees that they

do not realize the significance of what is being shouted. Jesus is saying, "I will not restrain them for they are but speaking that which God decrees must be spoken." In other words, His Messiahship was something the whole Divine creation should have been acclaiming.

As He rounded Olivet and came to the point where the road begins its descent into the Kedron valley, He paused. The splendor of the Holy City with the afternoon sun glistening on the temple and other buildings caused the divine heart to quicken with emotional upheaval. His whole body was wracked with sobbing (cf. Luke 19:41-44) and He wailed, "Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace!" The multitudes were now shouting "Hosanna," but they would soon be shouting "Crucify him." They saw in Him now a worldly ruler but after His arrest, humiliation and shame, they utterly despised Him. Their eyes were blinded by their worldly desires to the fact that God had visited them incarnate in Jesus. God had visited them with salvation and peace, but they knew it not! Soon they would cry, "His blood be upon us and upon our children."

Jesus, by divine prophetic wisdom, could see ahead some thirty-seven years to the day when their shouts of exuberant joy would be turned to cries of agony and wails of despair. Visions of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. passed vividly before His minds-eye. Josephus records the blood-curdling horrors of this siege when more than a million Jews were cruelly slain. Men were disemboweled; so many Jews were crucified the Romans ran out of wood with which to make crosses; women ate the flesh of their own children, and while other, equally horrible, atrocities were occurring, the city of Jerusalem was utterly leveled until as secular historians record, "not one stone was left upon another." In fact, this prophecy of Christ's and others was literally fulfilled when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. It came upon them because they rejected God's Christ. As the prophet said, "Sow the wind, reap the whirlwind." The Jews have brought all the misery and judgment they have endured through the ages upon themselves because they rejected the "Prophet like unto Moses" (cf. Deut. 18:15-19; Acts 2:22-26). How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

The multitudes were so carried away with their own hopes and carnal desires that it seems they were oblivious to the wailing and sobbing of Jesus. It seems strange that only Luke records the lament while two of the apostles who were eyewitnesses did not recall it.

The shouting, rejoicing multitude proceeded on into the city. The whole city was stirred up (cf. Matt. 21:10-11). This caused frenzied consternation among the rulers. The Pharisees began to say to one another, "See? Ye prevail nothing; behold, the whole world has gone after him!" They had laid careful plans which probably called for subtle but quiet watching and waiting to spring a cleverly conceived trap. But now all these plans have been upset by the overwhelming popularity He has gained. It seemed as if the whole world had deserted the leadership of the Pharisees and had gone over to this reactionary. All they could do for the moment was wring their hands in helpless frustration. But they would soon find a solution. They would side with the hated Sadducees in their bold and unscrupulous schemes.

Jesus proceeded directly to the temple. There, with the air of one in authority, He looked around at the things going on in her courts. As the hour was already late (cf. Mark 11:11), He left the city with the twelve and returned to Bethany where, it is probable, He spent most of His nights during the last week.

The Triumphal Entry is extremely significant. It is the climax of His teaching ministry. He approved of the surging enthusiasm of the crowd and their testimony to His Messiahship. In fact, He deliberately mounted the colt of an ass to emphasize what the people were shouting. The time had now come to make clear to the nation His claim to be its King. Jesus knew such a demonstration would cause violent reactions by the rulers. Better, however, to put them on the defensive and show the world just how satanic they were. We are not sure just why Jesus chose this particular day and hour—we do know that it was not by chance, but all things were happening in strict conformity to the divine timetable.

We do know that it took the greatest courage this world has ever known for Him to thus enter the city. The alarm had already been sent all over the countryside for His arrest. The cautious thing to do would have been to enter the city secretly, but Jesus entered the city in such a way that every eye was focused upon Him. Barclay says, "It was an act of the most superlative courage, for it was the defiance of all that man could do; and it was an act of the most superlative love, for it was love's last appeal before the end."

Indeed it was an appeal of love! He wanted the crass, materialistic multitudes to accept Him as Lord, Saviour and King of their souls. He made symbolic gestures (riding on the colt) and prophetic utter-

ances (Luke 19:41-44) to guide the people toward this end, but their ears had been stopped. R. C. Foster suggests the following attributes of the kingdom suggested by the Triumphal Entry: (a) Humility; (b) Love; (c) Power; (d) Righteousness; (e) Peace; (f) Joy.

Hendriksen outlines the significance of the Triumphal Entry thusly: (1) By it Jesus definitely indicates that He will die voluntarily; (2) He forces the Sanhedrin to change its plans to conform to His and the Father's; (3) He sets Himself forth in no uncertain terms as the Messiah; (4) He also shows the multitudes, what kind of a Messiah He is. We submit here a brief sermon outline entitled, "Behold Thy King Cometh Unto Thee."

### *Introduction*

- I. Describe Events of the Preceding Year of Popularity.
  - A. Teaching spiritual aspects of the kingdom.
    1. Many refusing to accept this interpretation of the kingdom.
- II. Describe the Immediate Events Just before Triumphal Entry.
  - A. Raising Lazarus, events at Jericho.
  - B. Anointing by Mary.
- III. The Triumphal Entry will be by divine purpose—no accident.
  - A. Time had come to publicly declare His Messiahship.
  - B. Time had come to challenge openly the public conception of the kingdom.
  - C. Time had come to offer Himself to the people as their promised king.

### *Discussion*

- I. He Came to Claim Lordship Over Men's Hearts.
  - A. He sought to win men by teaching and meek, lowly example.
    1. He is very unlike the type of king men expect.
  - B. He came saying, "Give me your heart . . ."
    1. By preaching and showing the love of God.
    2. By teaching that the kingdom is within.
    3. Prophets taught this over and over.
  - C. But man's heart is most difficult thing to win.
    1. Man will surrender almost anything but his will, heart and soul.
    2. Jewish multitudes would have willingly given Jesus their bodies in a death-struggle, but not their hearts.
    3. When a man gives God his heart it means that he can no longer do as he pleases . . . man will let God be his God as long as he can tell God what he himself will or will not do!

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- II. He Came to Establish a Kingdom of Peace and Joy.
  - A. These multitudes were prepared to do much rejoicing when the Messiah should come.
    - 1. They were waiting for the Messiah to bring prosperity.
    - 2. For centuries they had endured enslavement and poverty eagerly waiting for the prophesied Messiah.
  - B. Jesus came as the King of Joy to bring joy in the Holy Spirit.
    - 1. Christianity is not just for the times of peace and plenty.
      - a. Rom. 14:17.
    - 2. Christianity is not just for times of freedom.
    - 3. There is joy in serving Jesus whatever be the economic or political status, because it is a joy not of this world!
  - C. Real joy is found by abiding in the Lord's word.
    - 1. Fruits of the Spirit bring joy (Gal. 5).
    - 2. Joy in bearing fruit (John 15:1-11).
    - 3. Joy in serving others.
- III. He Came as Saviour-Deliverer From Sin.
  - A. This was abundantly foretold by the prophets.
  - B. He came to accomplish salvation for all men.
    - 1. Not just a select few or a select nation.
  - C. His salvation was to be found in righteousness.
    - 1. Righteousness bestowed by grace and righteousness lived by obedience.
    - 2. Salvation is not from trials or tyrants as the Jews wanted.
    - 3. Salvation from sin, hell, judgment.
      - a. But men cannot see or feel these in this world and therefore they do not desire to be saved from them.
  - D. Indirectly, however, the nation could have been saved by receiving Him by faith (cf. Lk. 19:41-44).
    - 1. So today, godliness exalts a nation but sin brings its downfall.

### *Conclusion*

- I. He Came the First Time, Meek and Lowly.
  - A. Lowly in birth, life and death.
- II. But He is Coming a Second Time as King of Kings, Lord of Lords.
  - A. He comes with all the royal hosts of heaven at His side.
  - B. He descends with a shout and blast of the trumpet.
    - 1. With angels to render vengeance in flaming fire.
    - 2. HE IS NOT MEEK AND LOWLY WHEN HE COMES AGAIN!

C. He comes:

1. As the Householder demanding accounting of each stewardship;
2. As the King to punish those citizens who refused His reign;
3. As the Creator who will rejuvenate His creation by destroying the old and making a new for His newborn creatures.

III. And what is Required of a Man that He Let Jesus Become His King?

A. Be born again into the kingdom.

B. Behold Thy King Cometh Unto Thee—art thou ready to shout Hosanna, Blessed be the One who comes in the name of the Lord!

### *Quiz*

1. Where did the two-part crowd come from?
2. Name at least four factors which tended to build up enthusiasm among this multitude.
3. What does "Hosanna" mean?
4. What was Jesus' reaction to the behavior of the crowd?
5. Why did the Pharisees demand silence?
6. What event did Jesus prophecy in Luke 19:41-44? Was it fulfilled?
7. Name three significant things Jesus sought to accomplish by this demonstration.

### THE GREAT PARADOX — DEATH FOR LIFE

*Text 12:20-26*

20 Now there were certain Greeks among those that went up to worship at the feast:

21 these therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: Andrew cometh, and they tell Jesus.

23 And Jesus answereth them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit.

25 He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will the Father honor.

### *Queries*

- a. Where did the Greeks come from?
- b. Why did they wish to see Jesus?
- c. Why did Jesus answer them thus?

### *Paraphrase*

Among those who had come up to worship at the feast of Passover were some Greeks, proselytes of the gate. These proselytes approached Philip (who was from one of the Greek-oriented cities of the Decapolis, Bethsaida in Galilee) with the request, Sir, we would like to see Jesus. Philip first consulted with Andrew and together they informed Jesus. It was then that Jesus answered, The hour has now come in which the Son of man is going to be glorified. Now I point out to you a positive principle of God's law—unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains a single, unfruitful grain of wheat; but if it dies, it germinates and yields much fruit. Again, another principle is that the man who loves this earthly life to the exclusion of spiritual life will ultimately lose his life for the earthly life is destined for dissolution. But to the contrary, the one who longs to be rid of this earthly life and loves the life to come will preserve it forever. If any man wants to serve Me, he must follow My way; and then where I am, safe in the bosom of the Father, there will my servant be also. For my Father will honor every man who serves Me.

### *Summary*

A group of Greek proselytes, intrigued with the teachings and spontaneous popularity of Jesus, seek Him with the purpose, probably, of learning His philosophy of life. Jesus answers them with the great paradox that He must die to provide Life and those who follow Him must die to self to appropriate that Life.

### *Comment*

No doubt Jesus returned to the temple courts each day of the last week from His lodging in Bethany. It would be the temple courts that would afford Him the largest, most sympathetic audiences. Furthermore, it would be here in the temple courts that He would be able to challenge the rulers to either surrender to His Messiahship or openly make their move against Him.

There seems to have been three courts in the temple of Jesus' day. The extreme outer court known as the "court of the Gentiles," the next court known as the "court of the women," and the court immediately surrounding the sanctuary known as the "court of Israel." Only Jewish males were allowed in the innermost court. The Gentiles were prohibited from all but the extreme outer court. Gentiles frequently became *proselytes* (converts to the monotheistic religion of the Jews). They are referred to in the Old Testament as "strangers" and in the New Testament usually as those who "fear God" (cf. Kings 8:41-43; Isa. 56:3-8; Mark 11:17; Acts 10:1, 22, 35; 13:16, 26, 43, 50; 17:4).

According to both Lenski and Hendriksen, the present participle in the Greek, *anabianonton* (the ones going up), means "those accustomed to go up" to the feast. This would mean the Greeks were worshippers of Jehovah according to the Hebrew religion. Out of despair and hopelessness brought on by their lifelong association with Greek philosophy and religion they were probably attracted to the Jewish religion because of its reasonableness and high moral standards. The idealism of Plato was cold, unfeeling and hopeless; the materialism of Aristotle was unreasonable and contrary to man's higher nature; the determinism and sensuality of Epicurus led to chaos and despair. The Hebrew religion of One True God, Creator, loving Father, the Personal Unmoved Mover of the universe offered a more reasonable explanation of the cosmos than their mythical, polytheistic religion. So they, like Cornelius (Acts 10), became "proselytes of the Gate."

They had come to the temple to worship during Passover week and had probably heard for themselves or through others of the astounding doctrines being taught by the Man of Galilee. Perhaps Jesus was in a section of the temple where they could not go, so they sent Philip to ask an audience with Him. Just why Philip went first and informed Andrew we are not sure. Perhaps Philip was not certain, as Hendriksen suggests, that Jesus would want to speak with them. To associate with Gentiles, especially in the temple precincts, would only incite the wrath of the Jews. So they both approach Jesus with the request.

No doubt these Greeks had been a part of the glorious entry of Jesus into Jerusalem the day before, either as spectators or participants. There were many questions on their mind. They wanted to know about the salvation this Galilean Rabbi promised — was it merely political and connected with His kingdom? When would His kingdom be established? What was His connection with the

God of the Hebrews—His concept of truth, of life?

They wondered about His doctrines of life and salvation and their seeking reminded Him vividly of the manner in which He was going to provide Life and Salvation for all mankind—the cross. It also reminded Him that the agonizing night was almost upon Him! The hour had come when the sinless Son should be glorified—glorified in humiliation. It was when the Son of man was lifted up on the cross that the glory and wisdom of God was made manifest; when the glory of God and His love would draw men unto Him. The cross and the empty tomb, foolishness to the Greeks and a stumbling-block to the Jews, became the wisdom and glory of God! Perhaps the title Jesus used of Himself here, "Son of man," is significant, perhaps not. It was a favorite title He applied to Himself. It has certain Messianic significance from the prophets (esp. Daniel and Ezekiel), but He may have used it to especially identify Himself as the Saviour of all mankind.

Be that as it may. He proceeds to give an answer to the great questions that were perplexing the Greeks. We do not know whether the Greeks were within hearing distance of Jesus' speech or whether He answered the two disciples and they in turn told the Greeks. However, His answer was delivered to them, it was rather enigmatic and paradoxical. It was in the form Jesus used most—a figure of speech from nature! Although this form obscured the message for those who *did not want to hear* (cf. Matt. 13:10-17) it made His doctrines very lucid and easily comprehended by those who did want to hear.

The doctrine plainly taught by Jesus is the *substitutionary atonement*. However, it was not nearly so plain to them as it is to us on this side of the cross. Just as the grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die to bear fruit, so must the Son of God give Himself up in death to make atonement for man and thus bear fruit by calling many to be sons of God through faith and obedience. They sought an answer to the question of salvation—He answered that man would be saved by His death. They sought an answer to the question of His glorious reign as Messiah—He answered that the Messiah would be glorified by death! All of this was prophesied of the Messiah (cf. Isa. 53, esp. verse 10). If He should not die, there would be no atonement and no salvation.

Next, Jesus turns to the question of man's appropriation of this substitutionary atonement which He shall provide. Man must make the things of this world secondary to the pursuit of the other world. As one sage has so aptly put it, "Life is more than a living!" The

man who makes food, drink, shelter and the vanities of worldly fame his ultimate goal is bound to lose, for this flesh and the world and its works are destined for destruction. To the contrary, the man who longs to be rid of this earthly tabernacle (cf. II Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 1:20-24; II Pet. 1:12-15) and by faith looks forward with eager anticipation to the life to come—he will preserve (or "guard" as the Greek text has it) his real Life forever. The man who makes the getting of earthly life his ruling passion forgets God, forgets that the things of earth are temporary, forgets the judgment to come (cf. Luke 12:15-21). Compare other parallel Scriptures with this passage, such as Matthew 10:37-39; 16:24-26; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-26; 17:32-33.

Verse 26 is further amplification of the way man comes into the saving grace provided through the atonement. Those who desire to follow Jesus and become His disciples must, as Barnes puts it, "imitate me; do what I do, bear what I bear, and love what I love." Men who desire to have the Life eternal which Jesus obtains for them must follow in His steps of self-renunciation and obedience to the will of God. Jesus died to bear fruit. His followers must die to self to bear fruit (cf. Gal. 2:20). When we crucify self we put to death that which must ultimately die and receive that Life which is Life abundantly. Thus the great paradox—to die is to live!

The concluding phrase of verse 26 is one of promise and comfort. Those who choose to follow Jesus, even to death, need not fear, for where He is there will His servant be. Jesus dwelt ever in the constant care of the Father and taught His disciples that they should expect the same care (cf. Matt. 6:19-34). The same promise was made in the great commission (cf. Matt. 28:19-20). Furthermore, the one who will leave all to serve Him will be rewarded by the Father. The word translated "honor" is the Greek word *timao* which is translated in other places, "honor," "hire," "value," "reward" and other similar terms (cf. Matt. 27:6-9; Acts 4:34; Matt. 15:4 [children are to support their parents, not merely honor them with words]; I Tim. 5:17). When a disciple of Jesus leaves all to serve Him, the Father rewards with certain blessings in this life (cf. Luke 18:28-30) and the most precious reward of all—the crown of life (cf. Rev. 2:10; 3:21).

So in this brief discourse we have the gospel in miniature: (a) the glorification and substitutionary atonement of Jesus in His death; (b) the appropriation of that atonement by man through man's crucifixion of self and following the word of Christ; (c) the safety and reward provided by the Father.

*Quiz*

1. Were the Gentiles ever known to have worshipped the God of the Hebrews? List some Scriptures to prove your answer. Were these Greeks such people?
2. Why did the Greeks seek Jesus?
3. Why did Philip not take them straightway to see Jesus?
4. Why would their request to see Him remind Jesus so vividly of His approaching crucifixion?
5. What is the teaching of Jesus in the metaphor of the grain of wheat?
6. How does the man who loves his life lose it? And the one who hates his life find it?
7. How does man appropriate the salvation provided by Jesus through His atonement?

## THE MAGNETIC CROSS

*Text 12-27-36*

27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour.

28 Father, glorify thy name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

29 The multitude therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it had thundered: others said, An angel hath spoken to him.

30 Jesus answered and said, This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes.

31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.

33 But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die.

34 The multitude therefore answered him, We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

35 Jesus therefore said unto them, Yet a little while is the light among you. Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not: and he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have the light, believe on the light, that ye may become sons of light. These things spake Jesus, and he departed and hid himself from them.

*Queries*

- a. Why tell the people that the voice of God was for their sake?
- b. How will He draw men to Him by being lifted up?
- c. Why hide from the people?

*Paraphrase*

Now my own soul is deeply distraught at the present reminder of my impending death, and shall I say, Father (if it be possible) save me from this hour? But (not My will but Thine be done) for this very purpose I came unto this hour. Father, I pray only that your name may be glorified. There came a sonorous voice booming from heaven, saying, I have glorified My name in the past and will glorify it again through You. The multitude standing near heard it and some said it had thundered but others said, An angel has spoken to Him. Jesus said, That voice from heaven came for your sake, not for mine, that you might have faith in me by this supernatural manifestation. Now is the critical hour coming in the entire history of the world in which it will be judged for its rejection of the Son of God; but at the same time and through the same means will the prince of this world, the Adversary and Accuser, also be defeated and rendered powerless. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth upon a cross of death, will draw all men who allow themselves to be drawn unto myself. (This He said to show what sort of death He would die.)

The multitude understood his figure of speech and said, We have heard teaching from the Law that the Christ lives forever. Why do you say in contradiction to this that the Son of Man must be lifted up in death? Who is this Son of Man of whom you speak? Jesus answered them by saying, You have the Light with you only a little while longer. You should walk in the illumination of the Light while you have the Light in order that the darkness of unbelief may not overwhelm you and imprison you. The person that walks in the darkness of unbelief is blind to his spiritual destiny. While you have the Light with you, walk and believe in the Light in order that you may become sons of Light and know your eternal destiny. Jesus said all these things, and went away and hid Himself from the multitudes.

*Summary*

The Greeks seeking Jesus remind Him of His impending sacrificial death. His sinless soul shrinks from the coming sentence of sin He must bear, but He is surrendered to the will of the Father.

The Father strengthened Him by a manifestation to the multitude. Jesus warns that His death will be the critical point in all history for the world and that the Accuser's power will be broken. He is the Light of the world and men must believe in Him and walk in His light to know their eternal destiny.

### *Comment*

The Lord now becomes more explicit in showing the agitation of His own soul which has been caused by the seeking of the Greeks. Their request has reminded Him of the fast-approaching hour when the barrier between Jew and Gentile will be taken out of the way. He is reminded of the moment when all men will be provided a way of reconciliation with God—He is reminded that the very purpose for His coming, just a few hours away, is death for all sin!

There are two major interpretations of verse 27. One makes Jesus utter a prayer similar to His agonizing prayer of Gethsemane, i.e., "Father, save me from this hour (let this cup pass from me), but for this cause came I unto this hour (nevertheless, not my will but thine be done)." The other interpretation places a question mark after the phrase, ". . . what shall I say, Father save me from this hour? No, I will not say that because for this very purpose came I unto this hour."

Either interpretation, as far as we can see, is in perfect harmony with other accounts of the Lord's deep feelings concerning the hour of the cross. The matter of punctuation (whether declarative or interrogative) is academic anyway, since the original Greek contained no punctuation marks. Jesus was tempted from the very beginning of His ministry, by the devil himself, to forego the way of the cross (cf. Matt. 4:8-10). Again, when Peter refused to accept the doctrine of the cross for the Messiah (cf. Matt. 16:21-28) it was a temptation that disturbed the depths of the Master's soul. When Mary anointed His head and feet with perfume at Bethany it reminded Him of His imminent death (cf. Jn. 12:7). So His agitated soul again considers the cross and He prays, "Father, save me from this hour (if it be possible), but for this cause came I unto this hour (and so my prayer is not my will be done, but thine), Father, glorify thy name." It was the same prayer He would cry even more strongly in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39; Heb. 5:7-8). The shadow of the cross was upon Jesus from the day of His birth (cf. Luke 2:34-35). It was not the physical torture from which He shrank, but the curse of sin He took (II Cor. 5:21) which caused the Father to turn His face from the Son (Matt. 27:46).

There is one other interpretation of this 27th verse. It is based on the Greek preposition *ek* (out, from). It might be paraphrased thusly: "Father, bring me safely out of this conflict" (a prayer for glorification through resurrection from the death of the cross).

Whatever be the interpretation we cannot fail to see the unwavering determination of the Son to carry out the eternal purpose of the Father! (cf. Jn. 4:34; 5:30; Heb. 10:7, 9). The utmost concern of Jesus was to glorify the name of the Father. Throughout His earthly life He glorified the Father, but the culminating glorification was to be the death and resurrection of the Christ, and the establishment of the church. The death of Jesus was no accident. It came by the deliberate foreknowledge and counsel of God (cf. Acts 2:23; Rev. 13:8).

God's answer from heaven (v. 28) includes more than the approaching suffering. God repeatedly glorified His name through the miraculous ministry of Jesus (cf. Jn. 5:23; 11:40); but especially in the crises of Jesus' ministry: (a) The Baptism (Mt. 3:17; Lk. 3:21-22); (b) The Transfiguration (Mt. 17:5); (c) and here. The promise of future glorification includes the death, resurrection exaltation of Christ and the world-wide proclamation of the gospel of which Jesus was reminded when the Greeks sought Him in the temple.

God's voice speaking from heaven must have been a great booming, thunderous crash (cf. Exodus 19:16-20). Many of the multitude that stood near Jesus heard only the sonorous thunder-like sound and thought that it had thundered (cf. Acts 9:7; 22:9; 26:13). Others thought they heard articulate language, perhaps of an angel, being spoken to Jesus. John the Apostle heard the words and later the Holy Spirit caused John to remember and record them in his gospel.

The voice was not primarily for the benefit of Jesus (v. 30). But how could the voice benefit the people if they could not understand what was spoken? Evidently the sound was of such magnitude and extraordinary character that it showed itself to be a supernatural phenomena. Thus it was manifestly a supernatural response to the heavenly-directed prayer of Jesus. The voice was to engender faith in Jesus. To show that Jesus was in direct communication with heaven.

The word "judgment" in verse 31 is, in the Greek, *krisis* from which the English language gets "crisis" and "critical." The "hour"

of His death about which Jesus has been speaking and praying is to be *the critical hour of all the history of the world!* To quote Barnes, "Now is approaching the decisive scene, the eventful period—the crisis—when it shall be determined who shall rule this world." Satan had very effectually ruled the souls of men in ages past, especially among the Gentile nations. He ruled through ignorance, superstition, fleshly passion and fear (cf. Heb. 2:14-15). It is rather presumptuous for us to think we can understand the infinite relationships between the devil's domain and God's omnipotence. The devil is called here "prince of this world" and in other places "god of this world," etc. (cf. Luke 4:6; II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 6:12). But even in ages past, before Christ defeated him at the cross, the Scriptures indicate the devil's power was subject to the omnipotent restrictions of God (cf. Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6). Of one thing we may be certain—the death of Christ was the moment of "casting out" for the devil. Satan's power was broken when Jesus suffered the penalty and condemnation of sin for man. Satan is the Adversary (cf. Zech. 3:1; I Pet. 5:8)—the Accuser (Rev. 12:10). But the atoning blood of Christ which paid the debt for man's sins nullified the accusations of the Accuser and defeated the Adversary. The glorification of Jesus (His death, resurrection and exaltation) would be the supernatural power that would destroy the rule of fearful bondage the Accuser held over all mankind and would be the drawing power whereby the Son of God would set up His kingdom of love, righteousness, faith and hope.

Hendriksen has connected this "casting out" of the prince of this world (cf. John 12:31-32) with the "binding" of Satan for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3), in his commentary on Revelation entitled, "More Than Conquerors." We believe Hendriksen has the most reasonable, sensible and Scriptural approach to the book of Revelation yet made. Mr. Hendriksen's view is that before the birth of Christ, the nations (all except the Jews) were in bondage to the kingdom of darkness—of Satan (by their own choosing, of course). There was no way for them, of their own merit, to break the shackles of the Adversary. But God spoke through His prophet Isaiah (and others) that those who were enslaved to darkness would one day see a great light (Isa. 9:1-7; 42:1-7—cf. Lk. 1:79; 4:16-32). The Old Testament prophesied that the spiritual bondage of the Gentiles to the prince of this world would be broken—light would come. Jesus is born and demonstrates His power to cast out the demons (emissaries of Satan) (read carefully, Matt. 12:29—note the word

"bind"). The work of binding Satan begins with the ministry of Jesus (cf. Lk. 10:17:18; Col. 2:15 and our passage here in John, 12:20-32). This binding and casting out or falling of Satan is in some way associated with the first coming of Jesus. It is immediately connected with the work of preaching the gospel to all nations throughout the world. The binding of Satan begins with Christ's first coming and extends *nearly* to His second coming (at which time the devil will be loosed for a short season). But the devil is not bound completely and in every sense. A vicious dog securely bound to a tree with a long, heavy chain can still do great harm within the circle of his imprisonment if a person becomes flirtatious or unaware by indifference. Satan is definitely chained, but within the sphere in which he is permitted to exert his influence for evil he rages most furiously and woe to the man who wilfully or indifferently steps inside that circle! In other words, Hendriksen believes that the Scriptures substantiate best the "amillennial" view of Revelation, i.e., we are now living in the millenium (the thousand year reign of Christ). Whether our readers agree with this view or not, we are persuaded they would profit from reading Mr. Hendriksen's book, "More Than Conquerors," published by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Of one thing we are certain, because of the death and resurrection of Christ we are more than conquerors (cf. Rom. 8:31-39). The lifting up of the Redeemer has accomplished the victory over the Accuser—"If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."

It is said of Napoleon that toward the end of his life as he lived it out in exile, he pointed one day to a red dot on a map that marked the place called Waterloo and said to a friend, "Had it not been for that small red dot there on the map I would have conquered the world." Satan and his cohorts are pointing to the one red, blood-stained moment in history called Calvary and saying, "Had it not been for that moment, I would have conquered the world."

Some commentators believe that because the Greek preposition *ek* (out) is used again in verse 32, Jesus means to include not only His death on the cross in the "lifting up" but also His being lifted up out from the earth (i.e., His resurrection also). The drawing power of His resurrection certainly cannot be denied, and neither can it be denied that His resurrection is also a part of His glorification (along with His ascension and exaltation). But perhaps it is wiser to simply take John's clear statement (v. 33) that Jesus was

speaking of the manner of His forthcoming death, and let it go at that.

The multitude understood plainly what Jesus meant by being "lifted up." But they stumbled over the idea that the Son of Man should die. It is the ever recurrent stumbling-block of the Jews—they simply could not comprehend the Messiah dying a humiliating death. Perhaps they even thought the Son of Man was to remain an eternal, temporal ruler (cf. Psa. 110:4; Isa. 9:6-7; Ezek. 37:25; Dan. 7:14)—they had heard that the Christ would remain forever. For an excellent discussion of the title "Son of Man" and other Messianic titles, see "The Self-Disclosure of Jesus," by Vos. The title, Son of Man, is a term used by the prophets to speak of the Messiah. Jesus seems to have a special fondness for the term, perhaps because it indicated more clearly His divine-human nature.

The main point of verses 34-36 is the misconception by the multitudes of the nature of the Messiah and the explanation Jesus gives. The significance of the three verses hinges on the "therefore" of verse 35. What follows the "therefore" is Jesus' explanation of the spiritual nature of the Messiah.

The figure of light Jesus applies to Himself as He has done before. The contrast is between His doctrine concerning the Messianic kingdom which is truth and their ideas of the Kingdom which are false. The difference is between belief and unbelief. The person who walks in the darkness of unbelief is blind to his spiritual destiny. He does not know where he is from, why he is here nor where he is going. On the other hand, when men believe in the true Light and become sons of light they know their purpose and eternal destiny (cf. Jn. 1:4, 8:12; 9:5). These Jews were warned that they should make use of the privilege of having the Light while He is still with them. Days of darkness were soon to come upon the nation because it rejected its Saviour.

The situation was becoming critical. The events of the latter part of John 12 probably took place on Tuesday of the last week, the great day of questions and challenges—the day when Jesus eluded the traps of the Herodians, Pharisees and Sadducees; the day when He publicly denounced them as hypocrites (cf. Matt. 23) (cf. Map #7, page 263.). But there was an appointed hour for His death and He would not permit Himself to be put to death until the time and in the manner ordained by the Father. He did not hide because of cowardice; to the contrary, His complete mastery of the situation

shows His omnipotence! He would not use miraculous means to prevent His death when the natural would suffice and so He retired, probably to Bethany (cf. Lk. 21:37), and hid from His enemies.

### *Quiz*

1. What are three interpretations of verse 27?
2. Why did the prospect of the cross trouble the soul of Jesus?
3. How could Jesus say the voice out of heaven was for the benefit of the multitude who they did not hear the words?
4. To what extent was the prince of this world cast out at the death of Jesus?
5. What is the drawing power in the lifting up of Jesus?
6. Why would the people say they had heard the Christ abides forever?
7. What is the light Jesus speaks of in verses 35-36? Why does He answer their question about the Son of Man in this manner?

### A PERPETUAL PROPHECY

#### *Text 12:37-43*

37 But though he had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him:

38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

39 For this cause they could not believe, for that Isaiah said again,

40 He hath blinded their eyes, and he hardened their heart; Lest they should see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, And should turn, and I should heal them.

41 These things said Isaiah, because he saw his glory; and he spake of him.

42 Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

43 for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God.

### *Queries*

- a. Did the people believe in order that the prophecy of Isaiah might be fulfilled (v. 37)?
- b. Was it impossible for the people to believe (v. 39)?
- c. Did God deliberately blind their eyes (v. 40)?

### *Paraphrase*

Although Jesus had been doing and was continuing to do a great

multitude of miraculous signs in the presence of these Jews, they refused to believe in Him and the word of Isaiah the prophet was fulfilled, which he spoke, saying, Lord who has believed our message? And to whom has the saving power of the Lord been revealed and who has understood and accepted this salvation? And Isaiah, prophesying in another place, gives the reason they were unable to come to belief, saying, God has allowed their eyes to be blinded and their hearts hardened when they refused to see with their eyes and perceive with their hearts and turn in repentance and God was unable to heal their wickedness. These words Isaiah prophesied when he saw the Messianic glory, in the temple, and spoke of Him. Nevertheless many of the rulers believed in Him but they would not publicly confess their belief because they were afraid the Pharisees would have them excommunicated from the synagogue. These rulers desired the approval of men more than they desired the approval of God.

### *Summary*

Isaiah is quoted as a commentary on the unbelief manifested by the Jews who were beholding the miracles of Jesus. The half-hearted belief of many of the rulers is recorded by John.

### *Comment*

The writer of the fourth gospel, John, now makes a parenthetical statement and quotes Isaiah (53:1 and 6:9-10) who prophesied God's foreknowledge of the unbelief of the Jews in the Messiah. John is not saying, nor did Isaiah intend to prophesy, that God predestines that men will disbelieve whether they want to or not. That is, God created every man with a free will to exercise in the matter of belief or unbelief and God will not overrule that free will and force a man to believe or disbelieve. Here, in the prophecy of Isaiah, we stand once again in the presence of the omniscient foreknowledge of Almighty God and are made aware again of our infinite limitations.

In verse 37 the Greek participle *pepoiekotos* (had been doing) is in the perfect tense indicating that Jesus had been doing many signs and was continuing to do many signs in the presence of the Jews of Judea and Jerusalem. But the multitudes still refused to believe in Him in spite of the miraculous signs He gave them.

And so in verses 38-41 John quotes Isaiah, to show not only that God foreknew this unbelief, but the cause for an unbelief so stubborn that it resists even divine manifestations of miraculous signs. Isaiah's prophecy states that unbelief, as an effect, may also be the cause of further increase in unbelief.

Verse 38 is a quotation of Isaiah's cry unto the Lord (Isa. 53:1) of the almost total lack of belief in Jehovah's prophetic message of the coming Messianic gospel. Isaiah denounced the sins of the people in his day and prophesied the downfall and captivity of the nation. But by and large his message was a prophetic message of hope, strength and a glorious destiny for the faithful remnant through whom would come the Messiah and His kingdom. But in the midst of his prophetic message concerning the Servant of the Lord (the Messiah), Isaiah cried out, "Who has believed our message—who has been able to see and believe in the prophesied Saviour of the Lord?" In Isaiah's day only a very small remnant believed. Yes, even in spite of many miraculous signs to substantiate that Isaiah's message was from God, many multitudes refused to believe. So, when John beheld the unbelief of the Jews, in spite of the many miracles of Jesus, he claims the prophecy of Isaiah to have reached another stage in its fulfillment. Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled in his own day, in the days when Jesus was manifested in the flesh and when Jesus was being preached by the apostles (cf. Acts 28:26-28).

And now, after a statement of the *fact* of unbelief, John again quotes Isaiah to comment upon the effect of unbelief which in itself becomes in turn cause for increased unbelief.

First let us establish that men disbelieve because they will to do so, not because it is impossible for them to do otherwise. To declare that some are predestined to be irresistably saved and others predestined to be lost when the gospel of Christ commands, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," — and "If any man would come after me . . ." — and "Whosoever will may come . . ." is absurd, to say the least!

Man is a free moral agent. Even in Eden man was given freedom to choose to obey or disobey. God makes known His covenant requirements and then man responds. The holiness of God and His message of salvation is of such a character, coupled with the nature of the will with which God created man, that the more man believes and obeys God, the easier it becomes to believe and obey. And, on the other hand, the more a man rejects and disobeys God, the easier it also becomes to reject and disobey. So it depends upon the way man responds to the message of God as to the effect the message may have upon him (cf. Jn. 3:19-21; 7:17).

The Jews of Isaiah's day responded to his message of repentance, punishment by captivity, and a future kingdom of spiritual salvation by scoffing unbelief. They wilfully and deliberately rejected the demands of God (speaking through Isaiah) because they "took pleasure in unrighteousness." They haughtily resisted the promised spiritual blessings of God for their self-righteousness, military alliances, material possessions, and indulgent pleasures. Their unbelief comes first of all because they harden their own heart against Isaiah's message. Then, the message, because it shows evil for what it really is and demands purity, humility, obedience, etc., causes men to love it more or hate it more as their faith increases or their unbelief increases. Furthermore, man's will, the spiritual force within him for good or evil, is a force that increases in power the more it is exercised in either direction—for good or for evil.

So in the hardening of man's heart all factors (man's will, God's message, the deceitfulness of sin) are involved. It is advisable that Romans, chapter 1 and 2, and II Thessalonians, chapter 2, be read in connection with the truth that men and God both are involved in the hardening of man's heart (cf. also Ex. 7:3, 8:32, 9:12; Rom. 9:17; Heb. 3:8; Heb. 3:13-15; 4:7).

In verses 39-40, then, John is pointing out first the effect of the materialistic, self-righteous, self-indulgent rejection of Jesus upon the hearts of the Jews. They had blinded their own eyes and hardened their own heart against the message of a spiritual kingdom and a spiritual salvation which Jesus preached (just as their fathers did in Isaiah's day). And with the nature of God and His message such as it was, coupled with their continued willful rejection in the face of continued evidence and appeals we see that God gave them up to the lusts of their heart and hardened their hearts. God was unable to save them because they would not allow Him to save them (cf. Isa. 1:10-20; 59:1-2; Jn. 5:40-44).

Who is the "him" of verse 41? John evidently means to say that Isaiah saw Christ. Isaiah said of his own vision, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple" (Isa. 6:1). John, then, is affirming that Jesus is one and the same as the Jehovah God whom Isaiah saw in the temple. This passage is conclusive proof that the apostles did not hold Jesus to be a lesser deity, but proclaimed Him equal with the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

In passing it is also worthy of note concerning verse 38, that the conservative view that Isaiah is the author of Isa. 53 is correct. John, who knew more about the Old Testament than the higher critics, does not even say, "It is written in the book of Isaiah," but John says, "the word of Isaiah the prophet . . . which he spake . . ." For John, a Jew, who lived in the first century and had tremendous advantages over the higher critics of the twentieth century in availability of textual material, there was only one Isaiah and that Isaiah wrote the entire book of Isaiah. The liberal, modernistic critics may divide the book of Isaiah into two or three parts all they want, but for John there is only one book and Isaiah wrote it all.

Verses 42 and 43 (along with John 18:15-16) indicate to us that John was well known and trusted among the rulers and priests. Some may have confided to him that they believed Jesus but would not dare to publicly confess it for fear of excommunication. These verses show again that so much of unbelief is moral and not intellectual. These rulers could see (as did Nicodemus) that Jesus was sent from God Himself for One who did miracles must be a Teacher come from God. But because of cowardice and selfish love for the honor and approval of men, they rejected the approval of God and willfully seared over their own consciences! Westcott says, ". . . the conviction found no expression in life . . . such ineffective intellectual faith (so to speak) is really the climax of unbelief" (cf. Jn. 9).

Thus the prophecy Isaiah made by the Spirit of God concerning the hardening of unbelief became a "perpetual" prophecy. In all generations of mankind when men have hardened their hearts by willful rejection of the spiritual nature and demands of God's revelation they have fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah. It has always been true, further, that when men "refuse to have God in their knowledge," then "God gives them up to the lusts of their hearts . . . unto vile passions . . . unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting" (Rom. 1). And the more a man refuses, the more calloused and hardened his heart and the more vain he becomes in his reasoning and his senseless heart is darkened and, while professing to be wise, he becomes a fool!

In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (cf. Col. 2:3) and when man loves the honor and wisdom of men more than the honor and wisdom of God he turns his back on an everlasting, sumptuous, soul-satisfying feast in order to eat husks with the swine.

*Quiz*

1. Where are the two excerpts from the prophet Isaiah located in his book?
2. Why did Isaiah cry, "Who hath believed our report . . ." etc.?
3. Are men predestined to belief and unbelief? Prove your answer.
4. How does the gospel harden the heart of some men?
5. Name five Scripture references that have to do with "hardening the heart."
6. How many authors are there to the book of Isaiah ?
7. Did the rulers mentioned in verse 42 believe in Jesus or disbelieve?

## THE IMPERATIVE WORDS

*Text 12:44-50*

44 And Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

45 And he that beholdeth me beholdeth him that sent me.

46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness.

47 And if any man hear my sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day.

49 For I spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

50 And I know that his commandment is life eternal: the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak.

*Queries*

- a. Why is Jesus repeating in verses 44-46 what He has said so many times before?
- b. How shall we reconcile verses 47-48 with John 9:39?
- c. What is the "commandment" which the Father had given to Jesus to speak?

*Paraphrase*

And Jesus cried aloud and said, Every man who believes in me, is in reality believing in Him who sent me; and every man who beholds my words and works and nature is beholding Him who sent me. I have come into the world as the Light and whoever continues

to believe in me will not abide in the darkness of ignorance and sin. Yet, if anyone hear my teachings and does not keep them, I do not judge him now, for I have not come now to judge the world but to save the world. But every man who rejects me and will not accept my teachings certainly will be judged—and the very words that I have spoken will be his judge at the last day when I shall come again. For I have not spoken on my own authority: the Father sent me and He has given me a commandment and told me what I should teach and speak. And I know that His commandment is the only way to eternal life. Therefore, the doctrines which I speak are exactly the commandments which the Father has given me.

### *Summary*

This cry from the heart of Jesus is a last public appeal for men to believe in Him and obey His teachings before the judgment comes. It is almost a summary of His whole public teaching.

### *Comment*

It seems most probable that this cry of Jesus is directly related to the terrible unbelief just manifested by the Jews. It also is a fitting climax to His public ministry. What Jesus says in these last few verses are a concise summary to all that He taught publicly: (a) His equality with the Father; (b) His coming into the world to be the Light of the world; (c) His primary purpose in the first advent was to save the world; (d) rejection of His teaching brings eventual judgment; (e) His message was given to Him by the Father.

For comments on verse 44 see our comments on 7:16. For parallel teaching on these verses see our comments on John 5, 7 and 8. For comments on verse 47, see our comments on John 9:39. There is no contradiction here. Jesus did not come into the world the first time to judge the world, but to save the world. However, the mere fact that He came, inevitably involves judgment. Every man must answer the question, "What think ye of Christ?" Every man shows what he is by his attitude toward Jesus and, therefore, judges himself. Jesus is God's touchstone of judgment. By a man's attitude to Jesus a man himself stands revealed for what he truthfully is—by his reaction to Jesus and His teaching, man passes judgment on himself.

But whoever rejects the person of Christ and will not obey His teachings will be judged by the teachings of Christ on the last day. The word that Christ has preached and that which He inspired the apostles to teach (His atoning death, His oneness with the Father, that He is the only way of salvation), will be that standard by which

the world will be judged in the last day (cf. Rom. 2:16; II Thess. 1:8-9).

That which Jesus taught was exactly the scheme of redemption which God the Father had planned before the foundation of the world. The Son became the Great Apostle (One sent) of the commandment which was eternal life. But what is that commandment? "And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ . . ." (I John 3:23). So in this one great commandment is a summary of the whole public ministry of Jesus.

Thus the self-revelation of Christ to the Jews has now been concluded. The remainder of the gospel of John records Christ's revelation to His disciples in a special way. R. C. Foster summarizes in this manner:

- I. The Self-revelation of Christ to the World, 1:19—12:50
  - a. The Proclamation, 1:19—4:54
  - b. The Conflict, 5:1—12:50
- II. The Self-revelation of Christ to the Disciples, 13:1—21:23
  - a. The Last Ministry of Love, ch. 13-17
  - b. The Victory Through Death and Resurrection, ch. 18-20
  - c. Epilogue, 21

We especially like the comments of Barnes here, "It is such a close as all his ministers should desire to make—a solemn, deliberate, firm exhibition of the truth of God, under a belief that on it was depending the eternal salvation of his hearers, and uttering without fear the solemn message of the Most High to a lost world."

### *Quiz*

1. What apparently made Jesus cry out this closing discourse?
2. Make a list of the things which summarize the ministry of Jesus in these verses.
3. How did Jesus' coming judge men?
4. What will the standard of judgment be for the world in the last day?
5. What is the great commandment which the Father gave to the Son?

## EXPOSITORY SERMON NO. TWELVE THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

John 12:1-50

### *Introduction*

- I. DAVID WROTE OF HIS TRUST IN THE GREAT SHEPHERD
  - A. Psalm 23

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- B. The Great Shepherd would lead to green pastures and still waters.
  - C. He would also lead through the valley of the shadow of death.
  - D. Read again John 10 "he leads them . . ." "they follow him . . ."
- II. THE GREAT SHEPHERD HIMSELF WALKED THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH
- A. This 12th chapter of John is charged with the darkness of those shadows.
  - B. Every circumstance, every word deepens the shadow of the cross falling across His path.
  - C. Everywhere He turned He was reminded vividly of His approaching suffering for sin.
  - D. Even in the darkness of these shadows, however, our Lord shines forth in the brightness of Divine Light by His faith, His love and His teaching of salvation.

### *Discussion*

#### I. ANOINTING FOR BURIAL, 12:1-11

(cf. also Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9)

- A. Mary's act of love and devotion reminded Jesus of His impending death and burial.
  - 1. Cost of the nard was approximately one year's wages.
  - 2. The humiliation involved for Mary shows her devotion.
  - 3. Her act also shows a deep comprehension by faith of Christ's continued teaching concerning the fact that He must die.
    - a. Her faith is greater than even the disciples, for they comprehended it not.
    - b. Her faith caused her to throw social propriety to the wind, it was an unreserved faith.
- B. The carping of Judas and the disciples probably reminded Him more of the cross!
  - 1. The grossness of their insensitivity and callousness contrasted with Mary's comprehension and love burdened the heart of Jesus.
  - 2. The human side of Jesus cried out for companionship and sympathy in the valley of the shadow, but His closest friends were interested only in money matters.
    - a. Later, when they would again be arguing among themselves about rank and position, He would try to teach them that greatness was in serving others (Luke 22:24-27; Jn. 13).

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- C. Immaturity, gross materialism, apostacy, failure to grow in the faith—all of this in the church today casts us right alongside these insensitive, callous disciples!
  - 1. The shadow of the cross is cast across His path again.
    - a. Read Hebrews 5:11—6:8.
  - 2. The church and its members have, in many ways, crucified the Son of God afresh and have put Him to open shame.
  - 3. LET EACH CHRISTIAN, WHO PROFESSES FAITH IN CHRIST, SHOW IT BY SUCH UNRESERVED LOVE AND DEVOTION TO THE LORD AS MARY EXEMPLIFIED . . . LET US LEAVE A MEMORIAL SUCH AS SHE LEFT!

### II. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY; 12:12-19 (cf. also Mt. 21:1-11; Mk. 11:1-11; Lk. 19:29-44).

- A. In this incident, the shadow of the cross fell upon His path through the fulfilling of prophecy.
  - 1. The people were singing Hosannas in jubilance expecting Him, on the basis of Lazarus' resurrection, to become their long-awaited militant Messiah.
  - 2. But Jesus knew that He was to come as their meek, humiliated, crucified Messiah.
    - a. Even the disciples misunderstood the prophetic word (cf. vs. 14-16).
  - 3. What prophecies would flash across the mind of Jesus as He beheld the superficial, misguided shouts of the multitudes?
    - a. Surely Isa. 49, 50, 51, 52, 53.
    - b. And Zech. 12:10-11; 13:7.
    - c. And Psalm 22.
    - d. Perhaps even the words of Simeon, Luke 2:33-35.
- B. Another shadow fell upon His heart in connection with the unbelief of the multitudes in the spiritual nature of His coming and His kingdom.
  - 1. The prophetic vision He had concerning the future destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Lk. 22:41-44).
  - 2. This very multitude of festive, shouting Jews would, in a few years, suffer unheard of tragedy—this because
    - a. They knew not the things that make for peace;
    - b. They knew not the day of their visitation; "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not" (Jn. 1:11).

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- (1) This verse portrays in general the whole public ministry of Jesus to the Jews.
- (2) This chapter (12) closes His public ministry on the same note of rejection.

C. What is the lesson for us today?

1. Jesus Christ must be Lord of all or He is not Lord at all!
  - a. He must rule our thoughts, emotions, desires, actions, indeed our ALL, or we dare not acclaim Him as Lord at all (cf. Matt. 7:21-23; Lk. 6:46-49).
2. We must surrender to and follow a Lord and a kingdom which is ridiculed and scoffed at by the world (I Cor. 1; Phil. 2:5-11).

### III. THE SEEKING OF THE GREEKS, 12:20-36

- A. These Greeks, having reached the depths of despair in the philosophies of ancient Greece, had probably become proselytes to the Jewish religion (see our comments on 12:20-21).
  1. Anyone acquainted in the least with the philosophies of men recognize them as simply the cries of despair and hopelessness of all men in a more erudite language.
  2. Philosophy does not even offer to the world a way of living here that appeals to man's higher nature—let alone offering any answers to the imperative questions concerning the purpose of life, death, eternity.
  3. Uppermost in the minds of the Greeks here would be to question Jesus about His teachings (which perhaps they had themselves heard at one time) concerning eternal life, heaven, hell, etc.
- B. Their seeking reminded Him of His great task (also prophesied) to accomplish the salvation of the Gentiles as well as the Jews (cf. Rom. 1:16-17).
  1. Their seeking reminded Him of the manner in which the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile would be broken down (cf. Eph. 2:11-22; Col. 2:8-15).
  2. They reminded Him of the fact that unless He was put to death, and buried, He could not come forth (in His resurrection) and bring fruit (Jn. 12:24).
    - a. By His death, burial and resurrection (a historical fact) He would demonstrate that in Him was TRUTH, thus giving many thousands of Gentiles in the darkness of philosophical ignorance and uncertainty LIFE.

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

3. Jesus also used this incident to teach that all who will follow Him must be where the Master is (Jn. 12:25-26):
  - a. Give up self, crucify self.
  - b. Rise to walk in a new life.

C. The application for us today should be apparent.

1. It is the power of the Gospel which saves men.
  - a. It is preaching the cross and resurrection which draws men to Christ (cf. 12:32).
2. This is the doctrine we must obey from the heart (cf. Rom. 6:17); we must die to sin and rise in a new life (cf. Rom. 6:1-14; Jn. 12:25-26).

### *Conclusion*

I. HOW CAN YOU CONTINUE TO REJECT HIM WHO HAS DEMONSTRATED BY HIS MIGHTY WORKS (Birth, Life of Miracles, Death, Resurrection), HIS DEITY?

- A. Do not harden your heart as the Jews did!
  1. The more you reject, the harder becomes your heart (see our comments on 12:37:43).
  2. Do not seek the honor of men above the honor of God.
  3. Harden not your heart (cf. Heb. 3 and 4).
- B. Remember, God leaves it entirely up to you—it is your choice.
  1. But if you wish to go on believing a lie . . . having pleasure in disobedience, God will allow you to continue to harden your heart against Him.
  2. His Gospel message either softens or hardens.

II. HOW CAN YOU THINK THAT BECAUSE THERE IS NO JUDGMENT TODAY THERE WILL BE NONE TOMORROW?

- A. Jesus came first to save the world.
- B. But He is coming again to judge the world.
- C. The whole basis of judgment will not be the opinions or doctrines of men, but the Word of God.
  1. See our comments on 12:47-49.
  2. Obedience to the Gospel of Christ is imperative (II Thess. 1:8-9).

III. JESUS COMES WITH THE MESSAGE OF THE FATHER . . . THE MESSAGE OF HEAVEN

- A. The one great commandment sent from the very throne of God is:

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1. "And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name (authority) of His Son Jesus Christ . . ." (I Jn. 3:23).
2. BELIEF, TRUE, OBEDIENT, TRUSTING, LOVING WORSHIPPING BELIEF IN JESUS CHRIST IS ETERNAL LIFE (Jn. 12:49-50).
- B. Jesus speaks this on the authority of God the Creator and Father (cf. Jn. 14:1-11).

### EXAMINATION, CHAPTERS 11 and 12

#### *Identify These*

1. Mary, Martha, Lazarus
2. Simon
3. The Greeks
4. Bethany
5. Perea
6. Caiaphas

#### *Who Said This, and Why?*

1. "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick."
2. "Lazarus is dead."
3. "Let us also go, that we may die with him."
4. "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."
5. "I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God,"
6. ". . . it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people,"
7. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings, and given to the poor?"
8. "Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel."
9. "Sir, we would see Jesus."
10. "Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

#### *Fill In The Blanks*

1. "Jesus said unto her, I am the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_: he that believeth on me, though he \_\_\_\_\_, yet shall he \_\_\_\_\_";
2. "And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, \_\_\_\_\_."
3. "Suffer her to keep it against the \_\_\_\_\_ of my \_\_\_\_\_."

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4. "Except a \_\_\_\_\_ of wheat \_\_\_\_\_ into the earth and \_\_\_\_\_, it \_\_\_\_\_ by itself alone; but if it die, it \_\_\_\_\_ much \_\_\_\_\_."
5. "And I, \_\_\_\_\_ from the earth, will \_\_\_\_\_ all men unto myself."

### *Interpret These Enigmatic Sayings*

1. "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live."
2. "He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."
3. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour."
4. "He hath blinded their eyes, and he hardened their heart; Lest they should see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, And should turn, And I should heal them."
5. "And if any man hear my sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day."

### *Questions For Thought*

1. How did the delay of Jesus to come to Bethany, which allowed Lazarus to die, work to the glory of God?
2. Why did Jesus weep at the tomb of Lazarus?
3. Was there any God-given inspiration in the declaration made by Caiaphas? (11:47-53)
4. What did Jesus mean by, ". . . the poor ye have always with you; but me ye have not always."?
5. How would the death of Christ bring about the "judgment of this world," and the "casting out of the prince of this world."?

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### CHAPTER THIRTEEN

We come now, in John's Gospel, to the beginning of the Lord's private ministry to the chosen Twelve. Chapter twelve ends the disclosure of the Son of God by Himself to the Jewish people and the record of their rejection of Him. Large portions of the Synoptic gospels are taken up with discourses of Jesus during the last week of His ministry which are not recorded in John's gospel. Some of the great teachings of Jesus that take place chronologically between chapters twelve (Triumphal Entry) and thirteen (The Last Supper) of the Fourth gospel *not* recorded in therein are: (cf. Map #7, p 263 ).

- a. Great questions answered by Jesus, Matt. 21 and 22; Mk. 11 and 12; Luke 20.
- b. Denunciation of Scribes and Pharisees, Matt. 23; Mk. 12; Lk. 20.
- c. Predictions of destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, Matt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21.
- d. Discourse on the Judgment, Matt. 25.
- e. Judas' plot to betray Jesus, Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22.
- f. Preparation for the Passover, Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22.

Now, beginning with chapter thirteen we have recorded for us the Word manifested, with a few exceptions, to the disciples privately and their eventual acceptance of Him (cf. our outline, page 19, Vol. I). Especially does John record (chap. 13 through 17) the more intimate, personal and private self-disclosure of Jesus to His disciples. Chapter thirteen is unique in this for no other gospel writer records these parting instructions of Jesus. Thus John 13 is vital in its complementary and explicatory connection to the synoptic accounts of the Last Supper.

John 13:35 is a condensation of the theme of the entire thirteenth chapter. Chapter thirteen is a very pertinent lesson on humility and service growing out of a bickering argument concerning places of honor and station in the anticipated kingdom of the Messiah (cf. Luke 22:24-30). It is also the beginning of a period of poignant instruction by the Master who must soon leave His disciples. Chapters 13 through 17 are the parting words of comfort and strength of the Incarnate Father to His soon-to-be bereaved children.

It is Jesus' desire to reveal unto them privately and graphically the character of the Son of God and His kingdom by example and precept.

We now take up a new division in our outline of the Fourth Gospel where the record naturally divides itself:

III The Word Manifested to The Disciples and Their Acceptance  
of Him, 13:1—20:31

A. Private Instructions and Encouragements, 13:1—17:26

1. Lesson on Humility and Service, 13:1-38
  - a. The Act of Loving Service, 13:1-11
  - b. The Lesson on Loving Service, 13:12-20
  - c. The Selfish Servant of Sin, 13:21-30
  - d. The Sacrificing Servant of Christ, 13:31-38

THE ACT OF LOVING SERVICE

*Text 13:1-11*

1 Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,

3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God,

4 riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself.

5 Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 So he cometh to Simon Peter. He saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew him that should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

*Queries*

- a. Does verse 1 indicate that this foot-washing incident was at another supper, separate from the Passover?
- b. Why Peter's change of attitude as in verses 8 and 9?
- c. What does the figure of speech in verse 10 mean?

*Paraphrase*

Even before the Passover Jesus was omnisciently aware that He must depart this world and His disciples and return unto the Father. And now at the Passover, more vividly aware than ever of the appointed time for His departure, and having loved His disciples fervently throughout His earthly ministry, He knew that the proper time had come to reveal to them His love to the uttermost. And during the paschal supper Jesus, fully aware that Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, had previously succumbed to the devil's temptations and had decided to betray Him—and in full consciousness of His deity and His divine prerogatives—arose from His couch at the supper table and, taking off His outer garments, He picked up a towel and put it around His waist. Then He poured water into the wash basin and began to perform the customary task of a servant by washing the disciples' feet and drying them with the towel around His waist.

Around the table from couch to couch Jesus performed this service until He came to Simon Peter. In shocked astonishment Simon Peter said, Lord, are you going to wash my feet? Jesus answered, Simon, you do not understand the significance of what I am doing now but later on you will understand plainly. But Peter objected strenuously saying, Lord, you must never lower yourself to wash my feet! Jesus answered, If you cannot surrender to my way of humility, which I am here exemplifying, you can have no share in my kingdom. Then Simon Peter said to him, Lord, if to share in your kingdom I must be washed by you, then wash not only my feet but my hands and head also. Jesus said to him, Once a person has been cleansed and has become my follower he is cleansed completely and need not repeat the initial cleansing but must sanctify himself and grow in grace by daily repentance and humble acts of love. And you have all become initially true followers of mine but need to grow in grace and humble acts of love and service to one another—all of you except one are true disciples. Jesus knew from the first that Judas would betray Him and to show His omniscience to His disciples who would later remember this prediction, He said therefore, You are not all clean.

*Summary*

Jesus teaches the proud and ambitious disciples a lesson on love, humility and true discipleship by performing a humble deed of love.

*Comment*

How expressive the words of this first verse of the thirteenth chapter. Long before this Passover Jesus was fully aware of the terrible suffering He must endure (Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23; Jn. 5:18, etc.)

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and yet His main concern was not for self but for His beloved disciples. All during the three years as the shadow of the cross grew more and more ominous His first care was teaching, encouraging, providing for and serving His disciples. They understood Him not and comforted Him not in His trials, yet He loved always. And now, having come to the crucial hour, more vividly aware than ever of His "exodus" He is not found selfishly engrossed with His own sorrows, but we find Him revealing His love to them to the uttermost. A. B. Bruce says, in *The Training of The Twelve*, "Jesus loved His disciples to the end, though they did not all so love Him. One of them at this very moment entertained the diabolic purpose of betraying his Lord. Yet that Lord loved even him, condescending to wash even his feet; so endeavoring, if possible, to overcome his evil with good."

Ever since the second century it has been disputed as to whether the Passover and Last Supper as recorded in the Synoptics (Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22) and the Supper in John 13 are the same or not. That they are one and the same should be plain when a comparison of the two accounts is made. Both John and the Synoptics record incidents which are identical. Compare them! Compare John 13:16-17 with Luke 22:14-15, 24-27. Compare John 13:18, 21-30 with Mark 14:17-21; Matt. 26:20-25. Compare John 13:38 with Matt. 26:34; Mark 14:30; Luke 22:34. As Hendriksen says, "Must we, indeed, assume that these three identical incidents occurred in connection with two different meals on two different evenings?" McGarvey, in his *Fourfold Gospel*, says significantly, "It accords with the supplementary nature of John's Gospel to thus mention it as a meal thoroughly familiar to his readers."

This being the same Passover supper as that of the Synoptics we may determine the precise evening of the week in which Jesus washed the disciples' feet. The disciples had been instructed by Jesus to prepare for the Passover at the regulated time and in the usual manner (cf. Matt. 26:17-21ff; Mark 14:12-16). The regulated time for eating the Passover that year very evidently fell on Thursday evening for Mark, Luke and John all three state unequivocally that Jesus was crucified on *Preparation Day*, Friday, "the day before the sabbath," (cf. Matt. 26:17-21; Mark 14:12-16). We quote here from an essay by Seth Wilson on John 13, entitled, "*An Example in Humility*": "The Sabbath mentioned (Mk. 15:42) must have been the regular Saturday sabbath, too; for the special day of holy convocation in Passover week (if it ever was called a sabbath) was the *first* day of unleavened bread (Ex. 12:16; Lev. 23:6,7) and would have

been the day on which Jesus was crucified or even the day before, according to Mark 14:12, since Jesus was alive and free on the day on which the passover lamb was killed and the leaven was put out of the houses of Israel. The next day He was killed. The next day was 'the sabbath.' 'And when the sabbath was past' was the first day of the week. The accounts do not say that two sabbaths passed before the first day of the week (read Lk. 23:54 through 24:1; Mk. 15:42 through 16:2)." For further discussion of this problem see the essay entitled, "*Was Jesus Crucified on Friday?*" by Seth Wilson, Special Study in the last pages of this volume.

Judas had probably made final arrangements with the authorities to betray Jesus on Wednesday. Now on Thursday night this same Judas is back with the other disciples hypocritically going through the rituals of the greatest feast of them all. Does he think Jesus is unaware of his evil plot and his hypocrisy? Never! He knew it all along (cf. Jn. 6:71; 12:4-6).

Where do we place the incident of feet-washing within the chronology of the events at the Last Supper? Most commentators and authors of harmonies place John 13:1-30 just after the dispute of the disciples (Luke 22:24-30) and just before the disclosure of Jesus concerning the betrayer among the Twelve (Matt. 26:21-25), assuming that Luke's account of this disclosure is chronologically out of sequence. Thus the chronology of events transpiring at the Last Supper seem to be as follows:

- a. Preparations for the Passover and coming into the Upper Room.  
(Matt. 26:17-19; Mk. 14:12-16; Lk. 22:7-13)
- b. Opening of the Passover supper by Jesus (Lk. 22:15-18)
- c. Dispute among the disciples (Lk. 22:24-30)
- d. Feet Washing and lessons in greatness (Jn. 13:1-30)
- e. The Betrayer revealed and he goes out (Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22; Jn. 13)
- f. Institution of the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22)
- g. The New Commandment Given (Jn. 13:33-38)
- h. Peter's denial and denial of all disciples foretold (Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22)

The opening remarks of Jesus concerning the fulfillment in the "kingdom of God" (Lk. 22:14-15) no doubt set the imaginations of the disciples to dreaming grandiose dreams again of thrones and positions. As they began to envision the kingdom and the positions available they began to strive with one another for the places of honor and position at this supper table. We quote again from Seth Wilson's essay "An Example of Humility": "It must have grieved Him and

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made Him feel lonely in this selfish world to know that they were quarreling with one another about their relative ranks and places of honor, in the very night when He was descending to the very depths of self-abnegation, claiming nothing of His own in order to bear the cross of shame to a criminal's death for the sake of those who so wrongly thought they had rights and rank. He was fully conscious of His own divine power and majestic rights by which He could have abased and humbled them into abject and cringing fear; but He loved them. He sought to teach them, not coerce them. He wanted to draw them to Him, not drive them from Him.

"So He arose from the supper, prepared Himself as a servant, and washed their feet. But why did He do that? Not only for a lesson. It was a genuine act of loving service, an act of humble willingness to do the most lowly service for His friends, an act of practical courtesy which they had forgotten or avoided in their preoccupation with selfish pride.

"In the land of Palestine the rough and dusty roads, the absence of stockings, the use of sandals, the habit of walking barefoot, the much greater amount of walking than we do, all make it necessary to give the feet frequent washings. (Read Gen. 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; 43:24; Judg. 19:21; I Sam. 25:41; II Sam. 11:8.) These passages show that washing the feet was the first act on entering a tent or a house after a journey. This is regularly done when entering a house, especially the better upper rooms which are usually carpeted. The shoes were never worn in the house. It was the common dictate of good manners to provide either water for the guests to wash their own feet, or a slave to do it. It became almost synonymous with hospitality (I Tim. 5:10). Jesus rebuked a Pharisee, in whose house He was entertained, for not providing water for His feet (Lk. 7:44). From an early date, however, it was considered one of the lowest tasks of servants (I Sam. 25:41), probably because it was done by the youngest and least-trained servants, or because of the idea of defilement connected with the foot. Therefore, if rendered voluntarily, it was a symbol of complete devotion. The undoing of the latchet, or thongs, of the sandals (Mk. 1:7; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:27) seems to refer to the same menial duty."

Whether Jesus began His loving act of service with Simon Peter or, having begun with one of the other disciples, came to him later we cannot tell for certain. The picture John paints seems to indicate to us that Jesus had already washed the feet of some who were so busy discussing rank and preoccupied with selfish dreams of glory they were oblivious to their Master's self-humiliation. But when Jesus

came to Peter, He found one disciple with at least enough respect and reverence to object. The Lord's first answer to Peter (v. 7) is mild, but firm, assuring the respectful Peter that what He was doing was fitting and although Peter did not understand now, he was to submit to the act and later he would understand.

But Peter (v. 8) objected more strenuously with even the note of dictating in his voice as to what the Master could or could not do. We can almost see Peter hastily drawing his feet back from the Master's touch.

Simon Peter's intentions were no doubt motivated by a sense of respect and reverence which is good, except when it leads one to object to the Lord's will and to refuse to obey Him. This was the dangerous frame of mind possessing Peter here. Let us quote here from *The Training of the Twelve*, by A. B. Bruce, page 346: "Observe, then, what was involved in the attitude assumed by Peter. He virtually took his stand on these two positions: that he would admit of nothing which seemed inconsistent with the personal dignity of his Lord, and that he would adopt as his rule of conduct his own judgment in preference to Christ's will . . . In other words, the ground taken up by this disciple compromised the whole sum and substance of Christianity, the former principle sweeping away Christ's whole state and experience of humiliation, and the latter not less certainly sapping the foundation of Christ's lordship." That is, Peter was objecting to the very basic tenent of Christ's ministry—humiliation—voluntary participation in the experiences of the flesh that He might conquer and redeem. In so refusing the Lord, Peter was in the dangerous position of disobeying Him and distrusting His demands because he did not understand and therefore letting his own fallible reason be his guide when Jesus had expressed His will in the matter. And, are not all of His disciples of all ages guilty at one time or another of the same misguided respect and reverence?

The Lord's answer (v. 8) was more explicit and stern. For if Peter would not surrender to the way of humility which the Master came to exemplify and teach—if Peter could not in whole-hearted faith obey his Master, even when he could not understand—Peter could have no part with the Master in His kingdom of which Peter and the others so fondly dreamed.

As A. B. Bruce points out in *Training of the Twelve*, if God, in Christ, may not humble Himself, He can have no part with us. He is relegated to the "Wholly Other" as our contemporary existential neo-orthodox theologians would confine Him. A great impassable gulf

separates the Divine Being from His creatures. His creatures may reach Him, perhaps, through the existential "leap" after they have reached the "crises." But as for God, He may peer wistfully from His prison-house of the realm of the Absolute and contemplate the sorrowful estate of man, but He cannot come near them, and reach forth a helping hand.

"But if the Son of God may have no part with us, then, in the second place, we can have no part with Him. We cannot share His fellowship with the Father, if He come not forth to declare Him. . . A God whose majesty, like an iron gate, kept Him aloof from sinners, could not even effectively forgive them. Still less could He sanctify them. Love alone has sanctifying virtue, and what room is there for love in a Being who cannot humble Himself to be a servant?" (A. B. Bruce, *ibid*).

The epistle to the Hebrews is the most extensive of all the books of Holy Scripture dealing with the necessity of Christ's participation in humanity in order that He might save, sanctify and intercede for man. If by grace God does not become incarnate in flesh so as to win the victory, how will man ever be restored to fellowship with a perfectly righteous and just Judge? By grace are we saved, and that through faith in a humiliated, yet triumphant Lord!

And if our carnal minds cause us to judge honor and dignity as the world judges and we reject the way of humility and service which our God chose and bids us follow—**WE SHALL HAVE NO PART WITH HIM!**

The stern warning of Jesus shook the impulsive Peter to the very innermost feelings of his heart. There is much to commend in Peter. Who can doubt his willingness to follow the Lord (Jn. 6:68-69)? Who can doubt his courage (Matt. 26:35; Jn. 18:10-11)? Peter believed in Jesus and he wanted earnestly to follow Him, to death if necessary, to establish the Messianic kingdom. But Peter's concept of Messianic kingdom was carnal—earthy. We believe that it was disappointment with Jesus in not fulfilling his earthly concept of the Messianic kingdom that caused Peter and the others to "be offended" in Jesus at the hour of crucifixion—not their cowardice. They would have fought at a mere suggestion to do so by Jesus (Jn. 18:36).

So when Jesus suggested that unless Peter allow himself to be washed he could not participate with Him in His kingdom, the thought of being excluded caused him to jump to the opposite extreme of overdone compliance. Lord, wash me all over, if that be one of the requirements for having part in your kingdom, was Peter's reply (v. 9).

The reply of Jesus in verse 10 must be interpreted in harmony with all that has preceded in this incident and, especially, in harmony with verse 11. We have attempted such an interpretation in our paraphrase of this text. What Jesus is trying to get the impetuous Peter to see is that once a man has become a devoted and faithful follower of His by an initial cleansing and sanctifying call (whatever that initial cleansing process may be) the new disciple must then grow in his spiritual comprehension of Christ's will and work. The disciples (all except one who was a hypocrite) had in all sincerity and honest desire answered His call to discipleship. They had all, no doubt, been baptized with John's baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. Being therefore of honest hearts and having by obedience to the command of God through John the Baptist been initially cleansed, they needed not to go back to first principles, but they definitely needed to be purified of their carnal conception of the way in which the Messiah was to accomplish His purpose and their earthly idea of the Messianic kingdom. They needed to grow in humility and love for one another even to the extent that they would willingly perform the lowliest services for one another. Every disciple of Christ must see the need for daily "washing of the feet" (purifying, sanctification). It is a daily task, this cleansing, by renewing the mind (Rom. 12:1-2; II Cor. 4:16; Col. 3:1-17).

But they were not all honest and sincere. One was a thief and a hypocrite—Judas. Jesus knew all along who the betrayer was (cf. Jn. 6:70-71). In order to indicate to the disciples who would later recall His omniscience in this matter and in order that they might record for all time that He was not taken unawares by Judas, but is in complete control of the situation and in order to give the traitor an opportunity to repent, Jesus said, "You are not all clean." But Judas had allowed the devil to take possession of his heart and was greedily plotting to betray the One who had in love and humility even washed the betrayer's feet and tried to bring him to repentance.

### *Quiz*

1. What great division within the ministry of Jesus appears at Chapter 13?
2. Why are the actions of Jesus at this supper so full of pathos?
3. Prove that the supper of John 13 is the same as the Last Supper of the Synoptics. Upon which day of the week was the supper held?
4. Name, in order, the events transpiring at the Last Supper.
5. What two things are indicated concerning Peter in his refusal to let Jesus wash his feet?

6. What is the meaning of Jesus' statement in verse 10?
7. Why inform them that there was one among them who was not clean?

## THE LESSON ON LOVING SERVICE

*Text 13:12-20*

12 So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and sat down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him.

17 If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them.

18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth my bread lifted up his heel against me.

19 From henceforth I tell you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

*Queries*

- a. Did Jesus establish "foot washing" as a commandment to be literally obeyed?
- b. How is the "blessedness" promised in v. 17 to be experienced?
- c. What connection does v. 20 have with this context?

*Paraphrase*

And when Jesus had finished washing their feet, He put on His outer cloak and reclined again at His place at the supper table, He began to teach them, saying, Do you know the meaning of what I have just done to you? You recognize and call Me, The Teacher, and, The Lord. This is what you should recognize and call Me, for this is Who I am! Here then is the lesson for you—if I, The Lord and The Teacher, perform the lowly but loving task of washing the feet of disciples and servants, you should lovingly condescend in like manner by humbly serving one another rather than disputing with one another over rank and position. I have washed your feet to give you

an example to follow in performing loving acts of lowly service to one another. I say to you very plainly, If a lord is willing to serve in the most menial of tasks, so should a servant be willing thus serve for no servant is greater than his lord, neither is a person sent greater than the one who sends him. And, although you vocally acknowledge the truth of these lessons you will discover that real happiness and blessedness is enjoyed only when you are actually practicing them. I do not mean to infer of you all that you are hypocritical and assent to what is right but do not do it; or that you all are capable of deliberate and habitual neglect of known duty. I have chosen you twelve, and I know the character of every one of you, but there is one among you capable of such conduct. Now this was foretold in the Psalms, He that eateth my bread lifted up his heel against me, and the character and conduct of this evil one among you is in fulfillment of this prophecy. Now I am telling you that I know of his evil character and plan against me before his schemes are actually carried out so that when it is carried out you will recognize my divine omniscience and your faith in Me as the Son of God will be the more strengthened. So, I say to you most emphatically, when you see Me betrayed and apparently defeated do not be misled for in my extreme humiliation I am truly become Lord and Christ, and he who receives the one whom I send with the message of Christ crucified receives Me and he who will receive Christ crucified will receive the Father who sent the Christ to be crucified.

### *Summary*

After the beautiful deed of loving service comes the divine instruction as to its meaning for those who will learn. With the instruction comes the promise of blessedness to those who will humbly serve one another in deeds of love.

### *Comment*

Jesus finished washing their feet and resumed His place at the table. How many of the disciples had their feet washed we do not know. The verb translated "sat down" is the aorist of *anapipto* which means literally to "fall back" but is better translated "reclined" since that was the customary position for dining in that age. Reclining again on His couch at the supper table, Jesus takes immediate advantage of the foregoing preparation in the minds of His disciples and presents the lesson contained in His deed. This socially unorthodox action of a Teacher washing the feet of his disciples would attract the attention of even the most insensitive of the disciples as they argued about places of position and rank (cf. Luke 22:24).

Momentarily taken aback as their Lord stooped to wash their feet they began to wonder what had prompted such an unheard of action. Jesus asks the rhetorical question, "Do you know the meaning of what I have just done to you?" Then He answers His own question with a very precise and logical argument. He reminds His disciples of the respectful titles they have sincerely accorded Him, and in a marked, emphatic manner He accepts these titles as His rightful due. He tells them distinctly that He is indeed their Teacher, whose doctrine it is their business to learn, and their Lord, whose will it is their duty to obey. His humble act of washing their feet does not mean that He is ignorant of His Lordship or even that He has lowered or degraded His kingly dignity. To the contrary, He has really enhanced the dignity and greatness of His Lordship by this expression of loving service (cf. Matt. 20:25-28; Mk. 10:42-45; Lk. 9:48; Lk. 22:26-27).

Now in verse 14 comes the central point of His argument. If the Lord of glory, the Holy One of God (cf. Jn. 6:69), can condescend to take the form of a servant and perform the most menial of tasks upon those so very far below Him, surely those who are actually the servants can render loving service to one another. This lesson is for us all! And how we need it—even within the kingdom of God, the church! So often trouble in the church comes because of jealousy over place and position. But those of the kingdom of God are not to be like the pagan world which spends all its energy seeking fame and fortune (cf. Matt. 20:20-28, etc.). When we are tempted to think of our dignity, our prestige, our place, our rights, let us see again the picture of the Son of God, girt with a towel, wash basin in hand, kneeling at His disciples' feet. Let us have in us the mind of Christ (cf. Phil. 2:5-11).

The question inevitably comes up concerning verses 14 and 15 whether or not these verses uphold the ritual of literal foot washing as observed in the history of the church past and present. Hendriksen points out that "foot-washing was practiced on Maundy Thursday by the Church of Augustine's day. It was recommended by Bernard of Clairvaux in one of his sermons. The practice was continued by the pope at Rome and by emperors of Austria and Russia and by kings of Spain, Portugal, and Bavaria. For a while it was practiced by the Church of England and by the Moravians. It has been continued to this very day by certain Baptist and Adventist bodies . . ." There are only two other places in the New Testament where washing of the feet is referred to—Luke 7:38, 44 (the sinner woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears) and I Tim. 5:10 where it is used figura-

tively to describe the lowly service to christian brethren in the past by widows needing the support of the church (cf. Paul's Letters to Timothy and Titus, by DeWelt, pub. College Press, page 99).

We believe Bro. Seth Wilson's essay, quoted previously, contains the most lucid comments on the subject of foot-washing we have read and we quote these comments herewith: "Whenever washing one another's feet is an act of practical courtesy and helpfulness, that we can perform in a true spirit of simple love and humble service, we ought to wash one another's feet. But when it is of no practical helpfulness, when it is performed as a public religious ritual to *display* our "humility," at special seasons, toward select persons, it does not seem to fit the pattern Jesus gave. 'Ritualizing such an act of love absolutely destroys its meaning.'

"The Great Commission assigned to the apostles the task of teaching the believers to observe all things that Jesus commanded; but we have no teaching from them concerning foot washing as a ceremony in the church. They do teach, however, lowliness, subjection, and loving service (Rom. 12:3, 10, 16; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2; 5:21; Phil. 2:3-8; Col. 3:12; I Pet. 5:5, etc.). There is no indication in the way that Jesus did the act at the Last Supper that He was instituting a form of worship or making it part of His death. It is not an act of worship to God, but of service to man out of the right kind of a godly heart of humility and love. Even those who urge it as a perpetual ordinance in the church teach that it 'symbolizes humility and service.' Exactly so: Jesus gave a very striking example and symbol of that manner of conduct and attitude of heart that He wants us to have. *He does not want us to repeat the symbol, but to practice the reality.* His example was clear, and no command of His is more direct or authoritative."

Verse 16 adds more emphasis to the main point of the lesson. No servant is greater than his lord . . . etc. If the Christian's Lord is willing to perform the duties of a servant, the Christian (who is really the servant) should be willing to serve and not make position and prestige his aim.

Verse 17 contains both a warning and a promise. The warning implied is against knowing the right and failing to do it. The promise is definite that knowing the divine will which has been revealed both by precept and example we will find blessedness when we *do* what Jesus is teaching here. The true road to happiness and joy and blessedness is service motivated by love. Man was not created to be just a taker and never a giver. Man was created to give joy and honor to the heart of God. This is man's ultimate purpose and only when he

is fulfilling that purpose by loving acts of service to God and man does he find joy and satisfaction of soul. Jesus said, "It is more blessed (happiness) to give than to receive." There is a noticeable dissatisfaction, almost unhappiness, in some of the disciples before the resurrection of Christ when they were always seeking and waiting for the Lord to appoint them to places of earthly honor and prestige. They bickered with one another and were jealous of one another. But, notice the change in these men as evidenced in the book of Acts and their Epistles when they put into practice the teaching of Jesus here in John 13:17! They found "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Jesus said it another way later when He said that "bearing fruit" would result in true godly joy (cf. John 15:1-11).

The blessedness of lowly service out of love is both objective and subjective. The objective blessedness must come before the subjective. That is, we must *know* that we have God's approval before we can feel joy and blessedness emotionally. That knowledge comes when we, as Jesus exhorts, "*do*" these acts of service because we then know we are living in accord with the Divine Will as objectively expressed in His written revelation. John expressed it later in his First Epistle when he wrote, "All who keep his commandments abide in him, and he in them" (I John 3:24). The fourth chapter of I John is also an excellent commentary on the words of Jesus in verse 17.

Thus when we do serve one another in love we *know* the blessedness of seeing godly fruit in the lives of those served; we *know* the blessedness of living in accord with the revealed will of God; then we can *feel* in our hearts the peace which passes understanding.

Jesus goes on (v. 18) to inform those gathered there that night that there is one in their midst who is capable of knowing right and deliberately neglecting to do it, (see our Paraphrase on this section). There was one there who was sly and scheming. Pretending to be desirous of serving the poor (Jn. 12:1-8) he was even then scheming to steal the money. While pretending to be a close friend of Jesus and accept His doctrine (eat His bread), he was scheming to betray (lift up his heel against) Him.

A. B. Bruce, in his *Training of the Twelve*, paraphrases this section in this manner: "In hinting at the possibility of a knowledge of right, unaccompanied by corresponding action, I have not been indulging in gratuitous insinuation. I do not indeed think so badly of you all as to imagine you capable of deliberate and habitual neglect of known duty. But there is one among you who is capable of such conduct. I have chosen you twelve, and I know the character of every one of you . . . there is one among you who knows, but will not do; one

who, having eaten bread with me as a familiar friend, will repay me for all my kindness, not by loving obedience, but by lifting up his heel against me."

There is more than one reason Jesus made this general prophecy of one very close who would betray Him. Primarily, as verse 19 points out, the prophecy was made so that when it came to pass the disciples would have their belief in Jesus the more strengthened. Secondly, it was another attempt by Jesus to penetrate the hardened heart of Judas and bring him to repentance. Again, the recording of the omniscient foreknowledge of Jesus was for man's benefit for all time. For those who will accept the testimony it shows that that which was happening was all within the eternal purpose of God. It was as Scripture said it would be ages before. Jesus and the Father both knew what was happening at all times. God was in control. Jesus was not the unfortunate victim of the schemes of men. He was not killed; He willingly chose to die and did lay down His life. He was not the victim but the master of circumstances.

Barnes has a note on verse 18: "These things have occurred in order that the prophecies may receive their completion. It does not mean that Judas was *compelled* to this course in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, but that this was foretold, and that *by this* the prophecy *did* receive a completion." The prophecy is from Psalms 41:9 (cf. also II Sam. 9:7-13; Psa. 55:12-14).

In verse 20 the Lord continues to look forward to the time when what He is prophesying concerning Judas' betrayal will have come to pass and He anticipates the reaction of despondency and defeat by the disciples. Hendriksen points out the connection of verse 20 with the context very well: ". . . when the disciples see their Lord delivered into the hands of his enemies, let them not despair. Let them not think, 'Now it is all over, not only with him but also with us, his followers.' On the contrary, everything continues just as it was. Nay rather, the very facts of the humiliation confirm *his* authority and the validity of *their* commission. An ambassador of 'Christ Betrayed, Condemned, and Crucified,' is still a true ambassador; in fact, he is *the only* true ambassador."

When the eternal plan of God is carried out—when Christ is betrayed, crucified and risen, and when the disciples go out to preach Christ crucified and raised (cf. I Cor. 1), whoever receives them and their message receives Christ and the Father. But whoever rejects them and their message of Christ crucified and raised, rejects the Father and His omnipotent plan of redemption. The point is, that a betrayed and crucified Christ is within the plan of God. Jesus was

completely aware of this. He now forewarns his disciples against the dark hours of the coming days. Verse 20 is not a disconnected after-thought of Jesus but is well within the context of the teaching He is now giving His disciples. They should not only *serve* with all lowliness and humility, but they will have a message of a crucified Saviour which the world will look upon as lowly, weak and humiliating. They will need their faith in the omnipotence of Christ increased!

### *Quiz.*

1. How would Jesus have "sat down" at the supper table?
2. What is the main line of argument presented by Jesus to teach the disciples about humility?
3. Give three reasons why "foot-washing" seems not to be commanded by the Lord as an ordinance for the church's observance.
4. Give two ways we may know the "blessedness" provided in v. 17.
5. Why did Jesus foretell the betrayal of Judas (3 reasons)?

### THE SELFISH SERVANT OF SIN

#### *Text 13:21-30*

21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in the spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 The disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

23 There was at the table reclining in Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

24 Simon Peter therefore beckoneth to him, and saith unto him, Tell us who it is of whom he speaketh.

25 He leaning back, as he was, on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

26 Jesus therefore answereth, He it is, for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him. So when he had dipped the sop, he taketh and giveth it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

27 And after the sop, then entered Satan into him, Jesus therefore saith unto him, What thou doest, do quickly.

28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

29 For some thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus said unto him, Buy what things we have need of for the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

30 He then having received the sop went out straightway; and it was night.

*Queries*

- a. Why was Jesus "troubled in the spirit"?
- b. Why did none of the disciples know for "what intent" Jesus spoke to Judas?
- c. Why did Jesus instruct Judas to do quickly what he was doing?

*Paraphrase*

Having prophesied these things concerning his betrayal and the disciples' future need for faith, Jesus was deeply disturbed of spirit and said to his disciples, I tell you solemnly, One of you will hand me over to the authorities. The disciples began looking at one another in startled perplexity, and kept looking at one another in silent suspicion, puzzled concerning whom he spake. One of his disciples, the one with whom Jesus was especially delighted and loved, was reclining at the table next to him on the same couch. So Simon Peter, on the next couch, signaled with a nod to this disciple and said, Tell us who it is of whom he is speaking. That disciple, leaning his head back upon the bosom of Jesus, whispered to him, Lord who is it? Jesus answered softly, It is that one to whom I shall give this morsel of bread after I have dipped it into the sop. Taking the piece of bread he dipped it into the sop and gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. After Judas had taken this piece of bread he made up his mind completely and allowed Satan to enter his heart and totally possess him. Jesus said to him in a voice loud enough for all to hear, What you are going to do, do quickly! None of those reclining at the table, not even those who were told about the traitor, understood the meaning of what Jesus said to Judas. Some of them thought since Judas had the money purse, that Jesus was instructing Judas to hurry and purchase provisions for the seven-day festival of Passover, or that he was instructing Judas to make haste on a mission of alms-giving to the poor. So Judas took the piece of bread and then went out quickly; and it was night!

*Summary*

In spite of the lesson on humble love and in spite of the Master exposing his shameful, deadly scheme, the selfish servant of sin, Judas, surrenders completely to the Devil.

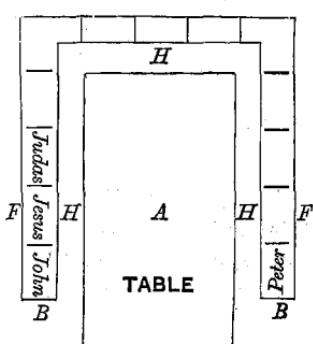
*Comment*

After Jesus had prophesied concerning the betrayer (v. 18), He became deeply disturbed in His spirit. The inward turmoil of spirit was apparent to John who later recorded it. His heart is troubled by the one who is planning to betray Him and He repeats His warning.

His heart was sick and groaned within Him over the imminent spiritual suicide of Judas. Jesus loved Judas! He tried until the very end to bring Judas to repentance. The tender Shepherd of souls is not willing that any should perish. Jesus was also much concerned about the spiritual weakness of the other disciples which they had exhibited here at this last supper. When He thought of the betrayer He also looked forward prophetically when they would all flee from Him like scattered sheep (cf. Matt. 26:31). The anguish of spirit here was also a prelude to the anguish of spirit in Gethsemane and Golgotha where He suffered the burden of all man's sins.

Judas was a master at deception. Outwardly no one could tell the difference between him and the other eleven disciples of Jesus. He was an excellent play-actor (hypocrite). He had even faked a concern for the poor (12:4-5) with such finesse that he prompted the others to criticize Jesus at one time. He had fooled the other eleven completely. When Jesus uttered His solemn warning (v. 21) it fell like a bombshell in the midst of that festive evening. The disciples were startled, incredulous, perplexed and began looking round about at one another in silent suspicion. Judas joined in, skillfully portraying one who was innocently dumbfounded.

Now the Jews did not sit upright when they ate at a festive table such as this. The Greek word *anakeimenos* means "reclining at table." The table was usually a low solid block. The couches were arranged around the table in U shape. The couches were placed with their heads toward the table and their feet away from the table in an oblique fashion (see diagram below). The chief place is near the center of the right side of the table. The next place of honor is that at the left side of the host (occupied by Judas) and the next place of honor at the right side of the host (occupied by John). The diners reclined by resting upon their left elbow, thus leaving the right hand free to deal with the food. Reclining in such a way a man's head was literally upon the bosom of the person reclining on his left.



PLAN OF SUPPER TABLE.

THE SUPPER SCENE. Around a low, Eastern table, oval or rather elongated, two parts covered with a cloth, the single divans or pillows are ranged in the form of an elongated horseshoe, leaving free one end of the table, somewhat as in the accompanying cut. Here, *A* represents the table; *BB* respectively the ends of the two rows of single divans on which each guest reclines, lying on his left side, and leaning on the left hand, with his head (*H*) nearest the table, and his feet (*F*) stretching back towards the ground. Thus we see how Jesus could wash their feet. As to the arrangements of the guests, the chief personage would sit near one end of the table. If there were three persons, he would sit between the two. We know from the Gospel narrative that John occupied the place on Jesus' right, at that end of the divans, as we may call it, at the head of the table. But the chief place next to the Master would be that to his left, or above him.

After a few moments of stunned silence and suspicious glances, the disciples began to ask one by one, "Is it I, Lord?" (Matt. 26:22; Mark 14:19) and they began to question one another, which of them it was that would do this (Lk. 22:23). The first answer of the Lord was a general one simply indicating that the betrayer was sitting and partaking with Him at the same table (cf. Matt. 26:23; Mk. 14:20). It is plain that the other disciples did not yet know who was meant. It seems that Jesus was conducting an almost private conversation with Judas. Judas even asked, "Is it I, Lord?" Jesus replied, "Thou hast said!" And apparently, no one heard this reply—not even John.

Simon Peter, the impetuous, signaled with a nod to the disciple "whom Jesus loved," the one reclining upon His bosom, to tell the rest of them who the traitor was. Peter assumed that John, favored with a place so close to the Master, would know if anyone did. John, however, did not know and so he leaned his head back upon the bosom of Jesus and whispered, "Lord, who is it?" John's question was probably unheard by the others. Evidently the reply of Jesus, "He it is, for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him," was also inaudible to all except John and Judas (and perhaps, Peter).

There must be some significance that Judas was sitting so close to the Saviour, on His left in the place of honor, that night. Even the offering by the host of a special morsel dipped in the sop to a particular guest was a sign of special concern. When the Jews wanted to show their concern for a guest, they invited the guest to dip food with them (cf. Ruth 2:14). The very fact that Jesus kept reminding Judas that his scheme was known was an attempt to rescue Judas from his headlong rush into spiritual suicide. All of these acts of love and concern were appeals from the very heart of Jesus toward Judas' re-clamation.

After Judas had taken this piece of bread he made up his mind completely and surrendered his whole heart to Satan. Then Satan entered into Judas. The point to remember is that Satan accomplished total victory over Judas only because Judas allowed him to do so. We are warned ". . . neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:27). We are encouraged "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). We are warned that Satan can take advantage of us if we are ignorant of his devices (II Cor. 2:11). Satan is a spiritual being and he operates in the spiritual realm. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood . . ." but against ideas, philosophies and thoughts. Unless we fill our minds with the thoughts and revelations of the Holy Spirit, we are leaving it open for Satan to enter. And when we willingly concentrate on worldliness and evil,

Satan has a completely unrestricted highway into our heart. This is what Judas did! He so loved money that he was trapped and drowned in destruction and perdition (cf. I Tim. 6:7-10).

When men deliberately and rebelliously "exchange the truth of God for a lie," (Rom. 1:25), God gives up! When men do not wish to retain God in their knowledge (Rom. 1:28), when they have no love for the truth (II Thess. 2:10-12), God gives up and allows them to be deluded into believing a lie!

Jesus knew that Judas had allowed the devil to take complete possession of him. Judas had exchanged the truth of God for a lie. The Incarnate God could do no more for Judas and so He said, "What thou doest, do quickly!" Why would Jesus make this command? Perhaps to drive the betrayer from the midst of the others immediately so that the few remaining hours may be directed toward those who will profit from the instructions. Judas had bargained to hand Jesus over to the authorities but the exact time for His arrest and death had not yet been set. The authorities had definitely decided Jesus should not be killed during the feast (Matt. 26:5). Judas thought that Jesus was in his hand; Jesus tells him that the reverse is true. Jesus orders Judas to do this business quickly, to carry it out when Jesus wants it done (Matt. 26:2) during the feast!

John knew who the betrayer was. Perhaps even Peter knew his identity, but none seemed to know the meaning of Jesus' last command to Judas. It appears that they thought Judas was sent quickly to buy something needed for the remainder of the passover feast, or, perhaps to act quickly in giving something to the poor. Judas was the treasurer of the group and these two suppositions seemed the only reason for the command.

Some commentators use verse 29 to prove that the supper here recorded in John 13 is not the passover supper because the disciples would have known that Judas could *not* purchase anything that night for a feast which was already over. However, the Passover lasted seven days. It is, therefore, entirely reasonable to record that the disciples supposed Judas to have been sent for more supplies for the remaining days of the feast. Especially would he be sent with haste if the next day was a holy day of the feast when nothing could be purchased.

Judas acted the deception out to the end. He brazenly took the morsel offered to him by Jesus. And then, probably to be away from the penetrating and meaningful looks of Jesus as quickly as possible, he went out "straightway."

The phrase "and it was night," has great impact. It was night for the sun had gone behind the horizon, but it "was night" for another

reason also. The outer darkness had overtaken Judas for he had allowed the god of this world to blind him to the Son of Righteousness. It is always night when a man turns his back on Jesus Christ the True Light. He who walks in darkness does not know where he is going and he stumbles and falls because the darkness blinds his eyes (cf. Jn. 1:4-5; 3:19-21).

### *Quiz*

1. Give 3 reasons why Jesus would be troubled in the spirit.
2. How would the principle characters of this section probably be located around the supper table?
3. How did Satan enter into Judas?
4. Why did Jesus command Judas to act quickly?
5. How many do we suppose knew who the traitor was?

### THE SACRIFICING SERVANT OF CHRIST

*Text 13:31-38*

31 When therefore he was gone out, Jesus saith, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him;

32 and God shall glorify him in himself, and straightway shall he glorify him.

33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you.

34 A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

36 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow afterwards.

37 Peter saith unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee even now? I will lay down my life for thee.

38 Jesus answereth, Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

### *Queries*

- a. Why did Jesus say, "Now" is the Son of man glorified?
- b. How is "love one another" a new commandment?
- c. Was Jesus questioning the courage of Peter in v. 38?

### *Paraphrase*

When Judas had been sent out to consummate his evil scheme, Jesus said, Now I have willingly sent the traitor to seal my death—

now by this act is the Son of man glorified and God is also glorified. And God shall glorify the Son in intimate union with himself and in just a few hours shall he glorify him in the ultimate victory!

Oh, my little children, I will be with you only a few hours longer. And the time is coming very soon when you will long for my presence but I must tell you, as I told the Jews, Where I am going you cannot follow. Since I am about to leave you I am giving you a new precept to follow. This new precept is built upon a new concept—it is that you love one another with the same self-sacrificing love with which I have loved you. If you shall do this, all men shall know that you are my disciples even though I be not with you in bodily presence.

Simon Peter said to him, Lord, where could you possibly be going that we cannot follow you? Jesus replied, I am going where you cannot follow me now, though you will follow me later. Peter asked quickly, Lord, what can possibly keep me from following you right now? Why, I am ready even to lay down my life for you! Jesus replied, Will you indeed lay down your life for me? I most solemnly assure you the rooster will not crow at coming daybreak until you have disowned me three times.

### *Summary*

Jesus shows the marks of a true and loyal disciple both by example and precept . . . one who will sacrifice self-will. Peter, trusting too much in self, shows he has the wrong concept.

### *Comment*

At the moment of the Lord's betrayal and arrest it would seem to the disciples that their Master had become the victim of unfortunate circumstances. But later when the Holy Spirit should call to their minds His complete mastery of the situation even before the betrayal they would glorify His name. Judas did not escape detection. Judas did not even steal away secretly to do something which was against the plan of Jesus. Here, this night, the Lord of the universe willingly and purposefully sends his betrayer off to do his deed. The sacrificing servant of God is glorified in a majestic surrender of self.

God the Father, in intimate union with the Son, is also glorified by His majestic giving up of His only-unique Son. At the Father's command is an unnumbered host of angelic warriors. At the instant word of the Father they would have slain every human enemy of His Son. But the glorious love and mercy of the Father for a world in sin kept this command from being issued.

And soon, very soon now, would the ultimate victory be accomplished—the victory over sin upon Golgotha and the victory over death in Joseph's tomb. Then shall the Son of man be glorified in-

deed. Then shall all His claims to deity be vindicated for all time.

The subject of his glorification in death, resurrection and ascension leads Him to make preparation for His physical departure from among them. Just as He told the Jews at the feast of Tabernacles, some six months earlier, now He tells His disciples He must leave them. They will long for His presence but where He is going they cannot follow immediately. He must ascend to the Father, but they must remain behind in the world until they are called up higher at death. And until their decease (*exodus*) and reunion with Him they will know His living presence by keeping the new commandment which He leaves with them.

Is this a *new* commandment? Has He never before given them the precept of love to keep? The newness of the commandment is contained in that His disciples are to love one another *even as* their Master has loved them. No such love could have been commanded before because no such love had ever been exhibited before! This love of Jesus for men goes even deeper than the command for a man to love another as he loves himself, for Jesus loves us more than we love ourselves. It is only by allowing Christ to dwell in us through faith that we can even come near to comprehending what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge (cf. Eph. 3:17-19)! The dimensions of His love are as boundless and limitless as faith! If His disciples have this love for one another, His presence will be living and abiding in them and working through them. And by such love will the whole world know the presence of Christ and know that such men are His disciples. Doctrinal correctness is not all there is to Christian discipleship, as important as that is (I Jn. 2:3-4), but a Christ-like love for one another is equally essential (cf. I Jn. 2:8-11). This is the type of love that would cause a Paul to write, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:2). By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples.

What a contrast between the selfless love of Christ and the love of self of Judas. The love that moved Jesus to willingly sacrifice Himself is the self-sacrificing love which is to be the distinguishing mark of a disciple of Christ.

The manner in which John records this section gives us the impression that Peter, in all his impetuosity and eagerness to demonstrate his loyalty to Jesus, brushed aside the teaching on love and directed the conservation abruptly back to the ominous note of impending conflict. If his Master is about to engage in battle he sees no reason why he cannot follow Him into the thick of the conflict. He is ready now!

If there is a fight to be fought for the right he is prepared now. Even if he must die he would go with his Master. He is ready and willing to lay down his life in battle for the Christ. Peter was no coward. He armed himself with a sword and would have challenged those who came to arrest Jesus in the garden (Jn. 18:10-11). He had the bold courage to follow the authorities as they led Jesus to the very house of the high priest and stood without until allowed to enter.

We do not believe that cowardice prompted Peter to deny the Lord and take an oath that he never knew Him. We believe Peter would have quickly admitted being a disciple of Jesus if the Master had just given the signal to fight. Perhaps he emphatically denied being the disciple of Jesus hoping to remain incognito until Jesus would give the signal to resist. When Peter finally realized that his Master was not going to resist he gave up his ambitions for the Messianic kingdom. That seemed to be Peter's trouble—ambition for the Messianic kingdom in his earthly concept of it. He had not denied self! We believe that basically Peter denied the Lord in that he refused to deny his own self-ambitions. When Jesus offered not the least bit of resistance, Peter, with the other disciples scattered—not because they were cowards, but because their aspirations and ideals were dying (they supposed) with Him. When Jesus had prophesied His death at Cesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:13-28), Peter rebuked Him for thinking such a thing should happen to the Messiah. It was here that the Lord told Peter he was minding the things of men. It was in connection with that very rebuke that Jesus warned the disciples they must lose their lives for His sake in a sense different from physical death. Before Pilate, Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews" (Jn. 18:36). Jesus forbade the disciples to fight to rescue Him—the very thing that the disciples would have done!

We believe that in essence Jesus is saying, "Peter, I know you are willing to fight and die physically for your concept of Me as the Messiah. But Peter, are you willing to put self to death and accept My concept of the Messianic kingdom. I assure you, Peter, you will deny Me before morning comes. Peter was not yet ready to crucify himself (cf. Gal. 2:20).

### *Quiz*

1. How was Jesus glorified by His actions there in the upper room?
2. Why does Jesus give His "new" commandment?
3. What is "new" about this commandment?

4. What will be the results of keeping this "new commandment"?
5. Was Peter afraid to die physically for Jesus?
6. In what way was Peter unwilling to lose his life for Jesus?

## EXPOSITORY SERMON THIRTEEN DIVINE LESSON ON HUMILITY AND SERVICE

John 13:1-38

### *Introduction*

#### I. THE SCENE

- A. The age-old ritual of the Passover is begun by Jesus.
- B. The disciples were arguing among themselves as to rank and position in the Messianic kingdom (which they believed to be coming to earth).
- C. The disciples had forgotten to perform the most customary act of hospitality toward their Master, washing of His feet.

#### II. THE LORD'S ATTITUDE

- A. Having loved His disciples with fervent, demonstrated love, He now comes to the crucial hour, more vividly aware than ever of His suffering and their misunderstanding and worldliness, and He demonstrates this wonderful act of humility, love and service for them.
- B. Even the betrayer was there but the Lord's concern is not for Himself. He is extending His love even in effort to reclaim this one.

### *Discussion*

#### I. THE ACT OF LOVING SERVICE 13:1-11

- A. Reason for the act.
  1. The disciples needed a lesson in common courtesy and humility.
  2. Jesus sought once more to turn Judas from his evil scheme.
  3. Jesus desired to teach the disciples the nature of His mission (He came to minister, not to be ministered unto).
  4. The Master demonstrates again His love for them personally.
- B. Reaction to the Act
  1. Some probably were so engrossed in politicking that they were unaware of it for a few moments.
  2. It did not reach into the heart of Judas Iscariot at all.
  3. Impetuous Peter finally came to his senses and objected that the Lord would so degrade Himself.
    - a. Peter was objecting to the very basic tenent of Christ's

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ministry—humiliation—voluntary participation in the experiences of humanity. Peter was letting his own reason be the guide in his concept of the Christ rather than allowing Christ to reveal His true nature.

- b. All followers of Christ of every age are guilty of the same rationalizations at one time or another.
- 4. Later, Peter swings to the opposite extreme (v. 9).
- C. Reply of Jesus
  - 1. Peter must obey the Master even when he cannot understand.
    - a. This obedience is, of course, based upon the evidence Jesus has given him before of His own deity.
  - 2. Peter (and all the disciples) must surrender to the humiliated Son of man as their Messiah and Saviour and divest themselves of the richly-regal concept of a worldly Messianic kingdom (see our comments on this portion).
  - 3. In reply to Peter's leap to the other extreme Jesus said:
    - a. Once a person has been cleansed and become a follower of Jesus, he need not repeat the initial cleansing but must sanctify himself and grow in grace by daily repentance and humble acts of love.
  - 4. All were cleansed and would repent except one.
    - a. This warning to strengthen their faith in Him and His mission later.

## II. LESSON ON LOVING SERVICE 13:12-20

## A. Preachment

- 1. His method—
  - a. motivated learning by asking questions to direct thinking;
  - b. on a positive note—started by complimenting disciples on what they did know;
  - c. followed logical progression—used example to illustrate
- 2. His message—
  - a. the example not intended to establish an ordinance in the church;
  - b. the principle—if your Master is willing to serve in the most menial of tasks, so should you, the servant, be concerned with service and not with arguing over position;
  - c. HOW THIS PRINCIPLE NEEDS TO BE APPLIED BY EVERY SERVANT OF THE LORD: PREACHERS, BIBLE COLLEGE TEACHERS, ELDERS, DEACONS . . . EVERY CHRISTIAN MUST REALIZE HE IS CALLED BY THE MASTER TO SERVE.

**B. The Prize**

1. Knowledge—there comes a knowledge of the Divine Mind when we follow the steps of Jesus.
  - a. There is also a warning implied here—knowing the right and failing to do it brings not blessing but curse.
2. Blessedness (literally, happiness)—the road to true happiness and joy is service motivated by love.
  - a. Man's ultimate purpose is to glorify and serve God—when he does not he is out of harmony with his purpose.
  - b. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).
  - c. Bearing fruit brings joy (Jn. 15:1-11).

**C. Prophecy of the betrayer.**

1. Given as predictive prophecy so that when it is fulfilled the disciples' faith in the deity of Jesus would be strengthened.
2. Another attempt by Jesus to penetrate the hardened heart of the hypocrite (play actor disciple) Judas.
3. Also it indicates to the disciples the divine omniscience of Jesus then and there—He knows His destiny all the time—He controls and is Master of the events.

**III. THE SELFISH SERVANT OF SIN 13:21-30****A. Frantic Soul Searching.**

1. The personal grief of the Master as He reclined in the room and at the same table with the greedy and hypocritical betrayer.
  - a. Jesus' grief was mostly His concern over Judas.
  - b. Jesus was deeply concerned over the spiritual immaturity of all the disciples.
2. The disciples are at first incredulous, then stunned, and then perplexed.
  - a. There was a period of soul searching (but they did not look deep enough).
  - b. Then they began to look around suspiciously at one another.
  - c. They all were betraying Him, in a sense, by their dullness of heart concerning His true mission.
3. Simon Peter, the impetuous, dared to know who, but was hesitant about asking aloud.

**B. My Familiar Friend, the betrayer.**

1. Jesus quoted Psa. 41:9 in verse 18 to show that His betrayal was prophesied.

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- a. David knew that the disloyalty of friends is the sorest of all hurts.
- b. Here is one who had companied with Jesus, eaten with Him, slept with Him, had been trusted with the purse—was even then dipping sop with Him (cf. Psa. 55:12-14).
2. The offering by the host of a special morsel dipped in the sop to a particular guest was a sign of special concern (cf. Ruth 2:14).
3. HOW MANY PROFESSED FRIENDS OF JESUS WHO MEET WITH HIM ABOUT THE SUPPER TABLE GO OUT IMMEDIATELY AND BETRAY HIM BY UN-CHRISTIAN DEEDS, WORDS AND HABITS.

## C. Fooled Followers.

1. Judas was a master at deception.
  - a. Outwardly one could recognize no difference between him and the other eleven.
  - b. He faked a concern for the poor (Jn. 12:4-5).
  - c. He innocently asked "Is it I, Lord?" (Matt. 25:25).
  - d. He acted the deception out to the end, brazenly taking the morsel offered.
2. When men deliberately "exchange the truth of God for a lie," (Rom. 1:25), God gives them up to their desires (cf. Rom. 1:28; II Thess. 2:10-12).
3. None of the disciples knew what was transpiring.
  - a. They did not know Judas was the betrayer.
  - b. But Jesus knew!
  - c. THERE ARE HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCH TODAY, AND SOME MAY GO UNDETECTED BY THE OTHER FAITHFUL DISCIPLES . . . BUT GOD IS NOT BLIND . . . HE KNOWS.
  - d. Notice: none of the disciples deserted the band later when they did find out there was a hypocrite among them.

## IV. THE SACRIFICING SERVANT 13:31-38

## A. Glorified in His sacrifice.

1. "Now" means that in His humiliating (to the world) death the Son would be glorified, exalted.
2. The Father would also be glorified because of the love and obedience of the Son.

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

13:1-38

3. This glorification also included the marvelous resurrection and ascension.

4. GIVING AND LOVING are the attributes which bring glory.

### B. Going away.

1. Even at the near hour of His own cruel death His concern is for the soon-to-be bereaved disciples.

2. But they may know the presence of His living Spirit within their hearts by keeping the new commandment which He leaves with them.

a. The newness of the commandment is in the newness of the self-sacrificing love which He exemplified.

b. No such love could be commanded before, because no such LOVE had been exhibited before! (cf Eph. 3:17-19) and (I Jn. 2:8-11).

c. The contrast is between the self-sacrificing love of Christ and the love of self on the part of Judas and even the other disciples this night.

3. THERE CAN BE NO QUESTION BUT THAT BROTHERLY LOVE IS A MARK OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP. One cannot say he knows and loves God and not have love for his brethren!

### C. Grieving disciples.

1. Peter is grieved at the thought that the Master must leave and that he cannot follow.

2. Peter is no coward—he will gladly engage in physical combat on behalf of the Master and His glorious Messianic kingdom.

a. Peter would shed his blood for the Jewish throne.

b. But this is not the type of sacrifice which Jesus desired.

3. Peter would deny the Lord.

a. Not because he was physically afraid.

b. Because he was ashamed of what he thought was a humiliating way for the Messiah to surrender without a fight.

4. SO MANY CHRISTIANS ARE TOO READY TO WIELD THE SWORD IN SUPPORT OF THEIR OWN CONCEPTS OF CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT FIRST STUDYING TO KNOW WHAT THE WILL OF GOD IS!

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Chapter fourteen has been read, quoted and preached for nearly two thousand years at times of sorrow, stress and bereavement. It has been a constant source of strength and consolation. This is exactly the purpose it was intended to serve when Jesus uttered it.

These are words of tenderness from a loving Father to His soon-to-be bereaved children. He is about to leave them, suffering a shameful and agonizing death and they will be scattered like lambs. The tenderness of Jesus is revealed here as nowhere else. Although He knows that they will soon desert and deny Him, He very patiently and tenderly explains that in His going He will not leave them desolate, but He will send the Strengthener. He explains that even in His leaving them He is going to prepare a place for them.

The whole theme of this chapter is "My Departure Will Bring Blessing—not Grief." In fact, Jesus plainly tells the disciples that if their faith be strong enough they can *rejoice* at His return to the Father! One notices throughout this discourse Jesus concentrating on what His going will mean for the disciples and not for Himself. Even within the very shadow of the cross His heart goes out to His "little children."

There is a great deal of most important teaching by our Lord Himself concerning the Holy Spirit in this chapter. Jesus explains plainly Who He is—how He is received—what He does. We must be careful, however, in our exegesis of Christ's promises here lest we expect to receive that which He promised exclusively to the apostles. Some of His promises in this fourteenth chapter are for the apostles only—while other promises apply to all believers of the Christian age.

Keeping the theme—a purposeful departure—in sight, we have outlined the fourteenth chapter thusly:

#### III. The Word Manifested to The Disciples and Their Acceptance of Him, 13:1—20:31.

##### A. Private Instructions and Encouragements, 13:1—17:26

(continued)

2. His Going Will Bless All Men, 14:1-31
  - a. He's going to Prepare a Place, 14:1-7
  - b. He's going to Make the Disciples Co-Laborers With The Father, 14:8-14
  - c. He's going to Send the Holy Spirit as The Strengthener and Revealer, 14:15-24
  - d. He's going to Leave Men a Peace That Overcomes the World, 14:25-31

## GOING TO PREPARE A PLACE

*Text 14:1-7*

- 1 Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me.
- 2 In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
- 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.
- 4 And whither I go, ye know the way.
- 5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?
- 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me.
- 7 If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

*Queries*

- a. What and where are the "mansions"?
- b. Which "coming again" is referred to in v. 3?
- c. What is the significance of verse 6?

*Paraphrase*

You must not let your hearts become distressed and discouraged within you over the things that are about to happen. You do believe in God, the Father; you must therefore trust in Me also as the Son of God. In Heaven, the house of my Father, are many permanent resting places. If there were no such places and no possibility of preparing them, I would most certainly have told you because the very purpose of My leaving you is to go and prepare a resting place for you. It is true that I am going away to prepare a place for you, and it is just as true that I am coming again to receive you into my own home, so that you may be where I am. You know where I am going and you also know the way! But Thomas interrupted, saying, Lord, we do not even know where you are going so how can we know the way? Jesus said to him, I, Myself, am the way and the truth and the life and no man is able to come to saving relationship with the Father unless he comes through My Mediatoryship. If you had been learning of My true personality and nature you would have been recognizing my Father also. From now on you will know more fully that I and the Father are One and you will know that you have seen the Father.

*Summary*

A departing Father fortifies His children. He goes ahead to prepare them a place. He will come again to take them to the prepared resting

place. He alone is able to provide the way. Yet, the children are not ready to place complete trust in Him. Their knowledge of Him and trust in Him will be completed soon.

### *Comment*

One writer has paraphrased this first verse, "Let not your heart be tossed and agitated like water driven by winds . . ." Jesus knew that the impending storm of the cross would rage upon their hearts with a fierceness that would test their faith severely. He then seeks to remind them of His intimate, co-equal relationship to God the Father in Whom they believed. The word "also" in verse 1 indicates that Jesus knows of their belief in God's omnipotence but also knows their faith in Him and in His mission needs to be strengthened. The way the original Greek is written in this first verse both "*believe*" might be imperatives or both might be present indicatives or a combination of both. We believe the context necessitates that Jesus is saying, "You are believing in God (present indicative), you must believe in me also (imperative)." With only cursory attention to the context of the fourteenth chapter the reader should realize that the burden of the exhortation is to establish Jesus' divine omnipotence as equal with God's.

The next two verses (2, 3) contain one of those statements of Jesus which, this side of His resurrection, grips and electrifies the heart with love and hope because of the tenderness of the words. Of all the words quoted beside the death-bed, the open coffin and the grave-side these would probably be repeated most often. And well they should be, but as words of Life and Strength they should be preached, believed and practiced before the time of the open coffin.

The word translated "mansion" is *monai* in the Greek and means literally "an abiding place; a resting place; a dwelling." The English "mansion" as it is connoted today does not represent what *monai* meant in New Testament times. The word originally meant a place to abide in, and was used of a resting place, a refuge, and in later ecclesiastical Greek a monastery.

The emphasis, as the context indicates, is on the abundance of eternal places of rest and refuge in the Father's house (Heaven). The kingdom of God is often referred to as a place of rest both here on earth and in Heaven (cf. Isa. 11; Matt. 11:28-30; Heb. 3 & 4; Rev. 14:13). The contrast is between the transitoriness of life and place on this earth with the permanence of the dwelling places in Heaven. The contrast is between the tribulation and wandering in this world with the sweet rest and refuge in the next world (cf. Jn. 16:1-2; Heb. 11:13-16).

Albert Barnes has a comment on this section which is worthy of consideration (Mr. Barnes paraphrases Jesus' words):

"The universe is the dwelling-place of my Father. All is his house. Whether on earth or in heaven, we are still in his habitation. In that vast abode of God there are mansions. The earth is one of them, heaven is another. Whether here or there, we are still in the house, in one of the mansions of our Father, in one of the *apartments* of his vast abode. This we ought continually to feel, and to rejoice that we are permitted to occupy *any part* of his dwelling-place. Nor does it differ much whether we are in *this* mansion or another. It should not be a matter of grief when we are called to pass from one part of this vast habitation of God to another. I am indeed about to leave you, but I am going only to another part of the vast dwelling place of God. I shall still be in the same universal habitation with you; still in the house of the same God; and am going for an important purpose—to fit up another abode for your eternal dwelling."

This paraphrase is in harmony with the Scriptures. Paul the apostle says that the church corporate and individual members may be habitations of God in the Spirit (cf. I Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20). The same apostle says that God has prepared for us another "tabernacle" (dwelling-place) eternal in the heavens; that God dwelt in Christ (cf. II Cor. 5). In John 14:23, the only other place where *monai* is used, we are told that God, the Son and the Holy Spirit will "abide" in us.

These are words to strengthen in an impending hour of despair. They are intended to promise the apostles the reality of security, refuge, rest in spiritual dwelling places more concrete and real than earthly "tabernacles" and dwelling-places. The reality of these eternal places of abode are based upon the divine omnipotence of Jesus Christ. One thing is certain, there are *places* of abode—Heaven is not just an idea or an ideal. The places may or may not be material places (remember, "a new heaven and a new earth")—but they will be where Jesus is!

It is nothing short of perversion of the Scriptures to contend that the "many" of v. 2 means men of all kinds of opinions, convictions, religions, beliefs will have a place in Heaven. It is manifestly clear from the context that only those who believe and obey Christ will be with Him there, for He is the *only way*!

Another important truth revealed by Jesus here is that *Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people!* God prepared a Passover lamb and delivered His nation under Moses. Then He prepared a land of rest and led them into it (cf. Ex. 23:20). This was all to typify the

One Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who was given a prepared body (Heb. 10:5-10) that He might prepare a resting place for us. One of the greatest preachers of a few years ago, Alexander Maclaren, points to three steps in the preparation process of Christ's going away. (1) He must go away (die upon the cross) to prepare our salvation. Only His meritorious sacrifice is sufficient atonement for our sins. Only by offering Himself as a prepared sacrifice may we be saved by grace. (2) He must go away (by His resurrection and ascension) to take captivity captive (Eph. 4:8) to triumph over principalities and powers (Col. 2:15) and allow us even now to "sit with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). (3) He must go away (unto the right hand of the Father's throne) to constantly minister for us.

All three of these ideas are strongly inferred throughout chapters 14, 15, 16, and 17 of the gospel according to John. It goes without saying that Christ's substitutionary death and conquering resurrection prepared a place of atonement, forgiveness and salvation for all who will accept. And so, He looks forward to His immediate going away (death, resurrection and ascension) here in John 14. But He also looks forward to His High Priestly preparation of these places of rest for all believers. We suggest a few of the preparations Jesus is now making as our Leader, Forerunner and High Priest. He is preparing both the places of rest and the people who hope soon to rest in them:

- (a) He succors the weak (Heb. 2:14-18).
- (b) He intercedes (Heb. 4:15-16; I Jn. 2:1-2).
- (c) He chastens (Heb. 12:7-11).
- (d) He sends ministering angels (Heb. 1:14).

In this fourteenth chapter of John, Jesus promises two returns. Here in the third verse He speaks of His bodily return when time will cease with the general resurrection of the saints and the judgment (cf. Acts 1:9-11; I Thess. 4:13-18, etc.). The other promised return is the sending of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and subsequently into the life of each Christian through the preached and obeyed Word of God and this promise is in John 14:18. We shall discuss this in our comments on verse 18. John does not record much of Jesus' teaching on the Second Coming. In fact, the only specific words of Jesus on the subject, recorded by John, are in 14:3 and 21:23. Here in 14:3 Jesus bases the reality of His bodily return squarely upon His "going away" which is His death, resurrection and ascension. In other words, men are to look forward to the reality of the Second Coming on the basis of historical, eyewitnessed evidence to His divine omnipotence. If Jesus could "go away" (conquer death and ascend bodily into the

heavens) and men could see it with their eyes (cf. I Jn. 1:1-4) then men could know with certainty that He would return bodily just as He promised.

We notice in verse 2 that the reality of Heaven and His preparations there are based on His claim to absolute knowledge and complete trustworthiness! "If it were not so, I would have told you," says Jesus. In other words, "I have demonstrated to you disciples prior to this by miracle and prophecy that I am completely trustworthy and that what I say is divine truth. I have never misled you, I have never lied, I have never been mistaken. Therefore, if what I now say were not true I would not be telling it to you."

We do not believe it ever redundant to repeat that all the promises Jesus makes concerning Salvation, Heaven, Hell, Judgment, Second Coming, etc., are to be believed upon the basis of historical, eye-witnessed demonstrations of His Deity (cf. I Pet. 1:3-5). The gospel according to John is, perhaps, the greatest of all writings on the deity of Jesus Christ and it is replete with one discourse after another on that one central theme. All life worth living here and all hope for the future life of glory has its foundation in this fact—Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God!

The words of Jesus in promising to come and take believers into His presence (v. 3) remind us of the words of Paul when he wrote that Christians would, at His Second Coming, be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and be always with Him there (I Thess. 4:16-18).

The place (Heaven) to which Jesus is about to go has a Way that must be traveled. And the disciples know that Way. Jesus has been teaching them this Way, leading them upon this Way ever since they joined themselves to Him. They had once acknowledged that only He had the words of eternal life (Jn. 6:68-69). He told them that His way was the cross and any man who follows Him in this Way must take up his cross daily (Lk. 9:23), but they rejected that as out of harmony with their concept of the Messianic kingdom.

So the problem with Thomas (and the other disciples) is that, clinging to their hopes for a temporal kingdom, they could not (or would not) understand His "going away" (His death). And if they did not know where He was going and why, how could they know the way? Their problem was, not knowing the goal they could not know the way. They knew that Jesus was headed in the direction of establishing the throne of God the Father in a Messianic kingdom, but they had no idea where it would be and how it would be.

In verse 6 we have one of the great seven "I AM's" of the gospel of John (cf. Jn. 6:48; 8:12; 10:9; 10:11; 11:25, and 15:1). When

Jesus said "I am the Way . . ." the original Greek is so written to place heavy emphasis on the pronoun "I" and would literally read, "I, even I Myself, am the Way." He does not merely show the way, but *He is* the Way. He is the Way in His own Person. As others have said, we are not saved by a principle, but by the Person, Jesus Christ. By His personal meritorious work we are saved by grace through faith—HE is the Way. This Way was prophesied in Isaiah 35:8 and described in its fulfillment in Hebrews 10:19-25. Since the Way is a Person being in the Way demands a personal relationship to the Way. We have access *by faith* into this grace in which we stand (cf. Rom. 5:1-2). We are in Him (the Way) when we *love* Him and *keep* His commandments (cf. Jn. 14:21-24). Trust (faith), love and obedience are commitments of one personality to another, they are the bonds of living fellowship and they are what Jesus seeks in every believer.

The arrangement of this phrase (v. 6) in the original Greek is interesting. All three predicates are preceded by the definite article which means that the subject and the predicates are both identical and interchangeable . . . "I am the Way and I am the Truth and I am the Life; the Way is Me and the Truth is Me . . . the Way is the Truth . . . The Truth is the Life, etc."

What is said of the Person of Jesus being the Way also applies to His being the Truth and the Life. In His Person He embodied the Truth. The Word became flesh (that is, the Divine Personality was expressed or revealed to man in the flesh, cf. Jn. 1:14-18). Truth is a representation of the reality of things. The life, and teaching of Jesus Christ is the most complete and perfect fulfillment of the types and figures of all other revelations concerning the reality of all things that can ever be presented to man, this side of Heaven (cf. Col. 2:3; Heb. 1:1-3).

He is the Life. Not merely physical life nor is He merely the source of the spiritual life of every man although He is the source of both of these. But He is the Life as opposed to Death. Only by faith in Him may men be assured of Eternal Life and fellowship with the Father. Without Him men are assured of eternal death and separation from God and all that is good and right. He is the Bread of Life; He is the Light of Life; He is the Resurrection and the Life; and those who believe in Him shall Live (cf. Jn. 5:25; Eph. 2:1-7).

Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Immanuel, The Word made flesh, is the Way, the Truth and the Life. There can be no other Way to God except through His Only Unique Son. He is the New and Living Way and this access to God is made through His meritorious accomplishments in the incarnation of fleshly service (cf. Heb. 10:20-23; Acts

4:12). There are two aspects of our approach to the Father through the Son. We must accept by faith His sacrificial death in our place as an atonement for our sins which we could never accomplish by any merit of our own. Then, "if one died for all, then were all dead . . ." That is, our "old man" was punished in Christ and died there on His cross. But those who accept this death by faith, also are alive by faith and "henceforth live not unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (cf. II Cor. 5:14-21). Christ's death took away our sins and by His sacrifice we come unto the Father, but by faith we are to abide in His Word and live unto Him and thus by our new life in Him we also come unto the Father.

As Hendriksen puts it, verse 6b teaches unequivocally "both the absoluteness of the Christian religion and the urgent necessity of Christian Missions . . ." There is no religion on the face of the earth that can save a man's soul except faith and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. Moslems are lost, Buddhists are lost, Jews are lost, all who have never come to a personal commitment of faith, love, trust and obedience to the Divine Personality, Jesus Christ, and to His revealed Word, are LOST! They have no access or communion with God their Father and Creator.

The disciples' comprehension of the fullness of His deity is not yet complete. Their minds are still cluttered with the cobwebs of the Jewish concept of a Messiah separated from God the Father, ruling in an earthly kingdom. Their understanding of His true personality and nature was still limited. This limitation was due both to God's own plan in giving a progressive revelation and to their preconceived ideas about the Messiah. Jesus indicates that if they had really given themselves to knowing and experiencing His personality and nature (instead of speculating about their idea of a Messianic kingdom), they would have had some knowledge of the personality and nature of God the Father in respect to the way of salvation by grace and faith. Jesus also promises that from that night onward they will know more fully that He and the Father are One. From that night forward they shall know that they have seen God incarnate and have walked with Him and talked with Him (cf. I Jn. 1:1-4). For a discussion of the oneness of Jesus and the Father see our comments on Jn. 10:30-38.

### *Quiz*

1. What is the primary objective of the whole discourse by Jesus in this 14th chapter?
2. What is the meaning of the word "mansion" in the text?
3. What is the contrast Jesus probably intended to make when He

- told of going away to prepare a "place" for the disciples?
4. If Heaven is a prepared place, what of its inhabitants?
  5. Give four preparations Jesus is now making as our Living High Priest in His ministry in Heaven.
  6. How many returns are promised by Jesus in this 14th chapter? What are they?
  7. Since the emphasis in v. 6 is on the Person of Jesus, what is demanded of those who desire to follow Him?

### GOING TO MAKE THE DISCIPLES CO-LABORERS

*Text 14:8-14*

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?

10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works.

11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father.

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do.

### *Queries*

- a. How fully did Jesus expect Philip to know Him as God Incarnate?
- b. What are the "greater works" which believers shall do?
- c. To whom were the promises of vs. 13, 14 made?

### *Paraphrase*

Philip said to Him, Lord, give us a manifestation of the Father which we may see with our eyes and we shall be satisfied. Jesus turned to Philip and said, Have I been such a long time with you and you do not really know Me and see the Divine Personality of the Father in Me, Philip? Any man who has come to recognize My deity has seen the revelation of the Person of the Father which is far better than a physical manifestation; why, therefore, do you still say, Show us

the Father? Do you not believe that I am abiding in the Father and the Father is abiding in Me and We are One? The words that I speak to you are not of human origin, but the Father dwelling in Me is performing His redemptive works by speaking in Me, the Son. Take Me at My word and believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. But if my Person, my life, my words do not command trust, then at least follow the way of reasonableness, and from the supernatural character of My works realize My supernatural Personality. I say to you truly, he who believes in Me, the works which I am doing he will do also. And even greater works than these miracles of nature will my disciple do, because I am going to the Father and My going supplies an even greater power. And whatever you shall ask, if it be in accordance with the will of God and in my name, I will do it in order that the Father may be glorified in what the Son does. If you shall ask Me anything, in My name and according to My will, I will answer your request.

### *Summary*

Jesus speaks plainly and lovingly to a despairing and misunderstanding band of disciples of His intimate oneness with the Father. He tells them plainly that He is the Incarnate God. He points them to His teaching and His works and promises to do for them anything that the Father can and will do. These are designed to be words of strength.

### *Comment*

The preceding words of Jesus about the *house* of the Father and the *dwelling places* being prepared there have stroked a familiar heart-string within the bosom of Philip. All men who believe in God (and those who believe in many gods, for that matter) have longed to "see" Him with the physical eye. Especially would a Jew desire to be so honored with a manifestation of God to his sensory perceptions as had some of his ancestors (Moses and Isaiah) (cf. 24:9-11, 33:18; Isa. 6).

The heart of Jesus was grieved at Philip's "little faith" just as the heart of God was grieved at the unbelief of the Israelites in the desert (cf. Psa. 78:40, 95:10; Isa. 63:10). Yet one can almost feel the pathos and tenderness of Jesus as he answers Philip. God has been in their midst in the person of His Son and yet they ask to see God; they have eyes to see but they see not. They have seen Jesus and His Messianic kingdom only through earthly eyes. They have not opened their spiritual perception and looked at Him with eyes of faith. They were walking by sight and not by faith (cf. II Cor. 5:7). Have all

the long days and nights spent teaching this select group of disciples been in vain? Do they still not see that He is in the Father and the Father is in Him? We have no right to question the loyalty and understanding of the disciples so far as it has come. They have confessed His Messiahship (cf. Jn. 6:68-69; Matt. 16:15-16, etc.). But, due to their Jewish background, they still separated the Messiah from any equality with Jehovah-God. As wonderful as Peter's confession is (Matt. 16:16), we do not believe Peter understood the oneness of Jesus and the Father at that time as he did after the resurrection of Jesus. None of the disciples comprehended the Incarnate God in Jesus until after His glorification.

Jesus plainly declares that to "see" Him is to "see" the Father. Here, we believe, the word "see" is used in a sense to mean spiritual comprehension and not sensory perception. To learn and come to know the character and nature of the Personality of Jesus is to learn and come to know the real character and nature of the Personality of God. To *know* Jesus is to *know* God—to know God as completely as it is possible to know Him this side of eternity. Furthermore, to know the Personality of God as He has revealed it is to know Him more fully than any physical manifestation could afford. We may look physically at the outward appearance of our fellow mortals day after day and never really "*know*" them until they take us into their confidence and reveal their innermost personalities (cf. I Cor. 2:9-16). But Jesus knew that He had made sufficient revelation through His teaching and His works that these men should have recognized the Incarnate God in Him! Why, then, should they still say, "Show us the Father?"

Verses 10 and 11 are basic to a true understanding of the nature of Christianity as a revealed religion. As Mr. Hendriksen says, "This passage shows that all knowledge with respect to the facts of redemption is based on genuine, Christian faith." The redemptive purposes of God for man are revealed. The oneness of Jesus Christ and God the Father is revealed. Reason unaided by revelation could not possibly have discovered this. The existence of God, and perhaps certain attributes of His nature, may be revealed in nature (cf. Rom. 1), but redemption is known only as it is revealed in His Son and the Holy Spirit guided apostles.

Whenever Jesus speaks, the Father works by means of this speaking. And for men to believe the words of Jesus is to do the work of God (cf. Jn. 6:28-29). Jesus implies here that He expected the disciples to believe in His oneness with the Father through the words which He spoke for "never a man spake like this man." He spoke as one having authority and not as the scribes. His words, charged with

authority, tender with compassion, astounding in their truth and wisdom, should have, on their own, commanded the belief of the disciples that He was one with the Father. But if His person and His words do not engender faith in His oneness with the Father, then let these disciples at least follow the reasonable consequences of the supernatural signs and wonders which He performed before their very eyes. Let them believe in His oneness with the Father by the miracles which He did (cf. Jn. 5:36-37, 10:37-38). The Christian religion is founded squarely upon the deity of Jesus Christ which has been proven by supernatural, miraculous deeds, performed in history witnessed by the eyes and ears of men. Having thus established empirical proof of His deity Jesus demands that all other truths and doctrines which He taught be believed, trusted and obeyed by FAITH!

In verse 12 Jesus gives another of the purposes in His soon "going away." Using the discussion of His "works" as a springboard, He proceeds to promise the disciples that they will carry on His work in a much greater way. He promises that the disciples will do miraculous works of a supernatural character just as He did during His earthly ministry. But greater works than these miracles of nature would they do because of His going to the Father. By His going He means, of course, His death, resurrection, ascension, and sending of the Spirit of Truth. The greater works which they would do were the works of preaching the gospel to thousands of people, both Jews and Gentiles, and winning the surrender of their hearts to Jesus by the power of the gospel. There is power in the gospel far more commanding and revolutionary than any miracle over nature, for it is a power that is capable of bringing the free will of man into harmony with the will of God. This power in the gospel came in its fullness only after the "going away" by Jesus (His complete glorification).

He promises further that anything they shall ask in His name will be granted. He not only promises that they shall do great and wonderful things by the power of God, He sets up the "power lines" through which this power shall flow. The power is not in prayer, *per se*, but is in the Holy Spirit who shall come and grant every request made in the name of Jesus. Prayers are the "communication lines" to the source of power. To pray "in the name of Jesus" means far more than the utterance of a ritualistic formula. It means the prayer must be first and foremost in the interest of the kingdom of God. Their requests must be in harmony with the will of God (cf. Lk. 11:2; I Jn. 5:14-15). Lenski says, "In all the connections in which this important phrase occurs (*to onoma*) (the name), denotes the revelation by which we know Jesus. This revelation covers his person

as well as his work." To pray "in His name" does not mean "on the basis of My name," but it means "in UNION with My (name) person and My revelation."

A major question of interpretation of this passage is "to whom is Jesus speaking here?" There is no doubt that He speaks primarily to the 11 disciples in the upper room. We believe that according to other New Testament Scriptures portions of these promises are for all believers.

Hendriksen says, "It is certainly worthy of notice that, according to this great saying of our Lord, the *greater* works are the *spiritual* works. The miracles in the physical realm are subservient to those in the spiritual sphere; the former serve to prove the genuine character of the latter. Does Jesus, perhaps, by means of this very comparison, which places the spiritual so far above the physical, hint that miracles in the physical sphere would gradually disappear when they would no longer be necessary?"

We believe that I Corinthians 13, taken in the context of chapters 12 through 14 (all three chapters speaking of the same thing—miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit) teaches that very thing. "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away." Thus we believe that the promise of Jesus that anyone who believes in Him will do greater works than physical miracles applies to all believers who by preaching and teaching the gospel convert sinners. Love and preaching the gospel are greater works than speaking in tongues and healings.

In I John 5:14-15 the promise is made to all believers that if they ask anything according to His will they shall have it. There are enough parallel passages in the New Testament to show the discerning reader that Jesus made certain promises of powers and miracles to His chosen apostles which He did not intend that all believers should exercise.

Jesus' going away meant that believing disciples would forever after become His co-laborers in God's purpose of redemption. Some (the chosen apostles) would need for awhile to do works (miracles of nature) similar to the ones which Jesus did. But these were secondary and only foundational for the greater works which would be done, not only by the chosen apostles, but by all believers. All believers are "stewards" of the power resident in the gospel and are admonished to administer it wisely (cf. I Pet. 4:10-11; II Tim. 2:1-2).

Again, the words of Jesus are pointed toward strengthening the disciples there who shall soon be without His bodily presence and for the strengthening of all disciples down through the ages who must

walk by faith and not by sight. These things are spoken by Jesus and recorded by the apostles that men might truly believe (trust) in Jesus and believing have eternal life (Jn. 20:31).

### *Quiz*

1. Why might we expect Philip to long for a physical manifestation of God?
2. How was the heart of Jesus probably touched by Philip's request?
3. How may we "see" God if we "see" Jesus?
4. In what way does man know the redemptive purposes of God?
5. Primarily, how did Jesus expect the disciples to recognize His oneness with the Father?
6. How important are the historically witnessed miracles of Jesus and the apostles?
7. What are the greater works promised by Jesus? Who would do them?
8. What does "in My name" mean?

### GOING TO SEND THE STRENGTHENER AND REVEALER

*Text 14:15-24*

15 If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever,

17 even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you.

18 I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you.

19 Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me: because I live, ye shall live also.

20 In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.

22 Judas (not Iscariot) saith unto him, Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.

*Queries*

- a. Who is the "other Comforter"?
- b. Why so much stress in this section on "keeping His commandments"?
- c. What did Judas (not Iscariot) want to know?

*Paraphrase*

If you really love Me and desire to carry on My work and receive answers to your prayers, you will keep my commandments. And if you abide in My commandments I will ask the Father to give you another Strenghtener and Helper and the Father will send Him. He is the Spirit of truth and He will dwell with you forever. The world cannot receive Him into fellowship because the world does not love or understand His divine Personality, just as it rejects My divine Personality. You know and love this divine Personality. He is the same Personality who is dwelling in your presence now in bodily form and shall soon dwell within you in spiritual essence. I will not desert you nor go away and leave you destitute of help like orphans. I, the Son, the same Personality who has been with you in bodily form, will come unto you in the Spirit. In just a very short time the world will not even be able any longer to see Me with physical eyes, for I will very soon be gone from the world in bodily form. But you who love Me and obey Me will truly see and know Me for I will be as equally alive and active in the Spirit as I am in bodily form. And when I have accomplished man's redemption and return to you alive in the Spirit then you shall also be alive indeed in the Spirit. In the day when you are born again in the Spirit you will know fully and completely that I am in My Father, and you will know that you are alive forevermore in Me, and that I am alive and dwelling in you. I affirm again, he that continues to know my commandments and continues to keep them is one that manifests his love to Me. The one that so loves Me shall be loved by my Father; and I will love him and will reveal Myself unto him in the Spirit. Judas (not Judas Iscariot the betrayer) said to Him, Lord, you have previously indicated that you would soon manifest yourself to the world in all your Messianic glory. Now you speak of manifesting yourself only to us. What has happened to so limit your intended manifestation? Jesus said, Judas, when a man loves Me he will continue to keep My word. And my Father will love him and the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit will come unto him and make our dwelling place within him. The opposite is also true, he who does not love me will not keep my words. And to reject my commandments is not to reject the com-

mandments of a mere man for the words which you hear Me speak are the very words of God the Father who commissioned Me and sent Me into the world.

### Summary

The strong emphasis of this section is upon Jesus' return to the disciples in the Spirit on the condition that they love Him and keep His word. The Holy Spirit helps and strengthens and abides in men through the Word of Christ.

### Comment

Love is the incentive for obedience and obedience is proof of love and trust. The one who keeps the word of Christ has the mature, complete love of God in him (I Jn. 2:5; 5:3) and is assured that he knows God and is known by God (I Jn. 2:3). But the one who professes to know God and does not keep the commandments of Christ is a liar and the truth is not in him (I Jn. 2:4).

Jesus makes this statement (14:15) in connection with what He has said before and what He will promise after. Their obedient love is a condition of their being called and empowered to serve as co-laborers in the redemption of man. Their obedient love is also the condition necessary for Jesus to send them "another Helper," the Holy Spirit.

Verses 15 through 24 are of great importance to the Christian in his understanding of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the God-head. Verse 15 not only indicates the condition necessary by the disciples in order to be given the Holy Spirit, it also indicates the agency (the Word of Christ) through which He comes into the believer. Verses 21 and 23 are reiterations of this for emphasis.

Verse 16 clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit is a person, not just an idea or a feeling. He is "another" divine Strengthener and Helper and Teacher just like Jesus who was the Word become flesh. He is not different from Jesus (except that He comes not in the flesh), but He is exactly like Jesus in word and in deed. The word "Comforter" is *parakletos* in the Greek and is transliterated "Paraclete." Literally it means "one called alongside to strengthen or help." He is not one who brings luxurious comforts as we think of "comfort" today. He gives strength that we may bear our tests and trials. He testifies of the promises of God whereby we might be partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world (cf. II Pet. 1:3-4).

He is also the Spirit of truth. He is the Revealer of divine truth. Verse 17 does not mean that it is impossible for man to exercise his will in surrender to God's revelation and thus receive the Holy Spirit; that man must be irresistibly overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit. Jesus

is saying much the same thing He said in John 3:18-21 (see our comments there, Vol. I). As Lenski puts it, "He speaks of the inability of willful obduracy . . . one in which men neither "behold" nor "know" the Spirit although He is present with all His grace." Jesus is speaking of the worldlings who refuse to have God in their knowledge (Rom. 1:18-32) and who take pleasure in unrighteousness (II Thess. 2:8-12). The Pharisees who would not believe in Jesus because He told them the truth (Jn. 8:44-45) are such. There are many such worldlings in many degrees of ignorance concerning the Holy Spirit. And many of them are ignorant of Him because they wish to remain ignorant of Him.

These disciples "knew" Him. He is the same Personality as Jesus except for the fleshly body. These disciples were learning of Him. Their knowledge of Him was not yet full and mature. They had their childish and selfish concepts of Him but they were growing and would soon mature in their knowledge of the Godhead and His purposes. Jesus makes it very plain here that He and the Holy Spirit are identical in Personality. He was with them in bodily presence but would soon be absent in bodily presence but "in them" in His Spiritual Personality.

Another touch of pathos comes from the heart of Jesus as He tells the disciples, "I will not leave you orphaned, for I am coming to you." The word translated *desolate* is the Greek word *orphanous* from which we get the English word *orphan*. Christ promises that He will not go away and leave them destitute of help like orphans. Orphans have no home but Jesus has already spoken of the dwelling place in the Father's house which He goes to prepare for His loved ones. Orphans feel lost and desolate but Jesus has shown His loved ones the Way—He is the Way home. Orphans have no "comforter" but Jesus promises to send the "Comforter."

In a few short hours Jesus would be gone from the eyes of the world, physically speaking. But those who love Him and obey Him will truly see and know Him. Christ is as alive and active in the Spirit as He was in the flesh. The Holy Spirit through the Word is living and active and powerful and moves in the hearts of men convicting and converting their stubborn wills. The Holy Spirit through Providence "works out all things together for good to them that love God . . ." When Jesus has accomplished atonement and justification by His death and resurrection and ascension and when He returned in the Spirit they would truly behold Him. When they should surrender and be born again by faith in Him and obedience to His word they would be truly alive. In the day when they should be born again by

the Spirit they would know more completely that He was in the Father, that they were alive forevermore in Him (Eph. 2:1-7), and that He was in them.

Again, in verse 21, Jesus repeats the conditions and the agency of receiving the Holy Spirit. Again He instructs them that the One who is to be sent will be but another manifestation of His Spirit. He and the Father are One; He and the Holy Spirit and the Father are One. There can be no mistake about how men and women are to be led to obey the Lord's commandments—they are to be led to love Him. There can be no mistake about how men and women are to show their love to Christ—by keeping His word.

During His last week of teaching in Jerusalem and near the city, Jesus talked often of the "coming of the kingdom," "the coming of the Son of man with power and great glory" (Lk. 21:25-28, etc.). Now He says to the disciples, "I am going away . . . the world will see Me no more . . . I will manifest Myself to those who love Me and keep My word." Judas (not the betrayer) manifests the immature concept of the kingdom of God that is still within the minds of the disciples. He is still full of the worldly notions of the Messiah and His kingdom. He seems to say, "This very week you talked of your coming with all the holy angels when the nations of the earth should be gathered together. Now you speak of manifesting yourself to us but not to the world. What has happened to so limit your Messianic program?"

Jesus replies to Judas as if to say, "Judas, I am speaking of an intimate fellowship of My Spirit with men who love me. It is a living union to bring strength, joy and peace. The return and manifestation I spoke of before is unto judgment; the return and manifestation I speak of now is unto those who love Me and keep My word."

This verse (v. 23) is one of the most profound, yet simple and lucid verses of the New Testament. In it is explained, as far as man can understand, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within everyone who loves and obeys Christ. It is simple enough for a child to understand yet it contains truth so profound that the most brilliant intellect cannot fully fathom. There are no requirements of mystical rites to be performed, to place one in a mood to receive the Holy Spirit. There are no promises here of any ecstatic trances or emotional fits that one may know he has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him. The very simple and plain promise is that the one who believes, trusts, loves and obeys Christ will be indwelt by the Spirit of God. We shall have more to say of this verse in later comments.

This section closes in verse 24 with Jesus emphasizing again that

He is trying to teach the disciples of the perfect oneness of the Son and the Father and the Holy Spirit. His emphasis is that the disciples should love Him and keep His word as they would keep the Father's word—for the words He speaks are the very words of the Father. Although He is soon to go away they may trust Him to fulfill His promises just as surely as God has fulfilled His words in the past. Any man who does not love Jesus nor keep His word is rejecting God! He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father (cf. our comments on Jn. 5:23).

We pause in our sequence of verse by verse comments here to consider briefly that divine Personality, the Holy Spirit. The context of Chapters 14, 15 and 16 of John's gospel teach more than any of the other gospels about Him. Jesus is concerned more here with instructing the disciples as to how the Holy Spirit takes up His dwelling within the believer. As a starting point we quote, "The Spirit is not a mere impersonal force or influence which we somehow get hold of and use; but He is a personal being, wise and holy, who is to get hold of us and use us. He is one with whom we may have the closest friendship, or fellowship" (Phil. 2:1; II. Cor. 13:14). He enters into our personalities, and we become new persons, with renewed minds, affections, desires and wills." (Seth Wilson, in, "Who or What Is The Holy Spirit?")

The question is, how does He enter into our personalities and get hold of us and use us? Do we absorb Him through the pores of our skin? Does He overwhelm us by some mystical, direct, irresistible saturation? How do we know that He is in us—by some emotional thrill or ecstatic trance?

We believe there are two spheres in which the Holy Spirit moves and works today—through His Word and through Providence. We believe that the Holy Spirit's Personality penetrates and enters into our personality as He expresses His mind, will and personality through His word. When we know His will in His word, believe and trust Him, love and obey Him and surrender our wills to His will, we believe He has come to make His abode with us. We believe this is plainly taught in the New Testament. In John 14 Jesus repeats twice this very idea (14:21, 23).

Again, we quote, "The Holy Spirit enters today into those who hear and obey the Apostles' written word even as He did into those who heard the oral word. The power of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life today is limited only by the lack of faith in the written word! The power of the Holy Spirit will be manifest as the Christian saturates his very life and being with the precepts and principles taught in the

Bible, which is the living voice of the Holy Spirit, and puts them into practice in his life. As the Christian has the mind to surrender to the instructions of the Holy Spirit as He speaks through the written word, the Holy Spirit possesses him, leads him and uses him and to just that extent (cf. Gal. 4:19; Col. 3:16)." (Walter L. Spratt, in, "The Holy Spirit in The Christian Life.")

Jesus said much the same in John 6:48-63 (see our comments in Vol. I). He is the Bread of Life. If men desire eternal life they must partake of His flesh and blood (His very nature). But how? Jesus answers, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." *We partake of Him by assimilating His word into our mind and heart.* He is then *in us*. Peter said the same thing when he wrote that we have been granted by God's divine power *all things* that pertain to life and godliness *through knowledge of Christ*. Furthermore, we may *partake of the divine nature* through His great and precious promises (II Pet. 1:2-4).

The Holy Spirit as a new Person and a new Life is born within us through the Word of God. We quote, "Before a child can be born it must be generated or begotten by its father. The same is true of the new birth. Before one can be born again he must be begotten again. This means there must be a *life-causing seed* to generate the new life. Is there such a seed? 1. Lk. 8:5-8 record Jesus' parable of the sower who "went forth to sow his seed." Christ Himself explains the story. "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God." 2. "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth." I Pet. 1:23. 3. "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth." Jas. 1:18. All of this means that the Holy Spirit inspired word is the life-causing seed that is planted in our hearts. How true it is that "belief cometh of hearing and hearing by the word of Christ." Rom. 10:17.

The Person of the Holy Spirit is born and grows within us through constant communion with Him by knowing His will, obeying His word and doing His work.

1. We are to drink of Christ's spirit (Jn. 7:37-39).
2. He is to dwell in us by faith (Eph. 3:17).
3. We are to be filled with the Spirit by understanding what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5:17-19).
4. He lives in us by faith (Gal. 2:20).
5. We receive Him by the hearing of faith (Gal. 3:2, 14).
6. We put on Christ by faith and obedience (Gal. 3:26-27).
7. The new man which is put within is renewed in knowledge after

the image of him that created him (Col. 3:10).

Our lives bear fruit when we allow the Spirit to lead us through His will as expressed in His word. The fruit of the Spirit is exhibited in the personal transformation of mind and character (hence conduct) of each individual who grows in Christian faith as he should (cf. Gal. 5:22-23; Rom. 8:2-4, 8:12-14, 14:17; I Cor. 6:9-11, 6:17-20).

To obey the Word is to be "led by the Spirit." The man who obeys the gospel is a child of God. The Spirit tells us to believe, repent and be baptized into Christ. Our spirits tell us that we do believe, have repented, and have been baptized. Therefore His Spirit and our spirits testify with each other to the same thing—that we are children of God (Rom. 8:14-17). By the same token, when we read, understand and do the will of the Spirit as expressed in the written word, we do put to death the deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13).

One thing is certain—the Holy Spirit will not come and dwell with us unless we "hear" His voice and "open the door" and allow Him to come in (Rev. 3:20). He may be rejected, resisted, despised, blasphemed, lied to, and grieved, if we do not want Him. Or, He may be heard, trusted, loved, received, obeyed, followed, fellowshipped if we desire Him and allow Him by exercising our faith to take hold of us and use us.

The only dependable agency available to man by which he may be certain that he *knows* the Holy Spirit or *feels* Him or that He *controls* him is obedience to the written will of the Holy Spirit in His word, which is the Bible! We may be sure we know Him if we keep His commandments (I Jn. 2:3). All who keep His commandments abide in Him, and He in them (I Jn. 3:24). Whoever knows the Spirit of God listens to the apostles' doctrine and this is the only way man may know the difference between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error (Satan) (I Jn. 4:6). If we love one another and confess Christ, His Spirit abides in us (I Jn. 4:12-15). Anyone who does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son (I Jn. 9:10). A man is on dangerous ground when he must depend upon human emotions or human creeds or human concepts to know the certainty of his possession by the Holy Spirit and how the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within him.

The Spirit does not operate independent of His Word in possessing a man and dwelling within him. Just as a father's personality penetrates and bears fruit in the lives of his children through the father's teaching and deeds, so the Personality of the Heavenly Father, His Spirit, penetrates and bears fruit in the lives of his children through

the Father's word and deeds as they are witnessed to in the Bible. Through His Word, written and spoken, He has striven with men. Through His Word, written and spoken, He convicts men of sin, righteousness and judgment. The Spirit, through His Word, when men allow Him by faith and obedience, comes into a person's heart and mind and possesses him, leads him and uses him.

There are, of course, many other attributes of this wonderful, divine Personality which we have not discussed here (i.e., His characteristics, His miraculous gifts, His providential working in nature and history every day, etc.). This has not been our purpose. We are concerned here only with the entrance into and possession of the believer by the Holy Spirit. If the reader desires more discussion of other attributes of the Holy Spirit we suggest Don DeWelt's book, "The Power of The Holy Spirit," Vol. I, published by College Press. Ozark Bible College also has a number of mimeographed essays by Seth Wilson, Walter L. Spratt and others for sale—simply write to the OBC Bookstore and ask for as much mimeographed material as they have on the Holy Spirit.

This divine Person was promised in the Old Testament (Ezek. 36:27). He was promised by Christ, the Incarnate Word (Jn. 7:37-39). He comes to every obedient believer today (Acts 2:38, 5:32). He brings strength, joy, peace, wisdom, power and fruitfulness.

### *Quiz*

1. Why does Jesus emphasize "love and keep my commandments"?
2. Who is the Holy Spirit like? What are some of His characteristics?
3. Why can the world not receive Him?
4. Why is verse 23 of such significance?
5. How is the Holy Spirit received into our hearts? Name 4 ways the Scriptures say He comes to us?
6. Is there any way man may be sure that the Holy Spirit is in him? How dependable is it?
7. When the apostles preached, what did they say was necessary for the coming of the Holy Spirit into the individual? Acts 2:38, 5:32.

### GOING TO LEAVE PEACE AND OVERCOMING POWER

*Text 14:25-31*

25 These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you.

26 But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you,

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the

world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful.

28 Ye heard how I said to you, I go away, and I come unto you. If ye loved me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go unto the Father: for the Father is greater than I.

29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe.

30 I will no more speak much with you, for the prince of the world cometh: and he hath nothing in me;

31 but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

### *Queries*

- a. Why is the "peace" which Christ gives not like "peace" for which the world strives?
- b. How is the Father greater than Jesus?
- c. What had Jesus prophesied before it came to pass (v. 29)?

### *Paraphrase*

A great many of My doctrines I have taught you while I have been with you in the flesh. Furthermore, the Father will soon send in My name the Helper, the Holy Spirit. He will teach you everything that is necessary for preaching redemption and establishing the church as well as infallibly recalling to your mind all that I have taught you while with you in the flesh. I am going soon but in My going I will leave you at peace with God. It will not be merely outward peace and physical security as the world sometimes gives, but it will be the peace which I, Myself, have—this peace of heart and mind which trusts in the Father in all circumstances and brings rest unto the soul—I give unto you. Therefore, you must not let your heart be anxious and troubled nor should you be cowardly and fearful. You have heard me say repeatedly, I am going away to My Father and then I come again to you in the Spirit. If you had grown in love for Me as you should you would have rejoiced at My going home to the Father. In My incarnation I became a little lower than the angels and became a servant and the Father, who is greater than I am in this respect, is waiting to reward and glorify Me. And I have told you of all this and predicted it now, before it actually happens, so that when it does come to pass, your faith in Me may be increased. I have very little time left to speak and teach you many things because the prince of the world and his evil cohorts are coming to accuse Me. This evil one can find no sin or guilt in Me—he has no part of himself in Me. But I will not resist nor escape but I will do as the Father gave me command-

ment so that the world may know that I love the Father. Arise, let us go forth to meet them.

### Summary

Time in which to strengthen the disciples is nearly over. He thinks of them before Himself. He promises again the Helper; gives them His peace; strengthens their faith in Him by prophetic utterance. He seems saddened that they are so dim of understanding His going away is a matter for rejoicing.

### Comment

By "these things" in verse 25, Jesus undoubtedly means all that He has taught the disciples concerning His divine mission while He has been in their company. He is about to promise the disciples further revelation from the mind of God through the Holy Spirit.

Bro. R. C. Foster calls verse 26 the "key" to understanding of the production of the New Testament. Certainly without the knowledge of the divine inspiration of the apostles one who reads the New Testament would utterly fail to comprehend much of it. This is not the only place Jesus made such a promise (cf. Lk. 24:49; Jn. 16:13, etc.). Jesus promises that not only by the power of the Holy Spirit will they infallibly recall all that He has taught them, but that the Holy Spirit will deliver unto them "all truth" which God has designed in His purposes of redemption. The apostle Paul makes clear in I Corinthians 2 just to what extent they received God's truth.

- a. They received the "hidden wisdom of God" (I Cor. 2:7).
- b. Man could never have known what was revealed to them (I Cor. 2:9).
- c. The Spirit revealed to them the "deep things" of God (I Cor. 2:10).
- d. Paul claimed that the "mind of Christ" had been revealed unto him and that this is what he taught (I Cor. 2:16).

The Holy Spirit or the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets of the Old Testament (I Pet. 1:11), but He did not lead them into "all truth" as He did the apostles. He spoke through them only in "divers portions and in divers manners" (Heb. 1:1). John later testifies that the only objective test whereby men may know the difference between truth and error concerning God's message for man is to "hear" the apostles. The apostolic message, and *only the apostolic message*, is the truth of God for man's salvation. All else is incomplete, erroneous or deliberately false.

The theory of just how this infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit over the writers of the New Testament was accomplished is another subject. Suffice it to say here that the Bible itself indicates the "verbal

plenary" theory. Paul says the Scriptures were "God-breathed" (II Tim. 3:16-17). Peter says no prophecy of Scripture is of any private, human origin, for prophecy came not by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were "borne along by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:20-21). The Spirit put the very words of God into their minds and mouths, as He did in the Old Testament, but the Spirit allowed different writers to use their own peculiar style in writing. John's style is much different from Luke's and Paul's, for example.

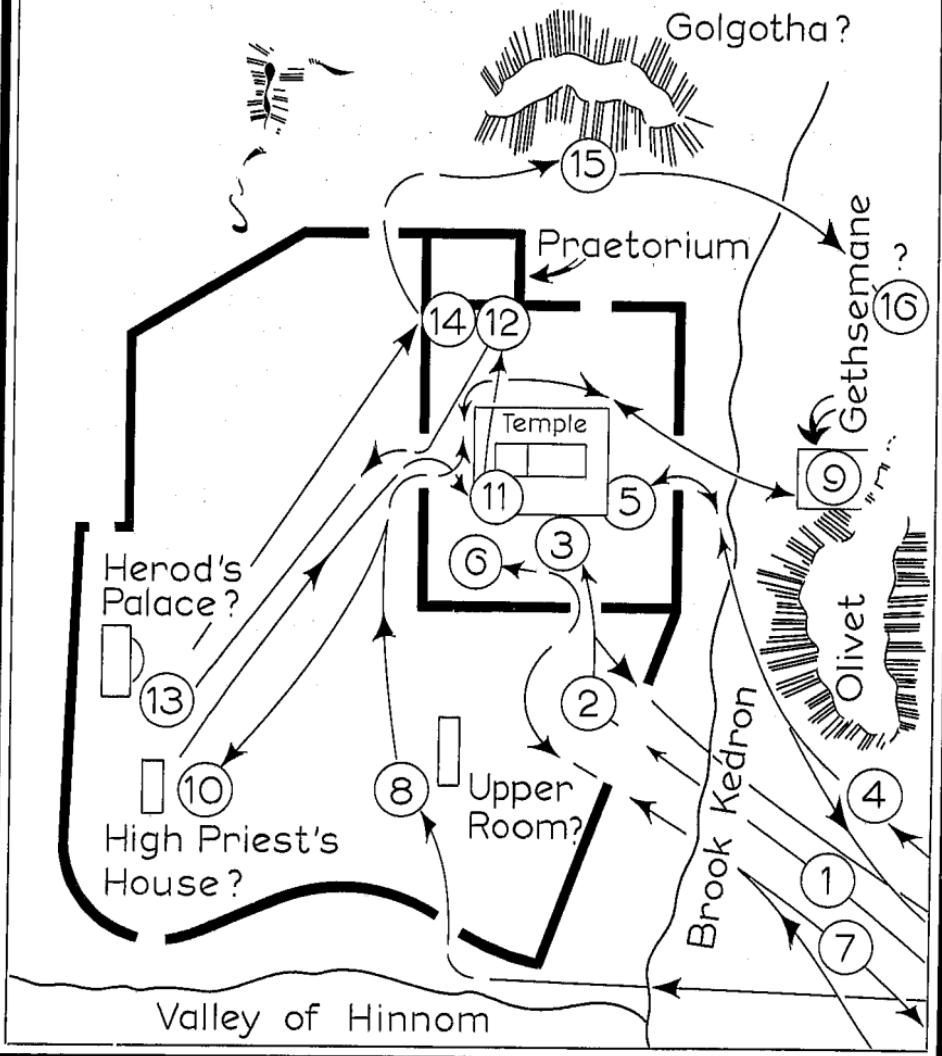
Yes, the disciples would have the divine Helper sent to them. He would lead them into all truth and remind them of all that their Master had taught them while with them. This Helper would also, by testifying of man's salvation and home in heaven, bring them the peace which Jesus Himself knew. It would not be the physical or economic or social security which the world calls peace (cf. Matt. 10:34; Lk. 12:51). The world may give outward peace but it can never give that peace and rest of the soul which belongs to the Christian because his life is hid with Christ in God (cf. Matt. 11:28-30). There will never be real peace on earth as worldly-minded men define "peace." In the first place, men are trying to promote peace without even consulting the directions of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. In the second place, the Bible teaches that there will be enmity and war on the part of Satan against the church of Christ as long as the world remains (see the book of Revelation). As long as there is evil there will be unrest; as long as there is sin, there will be rebellion and war.

But thanks be to God, Jesus Christ has made peace between man and God. Jesus, in His going to the Father (including His death, resurrection, ascension) accomplished man's atonement, paid man's penalty and accomplished reconciliation (cf. II Cor. 5:17-21). If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature and is at peace with God. But it requires faith and obedience on man's part to be "in Christ," for man is justified by faith and has peace with God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1), (see also Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 1:20).

This objective peace between God and man is but one aspect of the "peace" of which Jesus speaks. There is also the subjective side of "peace" which comes as a result of the first. It is the peace which drives anxiety and trouble and fear from the heart of the believer. God keeps in perfect (complete) peace all whose minds are stayed on Him, because they trust in Him (Isa. 26:3). It is a peace that brings cheer (Jn. 16:33). It is the peace which passes all understanding and guards our hearts and minds and rules in our hearts (Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15). It is the peace which is the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22).

MAP NO. 7—LAST WEEK

1. Bethany—Feast, Mary anoints Jesus, Mt. 26:6-13; Mk. 13:3-9; Jn. 12
2. Jerusalem—Triumphal entry (Sunday) Mt. 21; Mk. 11; Lk. 19; Jn. 12
3. Temple, enters, looks around, says nothing, leaves, Mk. 11:11
4. Curses fig tree (Monday), Mt. 21; Mk. 11
5. Temple—cleanses 2nd time (Monday), Mt. 21; Mk. 11; Lk. 19
6. Temple courts?—Great day of discussions (Tuesday)—Mt. 21:22-23-24-25; Mk. 11:12-13-14; Lk. 20:21-22
7. Retirement to Rest?—(Wednesday), Judas plots to betray Jesus, Mt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22
8. Upper Room—(Thursday), 4th Passover, Lord's Supper, Mt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22; Jn. 13-14
9. Gethsemane—(Thursday night), Parting discourses, agony, betrayal and arrest, Jn. 15:16-17; Mt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22
10. Trial before Annas and Caiaphas, Mt. 26:27; Mk. 14:15; Lk. 22:23
11. Trial before Sanhedrin, Jn. 18
12. Trial before Pilate
13. Trial before Herod
14. Trial before Pilate (2nd)
15. Golgotha—(Friday), Crucifixion, Mt. 27; Mk. 15; Lk. 23; Jn. 19
16. Garden—(Sunday), Resurrection, appears to Mary, other women, Mt. 28; Mk. 16; Lk. 24; Jn. 20





The peace which Christ brought to the world was prophesied (Isa. 9:6-7) and preached (Acts 10:36) and is relevant for a strife-torn world today. God give us the courage to preach it with conviction and simplicity.

Again the pathos of the night is painted for us as the Lord speaks the hunger of His aching heart for sympathy and understanding. Later, in Gethsemane, He will desire their fellowship in His agony but find them asleep. Here He desires the fellowship of their understanding concerning His going away, but they do not seem to be able to share in His feelings.

Many times already He had spoken of His return to the heavenly Father. If they had only grown enough to understand the humiliation of His incarnation, they would have rejoiced that He was soon to return to the Father for this would mean glory for Him. When Jesus said "the Father is greater than I," He did not mean that He was an inferior deity or that He was not deity at all but just the highest accomplishment of humanity. He is one with the Father, co-equal and the only-unique Son. But He was sent forth from the "Ivory Palaces" by the Father, and willingly took upon Himself the form of a servant (Phil. 2:5-8). He became a "little lower than the angels" in order to bring many sons to glory (Heb. 2:9-18). When Jesus willingly became the Incarnate Word He simply divested Himself of the glories resident in the bosom of the Father. The Father then prepared the reward and glory which the Son was to receive upon completion of His earthly mission (cf. II Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 12:2). The Father both glorified Him on earth and would glorify Him in heaven (Jn. 12:28, 17:5). In this sense only is God greater than the Son. If the disciples had realized the fullness of the glory that was to be His they would have rejoiced with Him.

In verse 29 Christ tells the disciples that He had made all these prophetic utterances concerning His death, resurrection, ascension and return in the Spirit before they come to pass in order that they will believe in Him. Fulfilled prophecy is one of the Bible's major evidences to its divine inspiration. Jesus Himself demonstrated His omniscience by foretelling His own death and resurrection as well as other historical events which came to pass in detail just as He had spoken them.

Jesus had spoken much and taught much in the last weeks and especially during this particular evening. Washing their feet, the Passover, the prophecies concerning Judas, Peter and the Eleven, institution of the Lord's Supper and the doctrines taught in Chapter 14 all have been spoken this Thursday evening. But the hour appointed by the

Father in which the prince of this world would be allowed to do his worst to His beloved Son was fast approaching. The adversary was coming to bring his accusations and there would be very little time left for Jesus to speak much with this little band of eleven. No doubt His heart was heavy, knowing their misunderstanding and dullness of heart. He could speak much more but the hour was almost here.

He must prepare to face His darkest hour. His foes would accuse Him and the prince of this world would rail at Him and slander Him through the mouths of men, but no sin or guilt would be found in Him (Jn. 18:23; Lk. 23:22; Mk. 14:56-59, etc.). The prince of this world could find no sin or guilt in Jesus and Jesus knew it. There is no doubt from this passage and others that Jesus was aware of His own sinlessness. No critic of the Bible has the right to say that Jesus did not know whether He was sinless or divine—or, that He never said He was without sin—because it is plain that Jesus both knew it and said it.

He had the power at His command to resist the evil crowd coming for Him—He had the power to refuse the cross, but in order that the world might know of His love for the Father and for mankind He would keep the Father's commandment to lay down His life upon the cross. He will prove His love by keeping His Father's commandments and so will all those who profess to know God prove their love by keeping His commandments (cf. Jn. 15:10).

### *Quiz*

1. To what extent did the Holy Spirit reveal "all" things to the apostles?
2. What is the peace which Christ gives to all believers? What does it do?
3. How is the Father greater than the Son?
4. Why does the prince of this world have nothing "in" Jesus?
5. How does a person prove his love to God?

## EXPOSITORY SERMON FOURTEEN A HAPPY GOODBYE!

John 14:1-31

### *Introduction*

#### I. BACKGROUND

- A. Jesus had just spoken of "going away" where the disciples could not then follow (Jn. 13:36-38).
  1. They were perplexed.
  2. They were ready to die for him in a physical battle (cf. also Jn. 11:16).

3. They did not know what was about to come to them at His dark hour of Calvary.
  - B. Jesus knew that they needed to be strengthened and warned.
    1. There is a deep pathos underlying the words of Jesus—the reader of these three chapters (14-15-16), may almost feel the urgency and tenderness of Jesus.
    2. Jesus desires to prepare them for the shock of what is soon to follow.
      - a. Due to their dullness He cannot speak too bluntly and plainly.
  - C. Jesus also knew that His going would bring eventual joy to the disciples.
- II. PREACHING OF THIS NATURE NEEDED TODAY
- A. Christian people need to be encouraged and strengthened.
  - B. Paul wrote to the people of Thessalonica—"comfort (strengthen) one another with these words" (I Thess. 4:18).
  - C. Some preaching on the present ministry of Christ as High Priest and "Preparer" needs to be done today.
  - D. Christian people need to be taught the Biblical doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Not just "about" Him, but instructions as to how He may be allowed to dwell in them and how they may be filled with Him more fully.

#### *Discussion*

- I. HE GOES TO PREPARE A PLACE OF PERMANENT REST FOR HIS LOVED ONES
- A. This prepared place is not necessarily a "mansion" as we think of "mansions" today.
    1. The Greek word *monai* (used also in Jn. 14:23) is better translated, "dwelling place," "abiding place," "resting place."
    2. The kingdom of God (whether on earth or in Heaven) is a "dwelling place of rest."
      - a. The kingdom of Christ (the church) is figuratively spoken of as a place of rest, peace, security (Isa. 9 & 11, etc.)
      - b. The new dispensation is spoken of in the epistle to the Hebrews as the fulfillment of the rest which God had planned and typified in Joshua and did not fulfill in David (Heb. 3 & 4).
      - c. Jesus spoke of giving rest (Matt. 11:28-30).
      - d. Heaven, of course, is the ultimate abode of rest (Rev. 14:13).

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- 3. Jesus, in His "going" (death, resurrection and ascension) prepared a "resting place" both temporal (the church) and eternal (Heaven).
- B. Jesus, Himself, is the Way.
  - 1. He does not merely show the Way, *He is* the Way.
  - 2. By His personal, meritorious work we are saved.
  - 3. This Way was prophesied (Isa. 35:8) and finds its fulfillment in Heb. 10:19-25.
  - 4. He is the Truth and the Life (see our comments on this verse).

## II. HE GOES TO MAKE THE DISCIPLES CO-LABORERS WITH GOD

- A. He has the authority to do so.
  - 1. He and the Father are One.
  - 2. He has revealed unto the disciples the Father.
- B. He promises these eleven disciples that they will do the great works which He has done while on earth.
  - 1. Speaking the words of God through the Holy Spirit.
  - 2. Performing miracles.
  - 3. Even raising the dead.
- C. But they, and those who should later believe in Him, would do greater works even than Jesus.
  - 1. They would preach the gospel to the whole world.
  - 2. They would exercise, in the gospel, a power far greater than power over nature.
    - a. To convert men, possessed of the freedom of choice, is to do a greater work than walking on the water.
  - 3. Preaching the gospel is the "greatest work in the world."
- D. Jesus sets up the "power lines" through which the believer may receive power to do this "greatest work."
  - 1. If we ask anything IN HIS NAME, we shall have it.
  - 2. We believe this to be a promise to all Christians conditional upon the requests being IN HIS NAME.
    - a. (See our comments on this verse.)
    - b. (cf. I Jn. 5:14-15.)

## III. HE GOES TO "COME AGAIN" IN THE SPIRIT

- A. Keeping His commandments is reiterated as a condition necessary for the sending of the Spirit.
- B. He will be a Strengthener and Helper and will not leave them "orphans."
- C. He will be the Spirit of Truth.
  - 1. The world cannot receive Him because it refuses to have

- God in its knowledge.
- 2. Worldlings will not believe because God's Word tells them the truth (Jn. 8:44-45).
  - D. He will dwell in all believers (14:21, 23).
    - 1. All believers will not receive the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.
    - 2. But His personality will dwell in men and women through His will as expressed in His word (see our special comments on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, pages ).
    - 3. THERE HAS BEEN A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF MISUNDERSTANDING AND ERRONEOUS TEACHING ON THIS SUBJECT.
      - a. As a result many millions of Christians are not availing themselves of the POWER of the Holy Spirit for their daily lives by "partaking" of the Spirit (Jn. 6:63).
      - b. Too many people are waiting for the Holy Spirit to do some irresistible work upon them apart from the revealed will of the Spirit in the written word. They want to be compelled to be good without any effort or surrender on their part!
      - c. The only dependable agency available to man by which he may be certain that he *knows* the Holy Spirit or *feels* Him or that He *controls* him is obedience to the written will of the Holy Spirit in His word, which is the Bible!

#### IV. HE GOES TO BRING PEACE

- A. The Holy Spirit will come and lead them into all truth.
  - 1. This will bring the final, complete revelation of God concerning man's redemption: this will bring the kingdom of Peace (Isa. 9).
- B. This will be a Peace quite unlike any peace the world knows or seeks.
  - 1. The foolish world rejects the Prince of Peace when it seeks even its temporal peace.
  - 2. There can never be lasting peace on earth among nations and men as long as there are men at enmity with God, unregenerate and unsaved.
- C. Christ's peace is twofold, one aspect of it absolutely necessary to cause the other.
  - 1. First, mankind had to be reconciled to God. Man the sinner becomes an enemy of God when he transgresses God's law.
    - a. Jesus Christ became the Lamb of God to suffer man's penalty.

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- b. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (II Cor. 5:17-21).
- c. He was our peace, breaking down the barrier of sin and law (Eph. 2:14-15) (cf. also Col. 1:20).
- d. Man, however, must exercise faith and obedience in order to avail himself of this peace (Rom. 5:1-2).
- 2. When man has thus availed himself of this peace through the access of faith it brings that peace of mind and soul which is subjective and inner.
  - a. It is a perfect (complete) peace (Isa. 26:3).
  - b. It brings cheer (Jn. 16:33).
  - c. It passes understanding (Phil. 4:7).
  - d. It rules our hearts (Col. 3:15).
  - e. It is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).
- 3. Both aspects of it to be preached (Acts 10:36).

*Conclusion*

- I. ALTHOUGH HE MUST SAY GOODBYE FOR AWHILE, IT IS A DEPARTURE THAT BRINGS HAPPINESS, FRUITFULNESS, PEACE
  - A. He does not leave His disciples as orphans.
    - 1. They are not fatherless, for their Father came and manifested Himself to them—demonstrated His love and care for them.
    - 2. They are not homeless because their Master is preparing a dwelling place for them of permanent rest.
    - 3. They are not lost for they are walking in Him, the Light, the Way, the Truth and the Life.
    - 4. They are not deserted for they have a divine Helper.
  - B. All who do not believe and obey Christ are the most pathetic orphans the world has ever known.
    - 1. They have no Heavenly Father—their father is the devil.
    - 2. They have no home but must face eternal unrest and torment in the hellish abyss.
    - 3. They are even now lost and are wandering as blind men in the darkness.
    - 4. They have no Helper.
- II. HIS GOODBYE WILL RESULT IN THEIR CARRYING ON THE WORK WHICH HE BEGAN
  - A. They, and all believers, will become co-laborers with God in the redemption of the world.
  - B. They, and all believers, will be crowned with the victor's reward for faithful service.

**III. HIS GOODBYE MEANS THE SPIRIT WILL COME AND TAKE RESIDENCE IN ALL WHO BELIEVE AND DESIRE HIM**

- A. He will bring joy and fruitfulness into men's lives.
- B. He will make the hidden wisdom of God known to men through the apostles.

**IV. HIS GOODBYE MEANS PEACE FOR ALL MEN WHO WILL ACCEPT IT BY FAITH**

- A. A peace more wonderful than anything the world can ever offer.
- B. A peace which passes all understanding.
- C. A peace and calm which overcomes all the storms of this life.

**CHAPTER FIFTEEN**

This chapter contains one of the many rhetorical masterpieces of Jesus found in the gospels. Speakers strive for a lifetime to attain the profoundity, simplicity, beauty and practicalness expressed in the allegory of the Vine and the branches (Jn. 15:1-11), and find that simply to quote what Jesus said is better than all their own eloquence. Had Jesus never uttered these beautiful words the world would have been much poorer in literary genius, let alone divine wisdom.

The main theme of this chapter is the Living Union of Christ and His Disciples. There are, of course, a few specific promises and instructions which apply strictly to the eleven apostles. But most of the instructions are ageless in their application and they are for the edification of all Christians.

The relationship between Christ and the Christian is not organizational but organic, vivifical, living. Even the societal relationship between Christian and Christian is dependent first and foremost upon the living union between Christ and the individual Christian. There is no life, no beauty and no fruitfulness except in living union with Christ. Apart from Him, even though an organizational status be maintained, there is only withering, decay and death.

We commend every Christian who is interested in knowing and feeling the reality of a closer walk with God to this fifteenth chapter of John. To every Christian who desires joy and satisfaction and fruitfulness we say, "put the teaching of this chapter to practice." To every preacher and teacher who desires to communicate more effectively we say, "imitate the simplicity and earnestness of the Master in John 15!"

This fifteenth chapter lends itself to excellent continuity when being outlined. We continue our outline of the third main division of the Gospel according to John:

III. The Word Manifested to The Disciples and Their Acceptance of Him. 13:1—20:31

A. Private Instructions and Encouragements, 13:1—17:26

(continued)

3. The Living Union of Christ and His Disciples, 15:1-27

a. Vital Union of Vine and Branches, 15:1-11

(1) The Vine the source of vitality

(2) Pruning needed to produce

(3) Reward of the relationship

b. Frank Union of Friends, 15:12-17

(1) Unlimited Love

(2) Communion of Confidants

(3) Access to Abundance

c. Persevering Union of the Persecuted, 15:18-27

(1) Participation brings persecution

(2) Greater revelation—greater responsibility

(3) Comforter will come

VITAL UNION OF VINE AND BRANCHES

*Text 15:1-11*

1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit.

3 Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples.

9 Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

### *Queries*

- a. How were they cleansed through the word which He had spoken?  
v. 3
- b. How are His disciples to abide in Him and He in them? v. 5
- c. What was His joy? v. 11

### *Paraphrase*

I, Myself, am the Vine, the real one. My Father is the Vine-dresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes and cleanses that it may yield more fruit. You have already received your initial cleansing through faith and obedience to the word which I have spoken to you. Now continue to remain in Me and let Me remain in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit unless it remains in living union with the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in living union with Me. I, the Vine, am the life-source; you, the branches, are the agents for bearing fruit. The man that dwells in Me and in whom I dwell in this living union, this man bears much fruit. Apart from Me you can do nothing fruitful. If a man is not dwelling in Me in living union, he is thrown away as a branch that is withered and dead and is gathered up with the others, and thrown into the fire and burned. If you continue to abide in Me and let Me abide in you through My words, you may ask whatsoever you will for My sake, and it shall be given unto you. This is the way My Father is glorified and exalted—when you produce much fruit by dwelling in Me. This also is the way you continue to become My disciples—when you continue to produce much fruit. Just as the Father loved Me and His love sustained Me, I also love you and My love for you will sustain you if you dwell in My love. If you keep My commandments you will live and dwell in My love even as I keep My Father's commandments and live and dwell in His love. All of these things I am telling you that you may come to know the same joy that I know and that your joy may be one of fullness.

### *Summary*

Jesus teaches that fruitfulness, adoration of the Father and discipleship is dependent upon living union with Christ, the Vine. All of this results, in turn, in a fullness of joy which Christ Himself knew.

*Comment*

Let us keep constantly in mind the central theme of these last fleeting hours of private instruction to the disciples: the living union between Christ and His disciples. From the opening of the Passover supper that night until He is arrested in Gethsemane, He uses many different figures of speech and different approaches to illustrate the absolute necessity of this intimate union.

The Passover celebration was always pregnant with Messianic prophecies, types and symbolism carried over from the Jewish Scriptures into the rituals of the night. Jesus had just referred to Himself as the fulfillment of the shadowy sacrifice of the Passover lamb. He had just plainly told them that He came as a ransom for the sins of many. He had referred to the "fruit of the vine" as a symbolic memorial of His blood. Perhaps they had gone out into the night (14:31, "Arise, let us go hence") and on their way from the upper room to Gethsemane had passed the Temple. Now the Temple, as Herod had restored it, had a great vine made of gold entwined and hanging around the door into the Holy Place. The vine is a figure employed prolifically in the Old Testament to typify the chosen Messianic people of God:

- a. The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel (Isa. 5:1-7).
- b. I had planted thee a noble vine . . . (Jer. 2:21).
- c. Israel is an empty vine . . . (Hos. 10:1).
- d. "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt" (Psa. 80:8).
- e. See also, Ezek. 15; 19:10.

The vine had actually become the symbol of the nation of Israel. The emblem on the coins of the Maccabees was the vine. It may be that the minds of the disciples, already dwelling on their idea of the temporal Messianic kingdom, were being drawn into further materialistic meanderings as they thought of the Old Testament symbols of Israel, the Lord's vine. They were contemplating their position in this kingdom because of their national heritage as Israelites. But Jesus would have them know that He was the Vine, the *real* Vine, in contrast to the typical vine. Membership in the Messianic kingdom, and all the glorious blessings promised by the prophets, is to be found not by national inheritance but by personal faith and intimate communion in the Person, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and True Vine. It is the same as all the nations of the earth being blessed in Abraham . . . in The Seed (singular, Gal. 3:16) of Abraham.

Whatever prompted the allegory of the Vine, it is one of the most beautiful pieces of rhetoric available for man to feed his soul upon.

And its purpose is to explain both the idealistic and practical sides of the vital union between Christ and all who would be His disciples.

He begins with the emphatic verb-pronoun linking which translated literally means, "I, Myself, am the Vine, the real Vine!" The only fruitful, saving relationship is intimate communion by the disciple with the Person of his Master. He, the Vine, is the source of life for the branch. There is no other source of life for the branch—apart from the Vine the branch not only does not bear fruit, it withers and dies and is burned.

The Father is the Vinedresser, the Husbandman. The Greek word for husbandman is *georgos*, meaning farmer or vinedresser. It is the same word from which we get the proper name in English of *George*. Notice the twofold work of the Husbandman. Every disciple (branch) who does not produce fruit after his own kind (other disciples) is cut off completely, cast forth and burned (v. 6). The whole idea of the allegory is that if there is any real union between the disciple and the Master, there will be some life, and if there is any life there will be some fruit. Therefore, the disciple who has no fruit has no life because he has no real union with his Master. God grant that preachers may be raised up to preach the Word of God with a fervency, purity and communicativeness which will draw all who profess to be "branches" into this intimate, personal union with the Vine. Preachers may organize, delegate and create a furor of activity, but there will be no real fruit until each Christian is in this life-supplying union with Christ.

The "branch" that does abide in the Vine and produce some fruit is cleansed by the Husbandman in order that it may produce more fruit. The vine is grown all over Palestine. It is a plant which needs a great deal of attention if the best fruit is to be produced on it. Each year the vine is drastically pruned that it may produce more and better fruit. We quote Maclaren here:

"We all, in our Christian life, carry with us the two natures—our own poor miserable selves, and the better life of Jesus Christ within us. The one flourishes at the expense of the other; and it is the Husbandman's merciful, though painful work, to cut back unsparingly the rank shoots that come from self, in order that all the force of our lives may be flung into the growing of the cluster which is acceptable to Him . . . let us understand the meaning of all that comes to us. The knife is sharp and the tendrils bleed, and things that seem very beautiful and precious are unsparingly shorn away, and we are left bare, and, as it seems to ourselves, impoverished. But oh! it is all sent that we may fling

our force into the production of fruit unto God. And no stroke will be a stroke too many or too deep if it helps us to that . . .”

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews tells us, “All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:11).

The word “cleanse” comes from the Greek word *catharoi* from which we get the English *catharsis* which means to purify. This continual purification of the Christian comes when his faith is put to the test through the chastening of the Lord and tribulations. The branch which continues to draw his life from the Vine not only endures the pruning but is made stronger and more fruitful as a result. We also must be diligent to purify our souls by our obedience to the truth (I Pet. 1:23) and follow after peace with all men and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12:14).

In verse 3 Jesus tells the disciples that they have already been cleansed (“pruned”) to a certain degree through the word which He had taught them. Already, through their reception of His word, certain of the “rank shoots” of worldliness had been cut out of their lives. Already they had accepted the call to discipleship and had sacrificed much and had borne some fruit. The same principle applies here as was stated by Jesus in John 13:10—see our comments on that verse.

Verses 1 through 3 have concentrated on the pruning and cleansing of the branches in order that they might produce much fruit. Now in verses 4 through 7 the concentration is upon the vital union of the branch in the Vine. The branch is *powerless* (Greek here is *ou dunatai*: meaning literally, *no dynamic*) to bear worthwhile fruit apart from the life which the Vine supplies. In the first three verses the great fundamental facts are presented (a) the Vine, (b) the branches, (c) the Vinedresser working for fruit. Upon these three great facts rests the imperative admonition, “Abide in Me . . .” All that is good and true and just and holy in word or deed coming forth from the Christian, originates not in him as branch but has its origin and motivation and power in Jesus Christ, the Vine. If anything good comes from us it is “the mind of Christ in us” (Phil. 2:5-8; Eph. 2:8-10; Col. 1:27-29). Apart from the love of Christ we can do nothing pleasing to God, even though we “give our body to be burned” (I Cor. 13:1-3; Matt. 7:21-23) and “perform miracles.”

Not only is it impossible to bear fruit apart from Christ, it is impossible to live! The assumption is that Jesus is warning these disciples who are now “in Him” not to sever that relationship lest they wither and die and be cast into the pyre (Greek *pur*; meaning fire).

Being cast into the fire undoubtedly means being cast into hell (cf. Matt. 3:8-12, 7:19, 13:42, 25:41). The wood of the branch has the curious characteristic that it is good for nothing when severed from the vine. It is too soft for any use. At certain times of the year the Jews were required to bring wood offerings to use in the fires on the Temple altar (Neh. 10:34, 13:31). The commandment (Lev. 6:8-13) was that wood of trees were to be burned upon the altar. The wood of the vine was fit for nothing (Ezek. 15:1-5). The only thing that could be done with the wood pruned out of a vine was to make a bonfire of it and destroy it (cf. Isa. 27:11).

Now the important question is: "How may we abide in Him in the Vine-branch relationship of which He speaks?" Is it completely mystical and must we wait upon a mystical revelation apart from the written revelation?

The authoritative word of Christ speaks the only answer in verses 7 through 10. Let us here quote Dr. Maclaren again:

"His abiding in us is . . . the abiding of His words in us; or, to speak more accurately, the abiding of His words in us is . . . the means of His abiding in us. What is meant by Christ's words abiding in us? . . . It means the whole of the conscious nature of a man being, so to speak, saturated with Christ's words; his desires, His understanding, His affections, His will, all being steeped in these great truths which the Master spoke."

If Christ's words are your desires then your desires will harmonize with His will, and "ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." Christ knows what is best for us. He loves us too much to give us our selfish desires and so the abundance of His riches is withheld until our wills are brought into conformity to His will.

To abide in His love (v. 10) is the same as abiding in Him. And how are we to abide in His love? By keeping His commandments just as He kept the Father's commandments. Christ in us is our "hope of glory" (Col. 1:27) and He dwells in us through His word (cf. our sermon notes on the Holy Spirit).

Bearing fruit (which is a result of abiding in Him) is also one of the ways to go on abiding in Him. The word "be" in verse 8 would be better translated "become" (from Greek *ginomai*) indicating that discipleship is a continuing process. We never so much *are* disciples as we are in the process of *becoming* disciples. Bearing fruit has, of course, the highest of all purposes, to bring glory and honor to God the Father. We are to let our lights shine before men in such a way that men may see our fruit and glorify the name of God (Matt. 5:16;

Jn. 3:21; I Pet. 2:12). All of our fruit-bearing and glorifying of God is prompted by our intimate union with Him in keeping His word. Lenski says, ". . . this is how we remain in Jesus: by receiving and permanently holding his utterances, the *bremata* (words) that come from his lips. He in us, and we in Him, the medium and bond of His spiritual union being His spoken Word" (cf. Jn. 15:7-10 with Jn. 8:31).

Verse 11 is the crowning point of this whole discussion. Jesus has laid down the divine formula for finding and filling oneself with joy. It is not a joy of frivolity which the world gives and takes away. It is joy "unspeakable and full of glory" it is the joy which Christ Himself knows. Though He was a man of sorrows while on the earth, there was in His soul that deep and abiding joy which no tribulation could smother. It was prophesied that He would be anointed with the oil of gladness (Psa. 45:7; Heb. 1:9). He found joy in the fact of God's revelation to men (Lk. 10:21); He found joy in saving the lost (Lk. 15); but most of all His joy was in the glory that was set before Him (cf. Heb. 12:2; Jn. 17:3). His joy on earth was found in complete self-surrender in love (Jn. 4:34) and this is where His disciples shall find the same joy (Jn. 13:17).

The plain path which leads to a cup of joy that runneth over is: (a) Abide in Him, (b) bear fruit, (c) glorify the Father. Why are so many Christian people not finding joy and fulfillment in their Christianity? Why are they withered and dead? Because they have not allowed the life-giving, fruit-bearing sustenance of the Word of God and the Spirit of Christ to flow through them. Further, they do not allow the Word to flow out of them as a river of living water, quenching the thirst of the souls of the unsaved; nor are they lights unto the world; nor are they the salt of the earth. They are unfruitful. They are unhappy and bereft of the joy of Christ!

### *Quiz*

1. What background probably prompted Jesus to use the allegory of the Vine and the branches?
2. What is the main purpose of the allegory?
3. What part does the husbandman play in the allegory?
4. Do works and busy activity always indicate fruitfulness? Why?
5. What good is a branch if it does not bear fruit? What happens to it?
6. *How* do we abide in the Vine?
7. What is the joy of Christ and how may His disciples find the same joy?

## FRANK UNION OF FRIENDS

*Text 15:12-17*

12 This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.

15 No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you.

16 Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

17 These things I command you, that ye may love one another.

*Queries*

- a. May love be commanded (vs. 12, 17)?
- b. When did Christ call the apostles, "servants"?
- c. How would their fruit abide (v. 16)?

*Paraphrase*

My one basic precept and commandment is that you continue to love one another in the same kind of love, having the same motive and purpose, with which I have loved you. The world over, men recognize as the supreme evidence of love that a man will voluntarily give up his own life for the sake of his friends. You are My friends if you are willing to let your love for one another rise to such self-sacrifice and thus keep My precepts. You have not been treated as bondslaves. The bondslave is not taken into his master's confidence but simply receives orders and carries them out without knowing the master's plans or purposes. But I have treated you as My friends, for all the plans and purposes which I heard from My Father I have revealed to you. Furthermore, this friendship is of My choosing and development. Our friendship is not on the basis of mutuality and reciprocity, but on the basis of My divine sovereignty and love. I chose you and appointed you as My friends that you may go and produce results from your labors that will remain forever, and that whatever you need from the Father to glorify His name in your labors and carry out His will you know He will give it to you. What I have said to you about My calling you by My divine sovereignty and not from any merit on the part of any of you—and what I have said to you concerning taking you into My confidence as friends—and what I have

said to you about My ultimate love for you has all been said in order that you may keep on loving one another as brothers in Me.

### *Summary*

To prompt the disciples to love one another Jesus tells them: (a) He willingly sacrifices His life for them; (b) He takes them into His confidence as His bosom friends; (c) He does both of these by His own divine election.

### *Comment*

May love be commanded? Can love be ordered into existence? We are sure that it cannot. As one writer has said, "The two ideas of commandment and love do not go well together. You cannot pump up love to order, and if you try you generally produce . . . sentimental hypocrisy, hollow and unreal." Nevertheless, we are able to direct our attention to things or persons outside ourselves and we are able to do battle against self-absorption and self-love. This ability of directing the conscious thoughts and feelings away from self which is under our control may also be commanded. Therefore, if we will concentrate on and give our attention to Jesus and to others, love will be motivated. Hence we will be following His command to love one another even in the same way He loved. He counted the being on equality with God a thing not to be grasped, but emptied Himself and took the form of a servant and became obedient unto a self-sacrificing death (Phil. 2:5-10). If we follow in His steps we shall be carrying out His commandment.

There is an air of completeness and all-sufficiency about this commandment (v. 12). It seems as if Jesus were saying, "This is all that you, as a group, will need to carry out My appointment." They needed no rank or complicated organization amongst them to bear fruit for Him; they needed only to love one another with the same kind of love, having the same motive and purpose, as the love which Jesus gave to them. It is to be a brotherly love that is "unfeigned" and " fervent" (I Pet. 1:22, 3:8; I Jn. 2:14-18, 4:7-11). This love of the brethren is the mark by which the world discerns those who are the disciples of Jesus (Jn. 13:34-35). It is still the one all-sufficient requisite for His disciples today. The church of the living Christ is more apt to bear abundant and abiding fruit today if its members love one another from the heart fervently, than it is through all the super-structure of world-wide ecclesiastical organization. Lack of brotherly love is the symptom of an even deeper evil—hate for God (I Jn. 4:20-21), and how is a man to bear righteous fruit for the glory of God if he hates both God and his brother?

In verse 13 Jesus states a principle that is generally accepted among

all men as the ultimate love. Man has no greater gift to offer, no greater sacrifice to make for another than his very life. It is the most here deeper than mere sacrifice of the physical life. What Jesus desires is laying down of "self" upon the altar of love. A man may even give his body to be burned and have not love (I Cor. 13:3). One may even lay down his physical life from a self-glorifying, self-gratifying motive. The love of which Jesus speaks is a love which "counts others better than self," which *denies self* even if the physical body remain alive.

Jesus takes another of the forms of mortal love, friendship (vs. 14-15), and glorifies and exalts it by exercising it to the divine degree. Jesus glorified the estate of family love when He taught, "He that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother" (Mk. 3:31-35). He glorified the estate of husband-wife love when He inspired the apostle to write the great dissertation on Christ and the church (Eph. 5:22-32). But the important thing to notice here is the reciprocal nature of the friendship. First there is the divine condescension that Christ chooses to allow men to be His friends. Then there is the condition which men have to fulfill to come into this relationship of friendship-by-grace. We are His friends only on the condition that we do the things which He has commanded.

But what a friendship that is once the circle has been completed! There are no limitations in that friendship on His part. He sacrifices self (vs. 12-13). And we are taken into close fellowship with Him, we are made to become confidants of His. Those who believe and trust Jesus and keep His commandments find that their relationship to Him grows into one of friendship rather than the drudgery of slavish and unintelligent oppression. The slave is given orders and is never taken into the confidence of his master as to the master's purposes and plans. But Jesus tells His friends everything He can concerning the plans and purposes of the Father. There is much that all of His friends cannot understand (Jn. 16:12), for His thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not our ways (Isa. 55:8-11). But what we can understand He frankly and plainly tells us. And even in those things which He withholds (things which we think we would be better for knowing) He does so out of love. A friend exercises reticence as well as frankness, when reticence is to the loved one's profit. But, of that which we most certainly need to know, He is very frank to say, "If it were not so, I would have told you!"

And in elevating those who believe in Him from slaves to friends He also took off them the chains of their bondage to ignorance, sin

and fear. His yoke is easy and the burden light (Matt. 11:25-30), but the weight of ignorance, guilt of sin and fear of death before He took us as friends was unbearable (Matt. 23:4; Acts 15:10; Heb. 2:15).

Actually, the relationship of Master and slave is not broken when Jesus chooses us to be His friends. The "slaves" remain slaves of their own choice. They serve Him as freed men bringing themselves into slavery to Him of their own volition and love for Him (cf. Rom. 1:1; II Pet. 1:1; Jude 1).

Verse 16 makes it very plain that our relation to Him as friends is dependent first and foremost upon His divine willingness and grace. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly . . . God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:6, 8). We were apprehended by Him (Phil. 3:12). We were divinely elected, but that was made eons ago potentially "in Christ" (Eph. 1:3-14). Potentially all men are elected to be saved, but only "*In Christ*." Man then must exercise his freedom to choose whether he desires this election or not by coming "into Christ" or remaining out of Him by obedience to His commandments (I Jn. 2:3-6, 2:27, 5:1-4, etc.). Even among these first disciples they were chosen by election but they themselves had to choose whether or not they wished that election. One (Judas Iscariot) refused the divine election. Even here they must go and bear fruit if they desire to "make their calling and election sure" (cf. II Pet. 1:2-11). Yes, the Shepherd always seeks the lost sheep before the sheep seeks the Shepherd, but the sheep must hear and follow the voice of the Shepherd to realize the safety and bountifulness of the fold.

And so, the disciples were chosen and appointed (or commissioned) with special gifts of the Holy Spirit in order that they might go and bear fruit. They were to go and sow the precious seed of the Word and reap a harvest of souls. This harvest of souls and the establishment of the church of Christ on earth was to be an abiding monument to their faith in Christ. The church itself, upon its establishment, was to be henceforth eternal, made up of living stones. And so is the fruit of the labors of every evangelist and Bible teacher who has ever had any part in winning a soul to Christ or of strengthening a soul in Christ. They are laying up for themselves treasures in heaven which are eternal, they will receive an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away.

And now, in summation, all that He had said to them of their election by grace—His taking them into His confidence as friends—about His own self-sacrificing love—all this has been said to provoke them

Because what they ask will be in His name, in accordance with His will and desires for man. When we make our wishes and desires Christ's, and Christ's desires ours, we shall be satisfied.

*Quiz*

1. How may we carry out the command to "love one another"?
2. What must a man "lay down" to love ultimately?
3. What is the condition on man's part in friendship with Christ?
4. What are two differences between a slave and a friend according to the Scriptures?
5. How are men elected by God? Is man involved in this "divine election"?
6. May men today bear "abiding fruit"? How?
7. How may we "have whatsoever we ask in the Father's name"?

## PERSEVERING UNION OF THE PERSECUTED

*Text 15:18-27*

- 18 If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you.
- 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.
- 20 Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also.
- 21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.
- 22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin.
- 23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also.
- 24 If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.
- 25 But this cometh to pass, that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.
- 26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me:
- 27 and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

*Queries*

- a. How had Jesus chosen the disciples "out of the world"?
- b. How does Jesus' speaking to the people bring sin (v. 22)?

c. In what way would the Comforter bear witness of Christ?

*Paraphrase*

Do not be overcome with despair when the world hates you, but take courage by understanding why the world hated me before it hated you. If your nature and character were worldly, the world would love you. But because your nature is not now in harmony with the world, due to My word which is now in you and has set you apart from the world, for this very reason the world despises you. You must keep on remembering the precept which I have taught you: A servant cannot hope to enjoy a better life than his master. If the worldlings have persecuted Me, the Master, they will most certainly persecute you, the servant. If any of them have kept My word, they will keep your word also which will be the word of the Master's appointed servants. And all of these persecutions they will bring upon you due to their hatred of Me because they do not know and love the One who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them the plain and final revelation of God they would not have been so acutely aware of their sinfulness. But now that I have come and they have rejected Me and My word they shall be condemned more severely, for they have no excuse whatever for their unbelief. Whoever hates Me, hates God My Father also. Moreover, if I had not proved My deity and Messiahship to the Jews through the works which I did—and no other messenger of God has ever done such works—they would not be guilty of the terrible sin of rejecting the Messiah. But now they are compelled by the miracles to recognize that the Father is with Me and so in hating Me they hate both Me and My Father. And the Father is using all this hatred to fulfill His plan of redemption in Me which He prophesied in their Scriptures, "They hated me without a cause." But when the Helper comes, the Person whom I will send from the Father to be with you, I mean the Spirit of Truth, He will be a divine personality bearing witness to Me and sustaining the witness which you, who have been with Me from the beginning of My ministry, shall also make concerning Me to the world.

*Summary*

His disciples will be persecuted because the world hates Him. The world hates Him because of the perfect piercing revelation He made of God's righteousness. God will use the world's hatred to fulfill His redemptive purposes. They are not to despair in their persecution for they will have the divine Helper to sustain them in their work of witnessing.

precious possession he has. And if any man will lay down his life for a friend he has loved him as fully as he is able. But there is something

*Comment*

The vital union between Christ and His followers results in a fellowship of fruitfulness (vs. 1-11); a fellowship of confidence and communion (vs. 12-17); this union also results in a fellowship of suffering! Because this unity binds them into one sanctified body, it separates them from all those who do not wish to participate in this holy calling. Jesus came to call men apart from the world. This naturally results in enmity on the part of the world (Matt. 10:34-39).

The "if" of verse 18 does not mean "there may be the possibility that the world will hate you." In the original Greek idiom it means "there is no question but that the world hates you."

Why should the world hate those whose very purpose is to do good? First, those who seek to do good must seek to propagate truth. What the Christian believes and teaches to be precious, the world regards as valueless. Much of what the Christian regards to be wrong, the world regards as right. Second, the righteous life of the Christian is a constant rebuke and judgment on unrighteous living and is, therefore, in direct opposition to the worldly life. All of this is because the world is out of harmony with the will of God. Men of the world walk by sight and not by faith. Their main interest is in satisfying the desires of the flesh and the pride of life. They have no concern for the hereafter. They are only after the "here." It all depends upon what a man judges to be valuable—it depends on where the treasure is, for there will the heart be also. If a man loves darkness, he will hate the light (cf. our comments on Jn. 3:18-21).

There is an alternative! If the follower of Christ would escape the hostility of the world and become one of the world's "hail, fellow, well met" children, all the Christian need do is lower his flag, cover up his badge and "do as the Romans do" and he will be loved by the world. As Maclaren puts it, "A half-Christianized world and a more than half-secularized Church get on well together . . . why should the world care to hate or trouble itself about a professing Church, large parts of which are only a bit of the world under another name?" When Christian people and churches become vain, earthly, sensual, given to pleasure, wealth, and ambition, the world will not oppose them . . . BUT GOD WILL!

But true disciples of Jesus are not of the world. When Jesus calls men out from the world and sanctifies them by His word, His Spirit abides in them (cf. Jn. 17:13-19). Henceforth they seek to make their every thought and deed captive to His will. Because they have overcome the world by faith and Christ now lives in them, the world hates them and makes war upon them (cf. II Tim. 3:12).

There are three approaches Jesus makes to prepare and arm His "little children" for their trying hours ahead. First, He tells them plainly that they must expect persecution. Fore-warned is fore-armed. Had He disguised or tempered His warning it would have been the worse for them when the persecution, in all its terribleness, came upon them. He told them plainly that they would be betrayed by parents and brethren and even put to death (cf. Lk. 21:12-17). Second, He tells them that whatever they may have to suffer, they can take heart in the fact that He, their Master, has suffered like persecution and hatred before them. The servant should be proud to share in tribulations with One who is so much greater than he, and regard his suffering a privilege rather than a burden (vs. 18 and 20). (cf. also II Cor. 4:17-18; Phil. 3:10; Jas. 1:2-4; I Pet. 4:12-16.) Third, Jesus tells these men that the world's hatred is a necessary outcome of their being called into fellowship with Him. They may either forfeit the privileges of such a fellowship and go back to the world, or they may retain the peace, hope and love of this fellowship and suffer the tribulations that necessarily accompany such an election. When He said "remember" He was referring to when He first sent them out. He warned them then that they would be hated and persecuted (cf. Matt. 10:16-25).

If men are of the attitude to obey God and His Son, they will obey the words of God's messengers—when God's messengers speak God's word. The apostles were inspired and thus their messages had the inherent authority of God. Men today who are spokesmen for God may expect true followers of Christ to heed their preaching but only so long as their preaching conforms to the written Word of God, the Bible. When men do not heed the word of Christ, it shows that they have not the love of the Father in them (cf. Jn. 5:42-43, 8:43-47).

In verses 22 through 25 are some of the most solemn words to ever fall from the lips of the Saviour of men. He plainly declares that by both His teachings and His miraculous works He demonstrated enough proof of His Sonship, Messiahship that men who reject Him have absolutely no excuse. In comparison with the sin of not listening to His words, and being taught by His works, all other sins dwindle into nothing. Jesus does not mean to say that these men would have been clear of all sin. The Jew was condemned by the Law; the Gentile committed sins against his conscience (cf. Rom. 1 and 2). But as black as these sins are, they are white compared with the blackness of the to love one another. He does not merely command love but with the command supplies the motive. And Christ's friends, living close to Him, and bearing fruit will get what they ask from the Father. Why?

sin of rejecting the revelation of God in His Son, Jesus Christ. The rejection of the Messiah was the crowning act of rebellion by the Jews against God which brought down the vengeance of God and caused them to become a "by-word among the nations." They rejected the "Great Prophet" (cf. Deut. 18:15-16; Acts 3:22-23). How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation (cf. Heb. 2:1-4)?

As light comes to a man and increases, so his responsibility to follow and live in the light increases (cf. Lk. 12:47-48). See also our comments on Jn. 9:35-41. "The measure of the guilt is the brightness of the light." No shadows are so black as those which are cast by the brightest noonday sun and no sin is so black as the rejection of the revelation of God in His Son who was "in the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person."

Jesus "spake as no other man" had spoken; He did works which no other prophet had ever done—not even Moses. The proof is so clear that men cannot plead ignorance. To most men the gospel has been so often presented that they cannot say they have had no opportunity. There is no excuse for their sin. They do not know the time of their visitation (cf. Lk. 19:41-44).

And the terribleness of this sin of hating Christ and His disciples is made even worse in that it is irrational and unreasonable. It is hatred without a cause. Jesus said that this hatred was foreknown by God and prophesied in the Old Testament. It was all within the purpose of God. It would be used by God to carry out His redemptive plan in Christ, the Lamb, the Suffering Servant. The same hatred by the enemies of God was shown to God's king David, but the final fulfillment of the worst that such hatred could do came from God's enemies against the One of whom David was but the shadowy type, the eternal Son of David. This prophecy is in Psalms 35:19 and 69:4—sometimes the entire Old Testament was called the law (including poetry, history and prophets). But Jesus had broken no law, injured no one, hated no one. To the contrary He sought only to do good to friend and enemy alike. What cause or reason had anyone for hating Jesus? What cause or reason has anyone today for hating Jesus? Some evil words and works have been done by evil men in the name of Jesus and His church, but the Word of Christ proclaimed and lived in the spirit of Christ has always sought the good of friend and enemy alike. What reason can the world give for hating true disciples of Jesus? None!

Now the climax to this section. He has poured out the deepest longings of His heart that they will persevere during the persecution that will inevitably come upon them. So now He promises again the

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"Comforter." This is the Holy Spirit, that divine Person He promised and described in the preceding chapter. He will come as the Helper. In their witnessing to the world they will have the companionship and fellowship of this divine One. As eyewitnesses they must testify concerning Jesus (cf. Acts 1:21-22, 4:19, etc.). The Holy Spirit would come to them and guide them infallibly in calling to their remembrance, without error, what they had seen with their own eyes and heard with their own ears (cf. I Jn. 1:1-4; II Pet. 1:16-21) and He would guide them into all truth which Christ had not yet taught them. But more than this, the Holy Spirit would accompany the apostles and bear witness to Jesus through the miracles He wrought through them (cf. Heb. 2:4).

If, then, God be for us, who can be against us (cf. Rom. 8:35-39)!

*Quiz*

1. Why does the world hate Christ and His followers?
2. Name the three ways in which Jesus prepared the disciples for the persecution to come upon them?
3. What is indicated of men today who will not listen and obey gospel preaching?
4. What did Jesus mean when He said "If I had not come . . . they had not had sin"?
5. Why do men, who have had opportunity to hear of Christ, have no excuse for their sin?
6. Why is hatred of Christ irrational and unreasonable?
7. In what ways would the Holy Spirit bear witness to Jesus?

### EXPOSITORY SERMON FIFTEEN THE LIVING UNION OF CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES

John 15:1-27

#### *Introduction*

- I. WHAT HAS BEEN SAID BEFORE LEADS UP TO THIS
  - A. Chapter 14 speaks of the beginning or birth of the union between Christ and His disciples.
    1. If they love Him and keep His word He will manifest Himself to them, 14:21.
    2. If they love Him and keep His commandments, He will be in them . . . He will dwell in them, 14:16-17, 23.
  - B. He must go away, but He will return to dwell within each disciple who by faith and love keeps His word.
- II. NOW INSTRUCTIONS ARE GIVEN ON HOW THIS LIVING UNION IS MAINTAINED
  - A. There is that which the disciple must do to maintain the union.

- B. There is that which the Lord does to maintain the union.
- C. In each relationship of the Lord and the disciple in this 15th chapter we find that the actions of both are necessary to maintain the union.

### *Discussion*

#### I. VITAL UNION OF VINE AND BRANCHES, 15:1-11

- A. Pruning needed to produce, vs. 1-3.

1. This "pruning" comes from the Lord and is to the end that the branch may produce even more fruit than it is producing.
2. The chastening of the Lord yields peaceful fruit and assures us that we are His beloved children (cf. Heb. 12:3-11).
3. The Lord does this by two different methods: He cleanses us of extraneous habits and luxuries by pricking our conscience through the Word . . . we put to death the deeds of the body by the leading of the Spirit in His Word; He also chastens us by His providential operations upon our lives in the events of history and nature.
4. IT IS OUR PART TO "COUNT IT ALL JOY WHEN WE ARE TESTED" (Cf. Js. 1:2-4, 1:12-15) . . . IT IS OUR PART TO LET THE TESTING BEAR FRUIT IN OUR LIVES.

- B. The Vine the source of Vitality, vs. 4-6.

1. Apart from the Vine is the source of Life, the branch cannot bear fruit.
  - a. There is no power in our testimony unless we are preaching the "power unto salvation" the gospel.
  - b. There is no power in our witness of life unless we are living with the personality of the Spirit in us.
  - c. In Isa. 55:10-11 the Word of God is depicted as a source of life just as the rain which comes down from heaven.
  - d. In John 6, the words of Christ (6:63) are said to be the living bread come down out of heaven which give life. THE REASON SO MANY "BRANCHES" DO NOT BEAR FRUIT IS THAT THEY ARE SO LOOSELY CONNECTED TO THE VINE THEY ARE NOT RECEIVING ANY OF THE VITAL NUTRIENTS NECESSARY TO FRUIT-BEARING!

WHEN MEN AND WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE "EAT THE BREAD OF LIFE," AND DRINK THE "WATER OF LIFE" ONLY ONCE A WEEK, HOW CAN THEY BEAR FRUIT?

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2. Apart from a living union with the vine, the branch *dies*.
  - a. The branch not only ceases to bear fruit if it does not partake of the life that is in the Vine.
  - b. It withers and dies and is cast into the fire (cf. Matt. 3:8-12, 7:19, 13:42, 25:41) see also our comments on page
  - c. THERE ARE NO INACTIVE CHRISTIANS . . . NO FRUITLESS BRANCHES. CHRISTIANS CANNOT STAND STILL, THEY EITHER GO FORWARD AND BEAR FRUIT, OR GO BACKWARD WITHERING AND DYING AND BEING BURNED.

## C. Reward of the Relationship, 7-11.

1. Notice that in verse 7 Jesus tells us very plainly just *how* this Vine-branch relationship may be maintained: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you . . ."
2. One of the rewards is that if our wills are in harmony with Christ's will, then we shall have an answer to every prayer we make . . . **WHAT A POWER THERE IS IN PRAYER.**
3. One of the rewards is that our Heavenly Father is glorified when we bear much fruit. This is our purpose . . . this is our calling . . . when we glorify Him, He will glorify us in Himself.
4. Another of the rewards is that we shall "dwell" in love. **LIVING IN HIS LOVE . . . OVERSHADOWED BY HIS MIGHTY LOVE** (cf. Rom. 8:31-39).
5. The crowning reward is in v. 11: **WE SHALL BE FILLED WITH THE SAME JOY WHICH OUR SAVIOUR KNEW . . . JOY UNSPEAKABLE AND FULL OF GLORY.** A JOY, NOT AS THE WORLD THINKS OF JOY, BUT JOY IN THAT WHICH IS ETERNALLY SATISFYING, BEARING FRUIT UNTO HIS KINGDOM!

## II. FRANK UNION OF FRIENDS, 15:12-17

- A. First Jesus gives the one great basic precept: His disciples are to maintain unity among themselves on the basis of love—the same **LOVE WHICH HE HAD FOR THEM**.
  1. The world over, men recognize as the supreme evidence of love that a man will voluntarily give up his own life for the sake of his friends.
  2. This Jesus was about to do. They would be His friends if they were willing to let their love for one another rise to such self-sacrifice and thus keep His precept.

3. Such a love is unlimited. It has no bounds. Such love is God like love for it loves first (cf. I Jn. 4:7-12).
  - B. Next Jesus promises to take His disciples into a communion that is enjoyed only by friends and confidants.
    1. Those who believe and trust Jesus and keep His commandments find that their relationship to Him grows into one of fellowship and friendship rather than the drudgery of slavish and unintelligent oppression.
    2. A slave is given orders and is never taken into the confidence of his master concerning the master's plans and purposes.
    3. But Jesus tells His friends (reveals to them) everything He can concerning the plans and purposes of the Father. Thus we know things which the Prophets did not know—things which angels desire to look into.
    4. But there are things which even friends cannot understand and do not need to know (cf. Jn. 16:12; Isa. 55:8-11). A good friend exercises reticence as well as frankness, when reticence is to the loved one's profit. So does Jesus in our case. But, of that which we most certainly need to know, He is very frank to say, "If it were not so, I would have told you."
  - C. Friends have access to one another's abundance. Jesus makes the abundant power and resources of the Heavenly Father's storehouse.
    1. If we ask anything according to His will we know that all the resources of Heaven will be sent to fulfill that request.
    2. What a grand and glorious promise that is!
    3. (cf. I Jn. 5:14-15.)
    4. GREATER THINGS FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD COULD BE WROUGHT THAN ARE BEING ACCOMPLISHED NOW . . . IF CHRISTIAN PEOPLE WOULD JUST BELIEVE AND AVAIL THEMSELVES OF THIS PROMISE FOR THE ONGOING OF THE KINGDOM! BUT WHAT IS THE SMALLEST SERVICE OF THE CHURCH? *PRAAYER MEETING!* THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH DOES NOT BELIEVE IN PRAAYER!!! BUT GOD DOES!!
- III. PERSEVERING UNION OF THE PERSECUTED, 15:18-27
- A. Participation with Christ in this living union will bring persecution, vs. 18-21.
    1. If we are united with Christ and stand for what He stands

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for; if we are against what He is against; if we live as He lived; WE WILL BE PERSECUTED BY THE WORLD.

2. Much of what the Christian regards to be wrong, the world regards as right; what the Christian believes and teaches to be precious, the world regards as valueless. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE WORLD ARE DISAGREED AND IN OPPOSITION AS TO WHAT IS GOOD, VALUABLE, RIGHT!!
  3. The righteous living of the Christian is a constant rebuke and judgment upon the unrighteous living of the worldling.
  4. Men of the world walk by sight and not by faith. They are out of harmony with God's will for their lives. If a man loves darkness, he will hate the light (cf. Jn. 3:18-21).
  5. The servant is not greater than his Lord. The world persecuted Jesus and if we live like Him, the world will persecute us (cf. II Tim. 3:12).
- B. Greater Revelation, Greater Responsibility, vs. 22-25.
1. Jesus does not mean to say that if He had not come they would not have had any sin at all.
    - a. All men have sinned against some law of God. They either sin against a revealed law on tables of stone, or against a law revealed to them in nature and on their consciences (cf. Rom. 1 and 2).
  2. What He is saying is, "compared with the sin of not listening to His words, inasmuch as He came with sufficient proof of His Messiahship, all other sins dwindle into nothing."
    - a. As black as some sins are, none are so black as rejecting the claims of Jesus, because His claims are backed and founded on overwhelmingly sufficient evidence!!
    - b. The works that He did offer evidence which cannot be reasonably and rationally denied.
  3. As light comes to man and increases, so does his responsibility to follow and live in the light (cf. Lk. 12:47-48).
    - a. The proof is so clear that men cannot plead ignorance.
    - b. The gospel has been declared to most men so many times that they cannot plead lack of opportunity.
    - c. Thus there is no excuse for their sin of rejecting Him.
  4. The terribleness of this sin is that it is irrational, unreasonable and, as Jesus says, "without cause."
    - a. Who has Jesus ever injured?
    - b. What law has He ever violated, what evil has He ever done?

- c. To the contrary, He and His true church has sought only the good of man, always!
- d. TO HATE JESUS IS TO HATE HIM WITHOUT CAUSE! TO REJECT JESUS AND HIS MESSAGE IS TO REJECT SOMETHING WITHOUT REASON AND CAUSE!
- C. But the Comforter will come to aid the persecuted disciples of Jesus Christ, vs. 26-27.
  - 1. He will come as Helper.
  - 2. In their witnessing to the world they will have the help of the Divine Personality, the Holy Spirit.
  - 3. He would guide them infallibly (and us today if we will adhere to His word, the Bible).
  - 4. The Holy Spirit helped the first disciples of Jesus by the miraculous works which He did through them in order to verify their message.

*Conclusion*

IF THEN GOD BE FOR US, IN SUCH A LIVING UNION OF FELLOWSHIP, FRIENDSHIP AND DIVINE ASSISTANCE, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US (cf. Rom. 8:35-39)?

**EXAMINATION, CHAPTERS 13, 14, and 15**

*True or False?*

1. Jesus established "foot washing" as a practice to be perpetuated in the church.
2. Jesus was sometimes troubled.
3. To "love one another as Jesus loved" was a new commandment.
4. Heaven is not a place.
5. Those who believe in Jesus will do greater works than He did.
6. There is no need to keep every little thing Jesus commands, just so long as we love Him.
7. The dwelling of the Holy Spirit within the Christian is known only when felt.
8. The Holy Spirit comes to us unconditionally.
9. One may be a Christian and never convert anyone else.
10. People of the world do not hate Christians.

*Who said this and Why?*

1. "Thou shalt never wash my feet."
2. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."
3. "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."
4. "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all."

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

5. "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?"
6. "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."
7. "No longer do I call you servants . . . but I have called you friends."
8. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin."
9. "They hated me without a cause."
10. "Arise, let us go hence."

### *Multiple choice*

1. Jesus took the basin and began to wash the disciples feet because:
  - a. It was a religious rite of the church;
  - b. They were arguing about their places around the table and He wanted to teach them humility;
  - c. It was a custom of courtesy for the host to wash the feet of the guests.
2. When Jesus said to Judas, "What thou doest, do quickly":
  - a. No one knew why He said this to Judas;
  - b. Everyone understood by this sign that Judas was the betrayer of whom Jesus had spoken;
  - c. Peter and John knew, but the rest of the disciples did not know that Judas was the betrayer.
3. When the people of the era of Jesus and His disciples came about a table to eat they:
  - a. Sat in chairs or on benches as artists have depicted the Last Supper;
  - b. Sat on mats or pillows on the floor in cross-legged fashion like the Arabs do;
  - c. Reclined on couches as the Romans did.
4. Jesus promised joy to His disciples in:
  - a. Bearing fruit; keeping His commandments; glorifying the Father;
  - b. Abiding in His love; being cleansed by the husbandman (the Father);
  - c. None of the above;
  - d. All of the above.
5. Jesus said:
  - a. The world loves the church and wants it to prosper;
  - b. The church should love the world and be as accommodating to the people of the world as possible;
  - c. The church should be separate from the world and be glad to suffer persecution;
  - d. The world hates the church but will not do anything to harm the church.
6. The Lord said of the branch that does not bear fruit:

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- a. "It is pruned that it may bear more fruit . . ."
- b. "It is cut off and cast into the fire . . ."
- c. "It remains on the vine but does not bear fruit . . ."
7. When Jesus said He would return, after His going away, to manifest Himself to the disciples, He meant:
  - a. He would return and dwell in them by the Holy Spirit;
  - b. He would return and appear to all disciples at the Second Coming;
  - c. He would appear to the disciples after His death (going away) at His resurrection (coming again).
8. Chapter 13 is an incident which took place:
  - a. During the Passover and Last Supper;
  - b. On another night after the Passover and Last Supper;
  - c. One night before the Passover and Last Supper.

### *Make a List*

1. Of five things said of the Holy Spirit in these three chapters.
2. Of three relationships which the disciples have in their union with Christ.
3. Of five things that result from the love which Jesus taught in these three chapters.
4. Of five ways in which Jesus spoke of His relationship to God the Father in these three chapters.
5. Of three figures of speech which Jesus used in these three chapters.

### *Quote or Paraphrase*

1. John 13:13-17
2. John 14:1-6
3. John 15:1-11

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

In chapter fourteen Jesus promised the person of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, both in a miraculous outward manifestation which would be given according to the purposes and will of the Father and an indwelling presence received conditionally and in proportion to the love, obedience and spiritual growth of each disciple. In chapter fifteen Jesus elaborated on the relationship of the disciple to the Master and the indwelling help of the divine Helper. And now, in chapter sixteen, Jesus speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit in the world convicting and convincing and completing the revelation of God's plan of redemption.

The key to the entire discourse of these three chapters is found in 14:18, "I will not leave you desolate, I will come to you." These last precious hours of the Passover midnight are filled with heart-tugging emotion as a Father attempts to strengthen and prepare His bewildered and childish children for the coming hours of despair, shame, separation and persecution. He must leave the little flock and they will become sheep among the wolves. But they will not be left desolate and without help. They will soon know and feel His divine presence among them again in the Personality known as the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of Christ living in them and working through them in the Word will be equally as powerful and real as the Incarnate Word was among them and will bring to glorious completion and perfection what the Incarnate Word was not commissioned to do!

The private, personal instruction of the Master to the disciples is coming to an end. The appointed time for His voluntary sacrifice is imminent and He must commune with the Father. His final instructions pertain to the revelatory work of the Spirit. He introduces this work by speaking of what He had already taught them. He then proceeds to speak of the progressive nature of God's revelation. When the Spirit comes He will reveal even more than the Son has been able to tell them—not because of the inability of Son, but because of the incapability of the disciples.

As A. B. Bruce puts it, when Jesus leaves them and goes to His Father, two elements of essential importance for the success of their work as apostles will be supplied. They will then have *receptive bearers*, and they, themselves, will be made *competent to preach*. Neither of these elements exist for the present. The world has rejected Him and His words; and they, though sincere, are very ignorant, and understand not what He has taught them. After His ascension, there will be a great alteration in both respects: the world will

be more ready to hear the truth, and the disciples will be able to declare it intelligently.

Chapter sixteen might be titled, "The Revelational Veil Will Be Rent." We believe the important message of this chapter for us today is that we may understand that what Jesus taught (which is recorded in the Gospels) was not the completed and perfected revelation of God's plan of salvation. What He taught before "his going away" could not be completely understood unless the "going away" be completed and the Spirit come to reveal what it all meant!

We continue in our outline of this great fourth gospel, the "Gospel of Belief":

III. The Word Manifested to The Disciples And Their Acceptance of Him, 13:1—20:31

A. Private Instructions and Encouragements, 13:1—17:26  
(cont'd.).

4. The Revelational Veil Will Be Rent, 16:1-33

a. He is Teaching Them This Night Many Dark and Foreboding Things, 16:1-11

- (1) To warn them and keep them from falling by showing His omniscience, v. 1-4
- (2) To show them that the darkness is necessary to bring the greater blessing of the Spirit, v. 5-7
- (3) To tell them what the work of the Spirit will be, v. 8-11

b. He Is Withholding Many Things Which He, in The Spirit, Will Reveal Later, 16:12-24

- (1) There were many things they could not now understand, v. 12
- (2) The Spirit would later reveal to them the complete glorification of the Father and the Son, v. 13-15
- (3) The Spirit would later reveal to them the perfected plan of God which would make their joy full and complete, v. 16-24

c. He Is Speaking in Veiled Figures But Will Speak Plainly Later, 16:25-33

- (1) Soon they will have free access to the Father Himself, v. 25-28
- (2) Now they show their failure to comprehend, v. 29-32
- (3) Soon they will know that He has overcome the world, v. 33

## TEACHING WHICH IS DARK AND FOREBODING

*Text: 16:1-11*

1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be caused to stumble.

2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God.

3 And these things will they do, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

4 But these things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come, ye may remember them, how, that I told you. And these things I said not unto you from the beginning, because I was with you.

5 But now I go unto him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

6 But because I have spoken these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you.

8 And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement:

9 of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more;

11 of judgement, because the prince of this world hath been judged.

*Paraphrase*

I have spoken to you in these last hours many dark and foreboding things concerning the persecution which is to come your way in order that you may not be caught unawares. They will excommunicate you from the synagogues. They will even go so far as to kill you. And the astounding thing is that those who kill some of you will even believe they are worshipping God and serving Him by such deeds. They will do these things because they have conceived of God as one who would delight in destruction of the followers of Jesus and they have never known the true nature of the Father or of Me. But these things I have spoken to you ahead of time so that when they come to pass you may remember my prophetic revelation and recognize my omniscience. And these things I did not need to tell you so plainly before because when I was with you the world's hatred was directed almost exclusively to-

ward me; but when I am gone that hatred will be directed toward you and so I forewarn you now. And I am about to leave you and return to him that sent me yet none of you are asking me any questions. You were full of questions before but now you do not even ask me where I am going because you are so full of sorrow. Sorrow has filled your hearts but even the most childish question would be better than the gloom of speechless despair. Nevertheless, in spite of your gloom, I am telling you the truth of the matter: It is an advantage for you that I return to the Father for if I do not return to Him the redemptive work of the Father will not be completed and therefore the Comforter will not come and perfect all this redemptive work into one completed message for your sakes; but if I return to the Father, having completed the work, then I will send the Spirit to you with the completed message. And when the Comforter comes He will publicly expose the guilt of the world and call it to repentance by convicting the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment: the Spirit will convict the world of sin in all its terribleness by showing that to reject Me is to reject the Lord of glory; He will convict the world of righteousness by showing that in My return to the Father I have completed the plan of salvation for man and there is now available a God-imputed righteousness; He will convict the world of judgment by showing the world the judgment of its own ruler, Satan, teaching the world thereby an ultimate separation between Me and all who persist in unbelief.

### *Summary*

The many foreboding things which Jesus has spoken to the disciples has filled their hearts with sorrow. They are so filled with sorrow that they have lost all interest in what the Master is trying to tell them of the coming Messianic redemption. He tells them plainly that His going will be to their advantage for the Spirit will return to them with the completed Messianic redemption.

### *Comment*

What Jesus had told them previously concerning the world's hatred and what He shall teach them subsequently about this hatred He teaches in order that they not be *skandalizo*, i.e., caught unawares, tripped-up, ensnared. They must be warned that following Him means they will be enduring the same persecution and hatred which the world meted out to Him. And when these dark and tortuous days come upon them they will know that their Master is not only sympathetic with their plight and is aware of it but that it all falls within His omniscient plan for the redemption of mankind. Their faith will not be tripped-up, they will not stumble.

Jesus prophesies that they will be excommunicated from their synagogues due to their following Him. For a Jew to be excommunicated from his synagogue then meant a great deal more than what we think of excommunication today. For the Jew of old, excommunication from the synagogue carried with it ostracization from social, economic, political and fraternal ties with their society as well as religious. They were the same as "dead" to all their contemporaries. In fact even some Jewish families today go through the form of a mock funeral for any member of their family who leaves Judaism and takes up Christianity!

Not only so but Jesus warns these disciples in verse 2 that the hour is soon coming when they will be killed for their Christianity and the almost unbelievable part of it is, their murderers will justify their crimes by thinking they are offering worshipful service to God. Of course the Old Testament taught that blasphemers were to be stoned to death (cf. Lev. 24:10-16) and the Jewish rulers had already accused Jesus (though it was unproven and unjustly pronounced) of this crime. If He was sentenced as guilty then His followers and those who preached His doctrines would also be sentenced as blasphemers. So the Jews in their ignorance and hardness of heart killed Jesus and His disciples convincing themselves that they were doing God a service. Paul the apostle, formerly Saul of Tarsus, the Pharisee of the Pharisees, was convinced that he was doing God a service by persecuting and imprisoning Christians (cf. Acts 22:3-5; 26:9-11; I Tim. 1:12-16). The Roman Catholic Inquisitions and the inquisitions instituted by John Calvin and his followers in Geneva followed the same line of bigotry and perversion.

These murderous acts the Jews (and others since then) did because they did not know the true nature of God. They failed to behold that God is love, even when Jesus, the Son of God, came to reveal His perfect love. Their sin darkened, materialistically greedy hearts were hardened against the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Their concept of God and His promises in their Old Testament was one of a God who was going to restore their gloriously prosperous kingdom of worldly blessings. They had made their own God from the thoughts of their own minds like the pagan world around them and like the world of unbelief today. The kingdom of salvation and redemption and regeneration which Jesus preached was not their idea of the kingdom of God. Therefore their God, they believed, would count it a service for them to kill anyone who dared to claim any other type of kingdom. One has only to read the Old Testament Prophets to get a background for the materialism of the Jews of Jesus' time. The people of that day were not, for the most part, interested in righteousness,

justice, regeneration—they were interested in an earthly king and an earthly kingdom of material goods. They were interested in religion only as traditions and outward rituals. They did not even know the meaning of their own prophets of the O.T., let alone the perfect revelation of God in His Son (cf. Jn. 8:34-47).

So Jesus (v. 4) prophesied all these things beforehand so that when they came to pass the disciples would remember that He had foretold them and they would be strengthened in their faith in Him as the omniscient Son of God. Prophecy has always been a tower of strength. When men in the finite limitations can know historically and experientially that future events have been foretold and have been fulfilled they may know historically, empirically and experientially that the Author of such prophecies is omniscient. If the prophecies of judgment and persecution come to pass we know that the prophecies of salvation and victory shall come to pass also. Fulfilled prophecy is perhaps the greatest evidence we have that the Bible is a supernaturally inspired book containing a supernatural revelation from a supernatural God.

Jesus had prophesied persecution for His disciples before (cf. Matt. 5:10-12; 10:16-39) but never quite so plainly as now. And the reason He did not need to reveal them so plainly and openly before was that when He was with them the world's hatred was directed almost exclusively toward Him and they did not feel the brunt of it. But from now on all that will be changed. They will feel all the force of the opposition of evil which He felt. Hendriksen has an interesting note: "One is reminded of Rev. 12:4, 13, 17: first the dragon seeks to devour the child; next he pursues the woman who had borne the child. Angry with the woman, he makes war on the rest of her seed. The book of Acts shows that this prophecy (15:18—16:4) was fulfilled in every detail." Mr. Hendriksen in his commentary on Revelation "More Than Conquerors" believes that the dragon is Satan; the child is Christ; the woman is the early church; and the rest of her seed is the church for the remainder of time.

There was a darkness and foreboding character in all the events and words of the night which caused a perceptible sorrow to fill the hearts of these disciples. The thought of His leaving them and the persecution that was to come to them had so filled their hearts with sorrow and depression that they scarcely heard His promise of the Comforter who was to come at His departure. They were so filled with grief they had not even thought to ask questions. They had asked plenty of questions before when He had spoken of preparing "mansions" for them, but now they were so overwhelmed with sadness at

the fact of His leaving them they forgot to be concerned with *where* He was going and *what* His going would mean to them.

But in spite of their gloom and despair Jesus tells them (v. 7) that what they judge to be darkness in His leaving them is, in truth, to their advantage. If He does not return to the Father the Holy Spirit cannot come to them. If He does not complete the redemptive plan in atoning death and victorious resurrection, the Holy Spirit (whose work is that of giving the written revelation and substantiating it with miracles and signs) cannot come. The Holy Spirit was not to be sent to every believer until redemption had been completed (cf. our comments on Jn. 7:37-39). The "greater works" of planting the regenerating word of God in the hearts of men could not come as long as the Word was limited in the Incarnation and as long as the good news had not been consummated in the atonement and resurrection. These "greater works" could only begin when the good news was completed and was preached by mouth and by printed page unto all nations. Thus it was expedient that He return to the Father.

And now in verses 8-11, Jesus gives in essence, the work of the Holy Spirit as it relates to the commission of the disciples to preach the gospel in the whole world. This is what the Spirit will do in assisting these men to regenerate those lost in sin. He will publicly expose the guilt of the world and call it to repentance by convicting the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment.

The Holy Spirit will come and convict the world of sin because of its rejection of the Savior. A man is not convicted of sin until he is convinced there is a standard between right and wrong and he is not convinced of any standards except his own until he is convinced of the Divine Person who has authority to set a Divine Standard. This is exactly the approach the Holy Spirit used through Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) when he proved the deity of Jesus from O.T. prophecy and from eyewitnessed facts of the resurrection. It was only then that the crowds were convicted of their sin in rejecting the Savior and cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" So the Holy Spirit, working through the Word, oral and written, when the deity of Jesus is preached—when the divine standard is preached, convicts men of their sin. Especially does the Spirit convince men of their utter lostness if they reject Jesus, the only hope of salvation, for "except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." Unbelief in Christ is the greatest of all sin for such unbelief leaves men dead in their sins. This is what the Holy Spirit was to come and convict the world of through the disciples, (cf. Acts 4:12, etc.).

He is to come and convict the world of righteousness because Jesus

"goes to the Father." What did He mean by this? We think He was referring to the world being convicted of righteousness relative to His completing the redemptive work of the Father on earth and then returning to the Father as man's Eternal High Priest. He will convict the world of righteousness by showing that in His return to the Father He has completed the plan of salvation for man and there is now available through covenant relationship to Him a God-imputed righteousness (cf. II Cor. 5:14-21). He died the atoning death for our sins upon the cross, thus all who by faith accept His death for theirs have their sins forgiven there. When we come into covenant relationship to Him by obedience by burial in baptism we are promised by the Word of God that His death is appropriated to us and also His resurrection and so we become new creatures (cf. Rom. 6:1-11). The Holy Spirit, upon the basis of the deity of Jesus, convinces men of the availability of this God-imputed righteousness. The Spirit also tells man of the terms of God's covenant in order that men may obey the terms and come into saving relationship to Christ.

The Holy Spirit comes to convict the world of judgment because the prince of this world has been judged, (cf. Jn. 12:31; 14:30). At the death of Christ sin was paid for and its penalty erased. At the resurrection the victory over death and the grave was won. Christ triumphed over the principalities and powers openly and spoiled them (cf. Col. 2:15). He destroyed him that had the power of death over men (cf. Heb. 2:15) and delivered men from this bondage of fear. Satan has been bound, he has been cast into the abyss (see Hendriksen's commentary on Revelation, "More Than Conquerors"). He came into the "strong man's house" and bound him (cf. Matt. 12:22-30).

Now if the devil is judged, conquered and despoiled by Christ men must be aware that Christ has won the victory over the world and that the world and all who are children of the devil will some day be judged.

One may turn just a few pages in his New Testament, to the 2nd chapter of Acts and he will see an amazing fulfillment of this prophetic promise of Jesus in action. Three thousand souls were convicted of their sin because of their unbelief in Christ; convicted of a God-imputed righteousness through His redemptive work and accepted a covenant relationship with Him by being immersed in water for the remission of sins; and were convicted of the judgment upon the "perverse generation."

### *Quiz*

1. Why did Jesus have to speak so plainly about persecution that was to come to these disciples?
2. Why would some think they were offering service to God by killing followers of Christ?
3. Why would they do such a terrible thing?

4. Why did He not speak to them before this of the terrible persecutions they would have to endure?
5. Why was sorrow upon the hearts of the disciples?
6. Why was His going away to be advantageous to them?
7. How does the Holy Spirit convict the world of:
  - (a) sin
  - (b) righteousness
  - (c) judgment

**THE SPIRIT WILL REVEAL LATER MANY  
THINGS WITHHELD**

*Text: 16:12-24*

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you.

15 All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you.

16 A little while, and ye behold me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see me.

17 Some of his disciples therefore said one to another, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye behold me not; and again a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?

18 They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? We know not what he saith.

19 Jesus perceived that they were desirous to ask him, and he said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves concerning this, that I said, A little while, and ye behold me not, and again a little while, and ye shall see me?

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for the joy that a man is born into the world.

22 And ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you.

23 And in that day ye shall ask me no question. Verily, verily, I say unto you, if ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name.

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be made full.

### *Queries*

- a. Why could the disciples not "bear" other things which Jesus desired to speak to them?
- b. How would He be seen by them again in a little while?

### *Paraphrase*

- c. How would their sorrow be turned into joy?

There are yet many things I need to say unto you concerning the work of the Spirit and the whole scheme of redemption but because the work of redemption is not yet completed and because of your spiritual immaturity you are not able to bear them just yet. But when the One I have spoken to you about comes—the Spirit of truth—He will guide you into all the truth. And He will not be all by Himself in this speaking but He will be speaking what the Father, Son and the Spirit communicate to one another. He will also give you a message of that which He hears is to come in the future. He will glorify Me because He will take from the Divine Mind all that pertains to Me in the redemptive work and declare it unto you in message form. All that which is Mine is the Father's and all that which the Father has is Mine. It is for this reason—the perfect unity of possession and purpose between Father, Son and Spirit—that I said unto you the Spirit takes of Mine and gives it unto you. In a little while you will not see Me any longer and yet in a little while you will see Me! Some of the disciples, when they heard this, began to say among themselves, What is this riddle He is speaking now—A little while and you will not see Me and yet in a little while you will see Me—and—I am going to the Father? What is this Little While that He talks about? We simply cannot understand Him! Jesus, knowing they wanted to ask Him what He meant, said to them, Are you trying to find out from one another the things I said concerning, A little while and you will not see Me and yet in a little while you will see Me again? I tell you most solemnly that you are going to be so sorrowful that you will sob and wail and all the while the world will be rejoicing! Yes, you will be deeply distressed but your distress will be turned into joy! When a woman gives birth to a child she certainly knows pain when her hour to deliver has come. Yet as soon as she has given birth to the child she forgets her agony for the joy of bringing a man-child into the

world. Now you are similarly going to go through a brief time of pain but I will see you again soon and your Little While of pain will be turned into rejoicing and this rejoicing no one shall ever be able to take away from you. In the day when I am seeing you again I will by the Spirit so teach you all things that you shall no longer be perplexed and wishing to ask Me questions. As regards the knowledge of the truth, asking will not be necessary for the Spirit of truth will attend to that. But as regards petitions of all kinds for all the necessities of life I say to you most truly, the Father will give them to you if you abide in My name. As of yet you have not asked anything in My name because all authority has not yet been associated with My name. You must keep on asking the Father, but in a little while you will ask by authority of My name in order that your joy may be completely fulfilled.

### *Summary*

Jesus turns from His previous (16:1-11) discourse on the work of the Spirit in the world, to the specific work of the Spirit in relationship to the disciples as individuals. The Spirit will reveal to them all the truth and He will turn their sorrow into joy.

### *Comment*

Jesus had spoken only a few things in the three years of His earthly ministry and for the most part the disciples were unable to comprehend and bear up under very little of it. Primarily it was because of their Jewish prejudices and presuppositions of a temporal Messiah and a temporal Messianic kingdom that they were unable to comprehend even the few teachings Jesus gave them concerning His work. They refused to accept the prediction of His death (cf. Matt. 16:21-23; cf. Lk. 24:17-27;) and even as late as His ascension they were still wondering about the establishment of an earthly kingdom in Israel (cf. Acts 1:6-7).

Besides their spiritual immaturity making them incapable of bearing the immeasurable riches of all that Jesus wanted to sell them, the work of redemption had not yet been completed and the other things which Jesus had to tell them would have to await the coming of the Spirit.

Although verse 12 has specific reference to the apostles and the forthcoming miraculous revelation of the Spirit the principle holds true for us today. The principle is that revelation of the nature and work of Christ is measured by the moral and spiritual capacities of men to receive it. Paul the apostle had to speak to the Corinthians as babes because they were spiritually and morally incapable of being spoken to as spiritual grownups. They were carnal. They still thought of Christ

and the church as fleshly and worldly. The more we know intellectually and experientially of the Person of Christ from His Word, the Bible, the more we will grow to be like Him and the more prepared we will be to bear the profound and sublime riches of His Word. The more we abstain from the worldly the better prepared we are to receive His revelation of the spiritual.

Jesus lovingly and wisely withholds what can most beneficially be revealed by the Spirit. When the redemptive work is finished, the Spirit will come to them and lead them into all the truth. This promise of Jesus to the apostles concerning *all the truth* is most important! There have been theologians, church councils, latter day prophets in all ages rise up and challenge this promise. Even in our day some who claim to be conservative, Bible-believing people have taught that the Holy Spirit has more truth than that which was delivered to the apostles to give to men and that He is giving new truth even today. If human language means anything at all, we believe the Bible teaches that what the apostles recorded was all the truth the Holy Spirit was to deliver to mankind for man's redemption and for man's temporal existence. In other words, the Bible itself claims that it is sufficient to lead man to saving relationship to Jesus Christ and is sufficient to guide man in all his relationship to living in this world. Compare the following scriptures with what is taught by those today who claim the Holy Spirit has new truth to reveal:

- a. Many things which Jesus did and said were not recorded but enough was recorded to bring men unto saving faith in Him (Jn. 20:30-31)
- b. The miraculous gifts of the Spirit prophecy, etc. in revealing Christ's Word to the early church (before they had the completed New Testament in writing) were to be done away when *that which* (neuter gender in the Greek and cannot refer to Christ's second coming) is perfect (completed written word) came (cf. I Cor. 13:8-13).
- c. No Word of Christ was to be preached (not even by latter day angels) other than that which the apostles delivered and wrote upon the penalty of being accursed from Christ (cf. Gal. 1:6-10).
- d. The scriptures are capable of making the man of God complete and no other revelation is needed (cf. II Tim. 3:14-17).
- e. The Word which brings us into a new birth abides forever and this eternal word is that which was preached by the apostles (I Pet. 1:23-25).
- f. He has granted unto us *all* things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Christ and that knowledge comes

through the promises of Christ contained in the apostolic truth (II Pet. 1:1-4; 1:16-21).

- g. The apostles are of God and those that know God do so by hearing the apostles. Those that do not know God do not listen to the apostles. AND BY LISTENING TO THE APOSTLES IS THE ONLY WAY WE KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRUTH AND ERROR! (cf. I Jn. 4:1-6).
- h. Who ever goes beyond the teaching of the Christ in the apostolic writings does not have God and those who go beyond the apostolic doctrine are not to be received as brethren in Christ (II Jn. 9-11).
- i. The faith (the complete body of doctrine necessary for salvation and christian living) was once for all time delivered unto the saints in the apostolic books of the New Testament (Jude 3) and that certainly means the apostles were led into all the truth the Holy Spirit deemed necessary for all time!
- j. The book of Revelation was the last book of the New Testament to be written. The last warning and the last invitation is given in this book. The admonition of this book is that nothing shall be added or taken away from what has been written by the apostles lest the judgement of God come upon the usurper.

Christians are commanded to judge between true and false doctrines for many false teachers are constantly teaching false doctrines in the world (I Jn. 4:1). THE ONLY DIVINE CRITERIA BY WHICH JUDGMENT BETWEEN TRUE AND FALSE DOCTRINE MAY BE MADE IS THE FINAL AND COMPLETE REVELATION OF CHRIST MADE IN THE WRITTEN DOCUMENTS OF THE APOSTLES, INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHICH WE KNOW AS THE NEW TESTAMENT!

Furthermore, what the Spirit shall teach the disciples will not be something completely different from what Christ has taught and will teach when He finishes His work. What the Spirit will do is take all that the Incarnate Word accomplished and make it plain and give it in specific commandments in order that men may understand and obey it. In bringing Christ to dwell in the hearts of men by faith the Spirit would cause them to apprehend what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge and be filled with all the fulness of God (cf. Eph. 3:14-19). In so doing the Spirit would glorify the Son and the Father. Thus the Acts and the Epistles become divine commentaries on the Gospels.

Verses 14 and 15 are to remind the disciples again of the oneness of Father, Son and Spirit. The Jewish mind tended to separate the

work of the Father from the Son and both from the work of the Spirit.

And now, in verses 16-24, we hear Jesus speak to His disciples a riddle concerning His return that was made plain only after the Spirit came at Pentecost. The disciples were completely perplexed as to the meaning. To them it sounded as if Jesus were talking in circles—contradicting Himself. Soon they will not see Him any more, yet soon they would see Him again. What does He mean? There are a number of things to be considered in interpreting His meaning: (a) the context—the close connection in what He is saying to what He has said before about the coming of the Spirit; (b) Jesus uses two different words for "see" *theoreite* and *hopsethe* which may indicate two different manners of vision (physical vs. Spiritual); (c) all believers in Christ are to be the ultimate recipients of the full joy promised first to the disciples; (d) their second vision of Christ was to remain with them. The Christ who should return to their vision after His going away no doubt began with the resurrected Christ (but even then He was difficult for some to see, (cf. Lk. 24:17-27), but was primarily the Christ who returned to them in the Spirit. The Christ who filled them with joy is the same Christ seen by all believers today—the Christ of the Spirit who shows Himself to men through His Word.

Jesus can make it no plainer than he does. But the disciples will not know what He means until He is resurrected, ascended and returns in all the power and truth of the Spirit. They will fall into the depths of sorrow but will be lifted to the heights of joy. Could their faith rest solely in His promises they would not sorrow but rejoice knowing that the cross was not the end. But their faith was not that complete (and ours neither, had we been there, I'm sure). Nevertheless, when He should return in a little while from the tomb and in power on Pentecost, their sorrow would be turned to joy.

The parable Jesus gives to describe the complete change that will take place in their lives is beautifully descriptive. One has only to be a parent, and especially a mother, to know it. The disciples will come from the agony of pain to the sublimity of joy. This is all the parable is intended to teach—the contrast between sorrow and joy of the disciples. One need only see the contrast between the disciples at the crucifixion and the resurrection and Pentecost to see the fulfillment of Jesus' prediction.

Verse 23 shows that this whole discourse concerns the coming of the Spirit. In the day that Christ comes to them again *all* their questions will be answered. There were many questions they had concerning all that Jesus had taught and done while they companied with

Him. Their minds were undoubtedly filled with questions. After His victory over the tomb and the coming of the Spirit the meaning of all they had seen and heard would become clear. They would then see that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3) and that in Him God chose to consummate all things and fulfill all things prophesied and typified in the Old Testament. They would see that in Him all of history—every question of mankind finds its answer. They would see that by faith in Him who conquered all there would be no more questions to ask—no more answers needed.

In verse 23 we have the promise stated again that every prayer for help in the exigencies of life asked according to the will and name of Christ will be granted (cf. our comments on Jn. 14:13-14; 15:7, 16). Verse 24 is a veiled statement (veiled to the apostles before the resurrection and pouring forth of the Spirit on Pentecost) that soon He will bring in a New covenant and henceforward all requests to the Father must be made according to the will and by the authority of the name of Jesus. Those who expect to gain the Father's ear henceforward must abide in the teaching of the Son. Before Pentecost, of course, the disciples prayed to the Father under the Mosaic dispensation and gained the Father's ear as they, by faith, abode in the Mosaic teachings. But after Pentecost the Christian dispensation, the fulfillment of all the promises—the reality of all that had before been only shadow—would make their joy full. Christ would be able to do for them exceedingly abundantly above all they ask or think.

May this section be an admonition to us that the Christ we have seen by the Spirit in the Word is more to be desired than the Christ seen with the physical eye. The Christ of the Spirit is the Christ who brings "joy unspeakable and full of glory," because He is the Christ in us, the hope of our glory (cf. II Cor. 3:12-18, 4:16-18; Col. 1:27, etc.).

### *Quiz*

1. Why could the disciples not bear what Jesus had to say later in the Spirit?
2. Is what the apostles taught and wrote (the New Testament) all the truth which the Spirit reveals concerning salvation? Prove your answer!
3. Would the Spirit teach anything new—anything other than what Christ had already taught? If not, what would He teach?
4. How would their sorrow be turned to joy?
5. Why would they ask no questions after the coming of the Spirit?
6. What lesson is there in this discourse for believers today?

## HIS VEILED SAYINGS WILL SOON BE MADE PLAIN

*Text: 16:25-33*

25 These things have I spoken unto you in dark sayings: the hour cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in dark sayings, but shall tell you plainly of the Father.

26 In that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you;

27 for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father.

28 I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father.

29 His disciples say, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no dark saying.

30 Now know we that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

33 These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

*Queries*

- a. What are the "dark sayings" and when were they made plain?
- b. Was Jesus critical of the belief of the disciples (v. 31)?
- c. Why would they soon scatter and leave Jesus alone?

*Paraphrase*

I have spoken to you during My ministry, and especially these last hours, in veiled and disguised sayings. But the time is coming very soon when I shall come to you again no longer speaking in this veiled way but reporting to you plainly concerning the Father. When that time comes I shall no longer have to treat you as children who do not know how to pray to the Father for themselves as they ought, but you will have matured and know to pray in My name—in accord with My will and purpose for you. And you will have your requests answered by your loving Father and He has such love toward you because you have loved Me and have believed that I came from the presence of the Father. It is indeed true that I came from the very presence of the Father and came into the world to accomplish My mission. Now, hav-

ing almost completed My mission, I am about to leave the world and return unto the presence of the Father. His disciples then said, Ah, now you are no longer speaking to us in veiled sayings but in plain words. Now we know that every hidden thing is known by you and you have no need of anyone to ask you a question before you know what he is thinking. Because of this demonstration of omniscience we believe you have come from God. Jesus replied, Are you now so sure of Me as you think—do you now really believe? I say to you the time is very nearly here when you shall all be scattered, each going to his own interests, leaving me alone. However, I shall not really be left alone at all for My Father is with Me. I have told you all of these things so that your faith in Me may be strengthened and thus you may have peace in Me. In the world you have anxiety and pressure but be courageous for I have conquered the world and all its fears and anxieties.

### Summary

Jesus promises that the time is coming very soon when all His dark sayings will be made plain. The disciples will not be able to endure the brutal frankness of some of it and will be temporarily scattered.

### Comment

The "these things" of v. 25 refers especially to what Jesus had been teaching His disciples that very night concerning His "going away" and "coming again." And, as a matter of fact, He had been speaking the truth of God to them with a veil upon it all through His public ministry (cf. Matt. 11:25-30; 13:10-17). In Matt. 13:10-17 Jesus quotes Isaiah 6 and gives one reason it was necessary for Him to speak in riddles, parables and veiled sayings—the hardness of the hearts of those who listened. Another reason is given in Matt. 11:25-30 and that is the concern of the Lord for the spiritually immature. The disciples fell into one or the other of these categories practically all of their days with Jesus before the resurrection. They had cluttered their minds with thoughts of an earthly kingdom and they were not prepared to be taught plainly (although Jesus did speak plainly with them at times) all the things Jesus had to teach them concerning His relationship to the Father and the Kingdom of God. Of course, Jesus was also prevented from speaking plainly about the whole work of redemption because the whole work of redemption had not yet been accomplished. He had spoken previously in veiled sayings concerning:

- a. His resurrection—"raising up the temple in three days."
- b. His crucifixion—"lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness."

- c. Partaking of His divine nature—"eating His flesh and drinking His blood."
- d. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit—"the water of life which flows out from future believers."

And in these last hours He had spoken of the "resting places" He was going to prepare; of seeing the Father in Him; of abiding in Him as branches in the Vine; of His going away and coming again by sending the Comforter; of the hatred of the world but His conquest of the world. All the truth represented by these parables and allegories would have been even less comprehensible to the disciples had it been spoken bluntly and plainly. Their immature but growing faith in Jesus might have been wounded beyond healing had He spoken openly. It is highly possible that they would have been so offended (cf. Matt. 16:21-28) at continued plain teaching about His death and the spiritual kingdom as to leave Him never to return.

But Jesus knew just how plain and just how veiled to be with these men and thus fan the spark of faith within their hearts into a fire that would endure. And this fire, after being refueled with the power of the resurrection and the Holy Spirit, would radiate and empower them to spread the flame of the gospel to the whole world.

One only need turn from the parabolic teachings of Jesus in the Gospels to the plain and unveiled teachings of Jesus (through the apostles) in the epistles to see the fulfillment of the promise in v. 25. The atonement, justification, the church, godliness—all are made plain in the epistles. When the Spirit came He led them into all truth. He made the way so plain that even the wayfaring men would not err therein (cf. Isa. 35:8). The way to come into covenant relationship with the salvation provided by Christ is plain enough for children to understand in the book of Acts. Exhortations on living the christian life are just as plainly stated in the epistles. Someone has said that the epistles are amplifications and interpretations by the Spirit openly of all that Jesus taught parabolically and in guarded form in the gospels. There seems to be some justification for this idea in a comparison of the gospels with the epistles.

Be that as it may, one of the important points to notice here is that the One who is going to make the "dark sayings" to become "plain" is none other than Jesus Himself returned to the disciples in the Spirit.

Besides the fact that upon His return in the Spirit will they have the hidden made plain, they will also pray with a new frankness and openness. Before they did not know how to pray as they ought (cf. Luke 11:1-4ff). Jesus had to teach them the things that were within the scope of His purpose and will for which they should pray. He had

to teach them how to pray—persistently, humbly, and forgivingly. And so He informs them that in "that day" (the day when He should come in the Spirit) they would not only know how to pray and what to pray for "in His name" (according to His will), but they would also enjoy a new relationship to the Father through the atonement which Jesus would accomplish for them. Jesus will be their High Priest, constantly interceding on their behalf, but they will approach the Father directly through Him. All barriers would be removed. By prayer they, themselves, might henceforth come into the very presence of God their Father, whereas before His atonement all men were prohibited from the presence of God and approached Him only through an earthly priest.

This new relationship of the disciples with the Heavenly Father is founded upon the Father's love for them because of Jesus. It is interesting to see the "eternal love triangle" worked out here in verse 27. God sent His Son Jesus and loved us first that we might be drawn to love Him. When we then love His Son and believe that He came forth from God, God loves us even more because of our love for His Son, (cf. I Jn. 4:9-10).

In one concise statement (v. 28) Jesus sums up the central act of redemption. He relinquished the glories of heaven for a season to become the obedient servant (cf. II Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:5-11). He came into the world in flesh incarnate and revealed the love of God. He is about to leave the world by the cross, the resurrection and the ascension. This statement is direct and clear. It is more direct than the statement in v. 16 which caused so much consternation among the disciples (v. 17). So the disciples are highly pleased that He is now speaking plainly. Their pleasure turns into amazement and then into a profession of increased belief of the deity of Jesus as they realize that Jesus did not need to ask any man anything. In verses 16-18 we find them discussing what Jesus had said in verse 16 which was such a puzzle to them. Beginning in verse 19 Jesus begins to answer their questions without asking them what their questions were. Jesus read their hearts like an open book. Suddenly it dawned on them that they were in the presence of One who had truly come forth from God and so they said, "Now we believe . . ."

What did Jesus mean by His reply in verse 31? Does He mean to deny their belief? No. It is not that the Lord is denying what belief they have professed, but that He is warning them not to be too sure of their own estimates of themselves. Jesus constantly warned the disciples against overestimating their own strength and abilities (cf. Matt. 26:31-35; Mark 14:27-31; Lk. 22:31-34; Jn. 14:36-38). So now He

says, "I accept your confession as genuine and sincere, but will your belief be strong enough to weather the coming storm?" When He should willingly surrender and allow Himself to be crucified as a common criminal would they still profess their belief in Him as One sent from the Father? It was not that Jesus was critical of what faith they had but He was fully aware of their weaknesses as well as their strengths. He was warning them against the fatal mistake of overestimating their own capabilities. What makes this so fatal is that one puts all his trust in his own capabilities and when failure comes (as it surely does to everyone) all hope for an overcoming power and all assurance of victory is gone. Paul the great apostle found this to be true in his own life. He found that in him dwelt no good thing. He came to the conclusion "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 7:15-25). And then he went on to show how victory is possible "in Christ" (Rom. 8:1-39).

Paul was constantly aware of the danger of overconfidence in oneself or the flesh and buffeted his body lest after preaching to others he himself might become a castaway (cf. I Cor. 9:27).

There is a great lesson for us here. We must beware of being too quick to say "We are able" (cf. Matt. 20:22). We must always remember the man who prayed, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

There is a prophecy from Zechariah 13:7 implied here in verse 32. The prophecy was quoted by Jesus in Matthew 26:31 and Mark 14:27. When Jesus was arrested the disciples at first made good their promise to fight for Him to the death. Peter drew his sword and would have fought there and laid down his life for his King. But when they realized that Jesus was going to offer no resistance but that He was going to submit to such humiliation, they forsook him and fled (cf. Matt. 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52).

Just what Jesus meant when He said they would all be scattered, "every man to his own," is not certain. Probably He meant to say that each would return to his own home and daily pursuits. After having seen Him die they assumed that His work was defeated (cf. Luke 24:13-24) and when the women reported that the tomb was empty and that evidently someone had taken His body Peter and John assumed the women to be correct and went away again to their own home (cf. Jn. 20:10). Luke 24:24 indicates their discouragement even at the empty tomb. They went away and left Him alone, but Jesus was not alone for the Father was with Him in the darkest hours and raised Him from the tomb.

Jesus has spoken these things, foretelling the future, showing the fulfillment of prophecy, so that after they come to pass their faith will be strengthened and thus find peace by trusting in His omniscience and omnipotence. There are two sides to the peace which the believer has in Jesus. First there is the judicial peace which Jesus accomplishes on behalf of man between God and man. This judicial peace is accomplished at the cross where in His body He suffered the sentence and penalty of sin and took out of the way all the commandments that were against man (cf. Eph. 2:11-22; Col. 2:8-15) which we appropriate by being buried with Him by baptism. Having been united with His death by faith and obedience (Rom. 6:1-11; Gal. 3:26-27) and having appropriated that judicial peace to our souls, we find and realize that subjective peace of heart and soul which passes understanding (cf. Phil. 4:7).

We have this peace by trusting in Him even in the midst of a world filled with tribulation. Even though christians must endure tribulation in the world they may be courageous and cheerful for Jesus has overcome the world. He has conquered and won the victory over all that the world can do. There is nothing that Satan or the world can do to defeat Jesus and His beloved children. Thus Jesus ends the dark and veiled sayings of this ominous night on a glorious note of victory! And the New Testament from the resurrection and appearances to the end of the book of Revelation is one grand *shout of victory!* (cf. for example Rom. 8:31-39; I Cor. 15:50-58; II Cor. 4:16—5:21; I Jn. 5:1-6).

The constant theme of the Old Testament prophets is that of God's ultimate victory over all His enemies.

Let this be the clarion call of twentieth century preaching—VICTORY IN JESUS! Men and women need victory for living in the here and now and victory when death makes its pretense of defeat. The surest way to make the preaching of the gospel relevant for this generation is to convince people of VICTORY IN JESUS!

### *Quiz*

1. Why did Jesus speak to the disciples in veiled sayings?
2. When and how were these veiled things made plain?
3. What did Jesus mean by saying He would not pray for them?
4. What was Jesus' purpose in questioning their belief (v. 31)?
5. How did they scatter and go each man to his own?
6. What theme was used to end His dark sayings this dark night?

### SERMON NO. SIXTEEN (TOPICAL)

We have chosen to deviate from expository type sermons in this one instance in order to give our readers a topical sermon which covers

briefly the whole scope of the Holy Spirit dwelling within the Christian.

### CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY

*Text: Col. 1:27*

#### *Introduction*

#### I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHRISTIAN IS THE ONE IMPERATIVE

- A. Christians are commanded "be filled with the Spirit . . ." Eph. 5:18
- B. Christians are told plainly, ". . . if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. 8:9
- C. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Jn. 3:5

FRIEND, IF YOU DO NOT KNOW THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOUR LIFE YOU ARE NOT FULFILLING THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH GOD CALLED YOU THROUGH THE GOSPEL.

AS ROMANS 8:9 SAYS, IF WE DO NOT HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT, WE DO NOT BELONG TO CHRIST

- D. Now a person may have once received the Spirit and then resisted Him, quenched Him, done despite unto Him, lied unto Him, grieved Him

1. ONE MAY HAVE ONCE RECEIVED HIM, AND BY INDIFFERENCE OR WILFUL RESISTANCE COMPLETELY CAST HIM OUT OF HIS LIFE!

THIS IS A MOST IMPORTANT THEME . . . ONE UPON WHICH CHRISTIAN PEOPLE OUGHT TO CONCENTRATE AND STUDY AND LIVE

#### II. THERE IS SO MUCH CONFUSION IN THE RELIGIOUS WORLD TODAY ABOUT THE NATURE OF AND THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. We are not talking about the special miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit
  - 1. This is the lesser and secondary work of the spirit anyway
- B. So many want to confuse this secondary work of the Spirit with the INDWELLING PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT IN EVERY CHRISTIAN

THIS IS OUR SUBJECT THE INDWELLING PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT WORK OF THE SPIRIT!

I DO NOT PROPOSE TO LEAD YOU TO A COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THIS DIVINE PERSONALITY, THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ONE SERMON

IN FACT IN A WHOLE LIFE-TIME OF COMMUNION WITH HIM WE SHALL STILL NOT KNOW ALL THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT HIM

BUT THIS PERSON HAS REVEALED ENOUGH OF HIMSELF IN HIS WORD THAT WE MIGHT KNOW HIM, LOVE HIM, BE HELPED BY HIM . . . EVEN MAKE HIM A PART OF US BY OUR CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH HIM

*Discussion*

I. WHO IS THIS PERSON?

- A. "He is not a mere impersonal force or influence which we somehow get hold of and use; but He is a personal being; wise and holy, who is to get hold of us and use us. He is one with whom we may have the closest friendship or fellowship. He enters into our personalities, and we become new persons, with renewed minds, affections, desires and wills" Phil. 2:1; II Cor. 13:14 . . . Seth Wilson
- B. He is called the Spirit of God, Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 6:11
  - 1. This is the Person who moved upon the face of the waters in the great creation of the world
  - 2. This is the Person who raised up Jesus from the dead
- C. He is called the Holy Spirit—the third Person of the Godhead
  - 1. This we accept on faith . . . we do not now understand how God can be 3 and 1
- D. He is called the Spirit of Truth, Jn. 15:26 and 16:13
  - 1. This speaks of His character and purpose as well as His personality
  - 2. His personality and purpose of bringing truth and light to man is contrasted with the spirit of darkness and error which is Satan
- E. He is called the Spirit of grace
  - 1. The law came by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ
- F. He is called the Spirit of Christ
  - 1. The two are equated—this describes His personality better than any of the others . . . for we know what the personality of Christ is like!!!
  - 2. In fact, Jesus makes it plain that the Holy Spirit to come and live in the disciples will be Himself Jn. 14:16-24  
(Read)

WHO THEN IS THE HOLY SPIRIT? HE IS A PERSON WITH A MIND, WITH LOVE, COMPASSION, HOLY, SINLESS, A

PERSON WITH A WILL, ONE WHO SPEAKS WORDS . . . ONE WHO CAME AND DWELT IN A BODY OF FLESH AND DEMONSTRATED HIS PERSONALITY TO MAN!

## II. WHAT DOES THE INDWELLING SPIRIT OF CHRIST DO FOR US?

### A. Comforts—Strengthens

1. By explaining many things such as
  - a. Reason for suffering, Job, II Cor. 1, Heb. 12
  - b. God's eternal purpose in history, Isa., Colossians, Rev.
  - c. Examples of those who overcame, Heb. 11.
2. We can't get this comfort and strength apart from listening and believing the Spirit as He talks to us thru the Word

### B. He convicts Jn. 16:7-11

1. Because He is the spirit of truth His word convicts us of our sin, of what is right and of the judgment to come
2. It is possible, however, to so cauterize one's conscience that one is not convicted by the Spirit (Rom. 1: Jn. 3:19-21) David . . . Felix . . . Herod

### C. He leads and guides us, Rom. 8:12-14; Gal. 5:18

1. He guided the apostles into all truth, Jn. 16:13
2. He revealed to them the mind of Christ, I Cor. 2
3. They recorded for us all that He had given them
4. When the Holy Spirit speaks to our hearts through His word He is guiding us and leading us IN DIVINE WISDOM!

### D. He bears fruit in us and thru us, Gal. 5:22-25

1. First the old man must die and the new man must be born Jn. 12:24
2. Then we must be cleansed periodically or constantly like a grape-vine is pruned, in order to bear more fruit Jn. 15:2
3. We must abide in Him . . . we must bear fruit to be His disciples

A TREE BEARS FRUIT AFTER ITS OWN KIND . . . A CHRISTIAN MAKES OTHER CHRISTIANS

HOW MUCH FRUIT HAVE YOU BORNE? WHY HAVEN'T YOU? BECAUSE THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO GET HOLD OF YOU AND RENEW YOUR MIND AND WILL!

WHAT DID JESUS DO TO THE FIG TREE WHICH BORE NO FRUIT? . . . OUTWARDLY IT WAS A FIG TREE AND OUTWARDLY IT GAVE THE APPEARANCE OF BEING REAL BUT IT HAD NO FRUIT

- E. He gives assurance, Rom. 8:15-16

1. The Spirit expresses His will in His Word, I Cor. 2
2. The New Will and Testament of God is the plan of salvation Heb. 9:15
3. When we know that we are complying with His will, then His spirit witnesses with our Spirit that we are the children of God.

John says: "He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in Him, and he in him. And hereby, we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." I Jn. 3:24

"These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God . . ." I Jn. 5:13

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son." I Jn. 5:10

### III. HOW DOES THE SPIRIT COME TO US?

- A. Much confusion and erroneous teaching on this part
  1. Some believe He is irresistible
  2. Some believe one must have an "experience" (emotional, miraculous) before one can be sure they have Him in their lives
  3. We do not presume to say the Holy Spirit could not operate in such a way if He saw fit . . . We say He does not because such an operation would mean the Bible becomes obsolete, for such an operation would contradict the Bible

We firmly believe the Holy Spirit has operated miraculously in the past . . . BUT EVEN THEN THAT WAS NOT THE INDWELLING PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT PROMISED TO ALL CHRISTIANS . . . THE MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT DID NOT KEEP PETER FROM SINNING . . . OR OTHERS! (the Corinthians, Galatians, Hebrews, etc.)

4. How then does He indwell the Christian
  - a. Do we absorb Him through the pores of our skin? Does He overwhelm us by some mystical, direct, irresistible saturation?
  - b. How do we know that He is in us—by some emotional thrill or ecstatic trance?

"The Holy Spirit enters today into those who hear and obey the apostles' written word even as He did into those who heard the oral word. The power of the Holy Spirit in the christian life today is limited only by the lack of faith in the written word! The power of

the H.S. will be manifest as the Christian saturates his very life and being with the precepts and principles taught in the Bible, which is the living voice of the Holy Spirit, and puts them into practice in His life. As the christian has the mind to surrender to the instructions of the H.S. as He speaks through the written word, the H.S. possesses him, leads him and uses him and to just that extent" W. Spratt

B. The Holy Spirit as a new Person and a new Life is born within us through the Word of God

1. This in itself is a miracle—there is a supernatural power in the supernatural word of God
2. There must be a life-causing seed to generate this new life
  - a. Lk. 8 . . . parable of sower . . . the seed is the Word of God
  - b. I Pet. 1:23 . . . begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God
  - c. Jas. 1:18 . . . of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth
  - d. We are born anew when we believe . . . belief cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ

C. He dwells in us through faith, Eph. 3:17

1. Gal. 2:20 . . . It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me."
2. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Gal. 3:2
3. We might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith, Gal. 3:14
4. "For we are all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ, did put on Christ." Gal. 3:26-27

D. Paul connects being filled with the Spirit directly up to understanding what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5:17-18)

The Spirit does not operate independent of His Will and Word in possessing a man and dwelling in him. Just as a father's personality penetrates and bears fruit in the lives of his children through the father's teaching and deeds, so the Personality of the Heavenly Father, His Spirit penetrates and bears fruit in the lives of His children through the Father's word and deeds as they are witnessed to in the Word of God.

E. We are to PARTAKE of the divine nature

1. II Pet. 1:2-4 "Grace and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world."
2. If men desire eternal life they must partake of His flesh and blood (His very nature . . . BUT HOW?)
  - a. Jesus answers, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Jn. 6:63
  - b. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet glorified." Jn. 7:37-39

WHEN WE PARTAKE OF HIS DIVINE NATURE BY ASIMILATING HIS WORD INTO OUR MIND AND HEART, WE HAVE HIS SPIRIT IN US!

The Holy Spirit is born and grows within us through constant communion with Him by knowing His will, obeying His will and doing His work!

F. He comes to us when we love Him and keep His word, Jn. 14:21,23

1. To obey the Word is to be "led by the Spirit"  
The man who obeys the gospel is a child of God.
2. The only dependable agency available to man whereby he may be certain that he *knows* the H.S. or *feels* Him or that He *controls* him is obedience to the written will of the H.S. in His word!
3. We may be sure we know Him if we keep His commandments I Jn. 2:3  
We abide in Him and He in us by keeping His commandments I Jn. 3:24  
Whoever knows the Spirit of God listens to the apostles' doctrine and this is the *only* way man may know the difference between the spirit of truth and spirit of error (I Jn. 4:6) . . . NOT EVEN OUR EMOTIONS ARE A SAFE GUIDE

If we love one another and confess Christ His Spirit abides in us, I Jn. 4:12-15

Anyone who does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God . . . He who abides in this doctrine has both the Father and the Son, II Jn. 9, 10

G. By "opening the door" Rev. 3:20

*Conclusion*

I. YOU CAN HAVE THIS DIVINE PERSONALITY DWELL WITHIN YOU TODAY

A. He is here in the world today . . . He dwells within the lives of many Christian people. I know for I have seen His divine nature working in their lives

He is here for His word has been preached

B. He is promised to you upon your reception of His word as the seed into your heart

1. He promises to take up a dwelling place in you upon your keeping of His word

17:1-5

2. The promise of Peter and the apostles Acts 2:38; 5:32 is just as living and relevant and practical today as it was 2000 years ago

II. WHAT CAN HE DO FOR YOU?

A. He can do all that the scriptures promise

B. He can satisfy the hunger and thirst of your soul

C. He can give you assurance, peace, strength, happiness, purpose, fruitfulness IN YOUR EVERY DAY ACTIVITIES IF YOU WILL JUST SURRENDER TO HIM

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

This is one of the most precious chapters of the Fourth Gospel. Here the Incarnate Son pours out His divine heart in prayer for Himself, for His intimate friends and for all believers. He prays for you and for me. This is really the Lord's Prayer. The prayer in Luke 11 commonly known as "The Lord's Prayer," is not His prayer but one He taught the disciples to pray. In the synoptic gospels there are many references to the prayer life of Jesus but only a few (and those in Gethsemane) tell us of the content of His prayers. But in John's gospel this one prayer gives special emphasis to the content of His prayers. This is uniquely the private prayer of the Lord Himself. He does not teach the disciples to pray this prayer, He prays things that no man could possibly presume to pray and, in fact, He does not even invite the disciples then present to join Him in prayer.

It has also been called the High-Priestly Prayer of Jesus Christ. First, it was offered by Him when He was about to give Himself a ransom for sinners. Second, this prayer gave further occasion to consecrate Himself as both High Priest and sacrificial victim in the approaching sacrifice on the cross. Third, it fulfills the typical rites of the high priest in Israel on the Day of Atonement as he prayed for himself, his fellow priests, and the covenant people (cf. Lev. 16:6, 33). Fourth, the parallel terms in the Epistle to the Hebrews and John 17, have in common the priestly concepts of cleansing, sanctification, perfection and priestly ministry in general.

Hendriksen expresses, to our way of thinking, the real theme of this chapter when he says, "The mission of Jesus Christ and of his followers on earth, unto the glory of God, is the theme throughout." In each distinct division of this prayer the glorification of Father and Son is mentioned. Jesus prays that He may be glorified and the Father thus glorified (17:1-5); He prays that the eleven disciples may be sanctified and united in order that He may be glorified in them (17:10); He prays that all believers in all ages may be one by abiding in His glory (17:22).

The prayer of our Lord here is one of the most distinct teachings of the New Testament on the unity of all believers. More than just a mere formal, doctrinal statement, this is a prayer from the very heart of God in the flesh. Most certainly the unity of believers is one of the things with which God is most concerned!

We shall outline this chapter as The Lord's Intercessory Prayer and place it in our continuing outline as follows:

### III. The Word Manifested to The Disciples And Their Acceptance of Him, 13:1—20:31

#### A. Private Instructions and Encouragements, 13:1—17:26 (cont'd.).

##### 5. The Lord's Intercessory Prayer, 17:1-26

###### a. Prayer for Himself, 17:1-5

- (1) To be glorified in the Cross
- (2) To be glorified in revealing God to men
- (3) To be glorified with former glory

###### b. Prayer for the disciples, 17:6-19

- (1) That what He taught them should end in His glorification
- (2) That they may have His joy fulfilled in them by remaining in His name
- (3) That they may be sent into the world by being sanctified in truth

c. Prayer for all believers, 17:20-26

- (1) That they may be one
- (2) That they may have His glory
- (3) That they may have the love of the Father

#### PRAYER FOR HIMSELF

##### *Text: 17:1-5*

1 These things spake Jesus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee:

2 even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, that to all whom thou hast given him, he should give eternal life.

3 And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.

4 I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do.

5 And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

#### *Queries*

- a. What "hour" had come?
- b. Does verse 2 teach "predestination-divine election?"
- c. What glory did He have before the world was created?

#### *Paraphrase*

When Jesus had said these things, He lifted up His eyes toward heaven and prayed, saying, Father, at last the hour which You have set to culminate Your plan of redemption in Me has arrived. I pray that by My death, resurrection and ascension You will glorify Me with deity before men in order that I may glorify You in all the earth; for this is in harmony with Your giving Me authority over all people in order that I may give eternal life to all whom You have chosen to grant eternal life through their relationship to Me. And the way in which they shall receive eternal life is to know You by submitting to Your will and coming into intimate fellowship with Him whom You sent, even Jesus Christ. I have glorified You on earth having completed the task which you gave me to do. So, now Father, glorify me in Your own presence with the glory that I knew with You before My voluntary humiliation, yea, even before the world was made.

#### *Summary*

Jesus prays for the Father to glorify Him through the events of His passion about to be enacted. This prayer for personal glory is, however, entirely selfless for its end is to be the glorification of the Father and eternal life to believers.

*Comment*

Just where Jesus poured out His heart in this prayer is not certain. The references in 14:31 and 18:1 seem to indicate some place between the upper room and the city gate that leads across the Kidron valley to Gethsemane. Some commentators think He remained in the upper room until this prayer was ended. The place is not important. The content of the prayer is.

Christ, by saying, "Father, the hour is come . . ." reiterates for the eleven disciples then present, and for all believers, His omniscient awareness that there are stipulated "times and seasons which the Father has set within His own authority" concerning the divine plan of redemption. The Son knows these "times" because the Father has shown them all to Him (cf. Jn. 5:19-24). "Hour" is not used in an absolutely literal sense here. That is, Jesus did not expect to be crucified within that very hour. In fact, many hours would transpire before the actual crucifixion occurred but the hours of "darkness" were now beginning. The time for teaching and pleading with men was over. Jesus was aware all along just how much time He had to accomplish His task on earth (cf. Jn. 24; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1). What a burden to bear—knowing the very hour that He must die. What agony to know not only the hour but to know also that He must die alone. What love and majesty that He should bear it willingly, knowing that He had the power to forego it.

In the New Testament the word glory (Gr. *doxa*) is used to denote honor in the sense of recognition or acclaim (cf. Lk. 14:10), and of the praise and reverence the creature gives to the Creator (cf. Rev. 14:7). It denotes majesty (Rom. 1:23) and perfection, especially in relation to righteousness (Rom. 3:23). In the O.T. the Hebrew word for glory, *kabod*, gives the idea of being laden with riches, power and position. All of these help explain the glory for which Christ prayed.

Jesus prays first that He might be glorified (honored with majesty, perfection, righteousness, etc.) by the "hour that is come." The overall tone of this prayer shows definitely that it is far from being a death knell. It is a victory shout! The "hour" includes not only the cross but also the resurrection and the ascension. The time has come for the Son who for a little while became "lower than the angels" (cf. Heb. 2:5-9), to be exalted above every name (cf. Phil. 2:5-11). The time has come when His divine majesty must, without question, be unveiled. It is almost as if Christ prays, "Father, at last the hour for which I have eagerly waited. Now, glorify thy Son!" But this is not a selfish request. The reason the Incarnate Son desires to be glorified is two-fold. First, as He prays in verse 1, He wishes to be glorified only that

the Father may be glorified. Both the Father and the Son are in complete harmony. What One wills the Other wills; what One works the Other works; what One loves the Other loves. There are no separate interests or aspirations between God the Father and God the Son. Even when every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, it will be "to the glory of the Father!"

In verse 2 Jesus explains the means by which He was to glorify the Father. The Son was to glorify the Father in giving eternal life to all those whom the Father should give to the Son. The "authority over all flesh" which the Father gave to the Son no doubt has reference to the same idea Jesus taught in John 5:19-29. Into the hands of the Son the Father committed authority and power over all flesh. Not only flesh but power over all the elements was committed to Him also. Verse 2 is one of the verses in the Fourth Gospel which becomes a frequent battlefield for Calvinistic predestinarians. The Scriptures teach a divine election, but not the extreme view advocated by Calvinists. It ought to be plain to every reader here from verse three that God gives to the Son for eternal life all men who are willing to *know* (intellectually and experientially) God the Father as He is revealed in God the Son. It seems to us that the N.T. teaching on election is clear enough in one aspect. All men have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God. God has not recompensed man with divine justice but has, from divine love, chosen to have mercy and save all who will be saved by grace. God has arbitrarily *elected* to save "whosoever will" in Christ Whose body is the church. We are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8). We have access into the grace of God through faith (Rom. 5:2). We are all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus and as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). The *election* is provided in Christ. God has provided His divinely inspired revelation, the Bible, to invite and instruct men into His election. But men, created with self-sovereign wills, must respond and surrender their will to His will in order to appropriate this election. Faith which issues in obedience to revealed truth is the response God demands of man.

Of course, divine foreknowledge in all its mysterious ramifications is beyond the comprehension of the finite mind with its limitations. Just how God knows the beginning from the end, how He knows all things before they come to pass, is inexplicable to the human mind. How God knows our destiny ahead of time and still elects us to salvation upon the condition of our response is also unfathomable. All of this we accept by faith in the omnipotence and omniscience of God on the basis of His revelation of Himself in Christ, in time and in

space to the senses of men. See our comments on John 10 for a further discussion of divine election. We recommend a careful and thorough study of Romans 9, 10 and 11 and Ephesians 1, 2 and 3 in connection with the subject of election.

But how may we know that we are of the elect or not? Some religious teachers say that a person who has "fallen away" after an initial response to the preaching of the gospel was never saved in the first place. Thus, they say, we may know that such a person was never elected to salvation but has very evidently been elected to damnation and this before he was ever born and apart from any choice he might wish to make after his birth. Such a perversion of the Scriptures makes them worse than useless. What purpose does the Bible serve, with all its exhortations to hear, believe, repent, obey, make one's calling and election sure, if men are elected apart from any response on their part. Our salvation is conditioned upon our response and our response is faith in Christ which issues in obedience to His revealed will. Let us also direct the reader to a thorough study of John's First Epistle. There is not in all the New Testament a more lucid discussion of the certainty of salvation in response to the revealed will of Christ (especially I Jn. 3, 4 and 5).

When Jesus said that eternal life is to be found in "knowing" God and the Son sent by God, He meant more than an intellectual knowledge of God. But He meant at least that knowledge for it is impossible to know God experientially without knowing Him through the intellect. Paul wrote in Hebrews 11:1-6 that any one who "comes to God" must believe that He exists. There are many exhortations for men to come to an experiential knowledge of Christ (cf. Jn. 7:17; Phil. 3:8-11), but there is only one way to experience any of the love and other characteristics of the nature of God and that is to let His Spirit be born and grow in us through the Word of the Spirit in the Bible. See our comments on the Holy Spirit in chapters 14, 15 and 16.

Jesus speaks in the past tense in verse 4 and, as Hendriksen says, "He has a right to speak as if also this suffering (of the cross) has already been endured, so *certain* is it that he will endure it!" The Cross was not an accident nor an isolated event; it was the climax of the work Christ came into the world to perform. That is why the cry of Jesus, "It is finished," has always been such a wonderful word to sinful men. It speaks "peace" to men because it announced the sealing of the covenant of grace, and became the sure foundation upon which to rest their salvation. The work of the Cross, of course, had to be validated by the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the tomb.

The Son has potentially accomplished *on earth* the Father's will and

mission perfectly; and now what is uppermost in His mind is the continuance of that work in glory (the sending forth of the Holy Spirit; His reigning upon the throne of David; His High-Priestly mediationship), because in verse 5 He goes on to ask the Father to glorify Him with the glory that was His before the Incarnation. To go into detail about His pre-incarnate glory would be to speculate idly. But the scriptures are plain enough that the Son enjoyed equality with the Father; the Son, though rich, became poor that we might become rich; He emptied Himself of divine glory and became obedient even unto death. All creatures and all creation sing and shout His praise; all creatures and all creation serve Him.

While on earth His magnificent glory was veiled by the form of flesh, but in Heaven all of His magnificent glory shines forth. In Heaven, the Lamb, standing as though it had been slain, is worshipped and praised as, "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and the riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing . . . for ever and ever," (Rev. 5:11-14).

### *Quiz*

1. What does Jesus mean when He says, "the hour is come?"
2. What does the word "glory" mean?
3. Is Jesus' request to be glorified out of harmony with God's plan?
4. By what means is Jesus to glorify the Father?
5. How does the Father "give" people to the Son? Is Calvinistic predestination taught here? If not, why not?
6. How do men "know" God and the One He sent?
7. What glory did Jesus know before with the Father?

### PRAAYER FOR THE DISCIPLES

*Text: 17:6-19*

6 I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee:

8 For the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that you didst send me.

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me; for they are thine:

10 and all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them.

11 And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and

I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are.

12 While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 But now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy made full in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth.

18 As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

### *Queries*

- a. How were the disciples "given" to Jesus?
- b. How did the perishing of the "son of perdition" fulfill the scripture?
- c. How is God to keep the disciples from "the evil one?"

### *Paraphrase*

I have explained Your nature and declared Your will unto the men who were chosen by You, out of all mankind, to be My apostles. They were Yours before, being sincere disciples of Your covenant under Moses, and You directed them to Me through Your Word; and Your Word in the Old Testament, in John the Baptist and in Me they have guarded in their hearts. These men are fully persuaded that all the doctrines and all the miraculous works which You have given Me are all really derived from You. They have come to this persuasion upon the surest evidence for I have taught them no other doctrine but that which You gave Me to teach. Being therefore fully persuaded that My teaching is in perfect harmony with Your divine nature they have accepted and appropriated it in their hearts and have known assuredly that I am the Holy One of Israel truly commissioned by You and have trusted in their hearts that You sent Me. I am praying in the last moments of My life on earth for these men particularly and not for the world in general because they are more especially Your servants for upon these few shall fall the responsibility of carrying on My work of redeeming sinful men. Everyone who serves Me and carries on My

work serves You and everyone who serves You serves Me. And every disciple who is true to Me and serves Me in faithfulness and fruitfulness brings honor and glory to Me. And now, having finished the work You gave Me to do, I am no longer to continue in the world but I am coming back to Your presence. These servants of Mine, however, must remain in the world and so, Holy Father, I am praying that You will care for them and guard them in Your Word which You gave to Me in order that when they are sent forth to carry on My work they may be one in doctrine and in deed imitating the oneness of the Father and the Son. During My personal ministry among them I guarded them in the Word which You gave Me and none of them fell away except the son of perdition and his falling away was not due to any defect in My care for him but was because of his own unrepentant rebellion and fulfilled the prophecy of scripture showing the foreknowledge and omniscience of the Father. Now I am coming to You so I am praying and teaching and demonstrating My care for them and Your care for them in order that they may have the joy that I know from Your care made full to overflowing in themselves. I have given them every doctrine and precept of Yours necessary to fit them for converting the world. The world hates them and persecutes them because they will not conform to the world but are endeavoring to be even as I am—not conformed to the world. Nevertheless, Father, I am not praying that You should remove them out of the world and keep them from persecution, but I am praying that You will guard them through the power of Your Word and Your Providence from the fiery darts of the evil one. These men are not of the world for they are Mine and I am not of the world. I pray that, by the sanctifying power of Your Spirit operating upon their minds by Your word, they may be separated from worldliness and dedicated to proclaiming Your Word which is Truth. And, as You sent Me into the World with Your regenerating Truth, I am sending them into the world with Your Word to transform the world. In order that these men may have power to be transformed, separated from worldliness and effective in carrying out their commission I now fully dedicate Myself in atoning death and resurrection. This is the truth which will give them the power for such sanctification.

### *Summary*

Jesus pours out His heart in prayer for this select group of disciples. Upon them shall fall the tremendous responsibility of carrying on God's message of redemption to all mankind. He prays for their oneness and their sanctification in the Word. He prays that the Heavenly Father will protect them and keep them from the evil one.

**Comment**

There should not be any problem with *how* the Father *gave* these eleven disciples to Jesus. Verses 7 and 8 are explanatory of verse 6. Verse 6 is even *self-explanatory*. The Father *gave* them to the Son by "drawing" them to the Son (cf. our comments on 6:41-51). The Father gave them to the Son when the Son "manifested the Father's name" to these men. When they "received" the teachings of Christ and accepted His deity and chose to follow Him it was because the Father had given them to Jesus. By the divine omniscience and omnipotence of the Father these disciples (which included even Judas Iscariot in the beginning) were given the opportunity to hear Jesus preach, witness His miracles and be invited to follow Him. Furthermore, in the divine providence of God, these men were prepared aforetime by the revelation of God to them in the Old Testament. This, we believe, is the significance of the phrase; "thine they were . . ." They were sons of the covenant of Moses, sons of Abraham and Israelites in whom there was no guile, i.e., they were sincere and honest men (except for one). Some of them had even become disciples of the Voice crying in the Wilderness, John the Baptist. They were eager to hear and do the will of Jehovah God. But even the prophet of the wilderness was God's delivery man to *give* these disciples unto the Christ (cf. Jn. 1:29-34; 3:22-36). So, these men were called by God through preaching and providence—through divine doctrine and divine deeds. But each one was chosen on the condition that he answer and respond to the call of his own free will. Each one was tested and each one was free to follow or free to "go away" (cf. Jn. 6:66-67).

All men are given to the Son through the same plan of redemption. Jesus stated (Matt. 11:25-30) that no one knows the Father except those to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. But Jesus went on to explain that every man who wanted to come to Him might do so by learning of Him. These men, however, were chosen "out of the world," i.e., they were called to a special office (cf. Matt. 16:13-20; 18:18-20; Jn. 20:19-23; I Cor. 2; Eph. 4:11). These men were called to be apostles; given a special office, a special commission, special gifts. It was the will of the Holy Spirit (cf. I Cor. 12:11) to give certain people in the first century church special offices and special gifts for the special reason that the supernatural will of God had not yet been completely recorded in writing. These men were "given to Christ out of the world" (a group specially set aside from the rest of mankind) to become foundation stones in the church of Christ—Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. And, despite their failure to comprehend the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of Christ, they kept (guarded)

the word of the Father as Christ had revealed and taught it to them. They were persuaded of His deity, of His Messiahship. They not only guarded His word but they also preached His word when He sent them forth (Matt. 10).

They had just proclaimed their belief in the divine origin of His teaching (16:29-30). In verses 7 and 8 Jesus confirms the sincerity of their former profession. They came to this wonderful knowledge by "receiving" the words which Jesus taught them and "believed" them. These men heard His teachings and allowed His word to "have free course in them" while others who heard His teachings did not (cf. 8:37, 5:38). These men were willing to do His will and thus knew His teachings to be of God while others were not willing (cf. 7:17, 3:19-21).

McGarvey (Fourfold Gospel) gives four reasons or pleas of Jesus as to why the Father should bless the disciples of the Son: (a) because they are the Son's property in a special sense as a gift from the Father; (b) because of their reception and retention of the truth and the resulting knowledge and belief; (c) because the Son is glorified in them; (d) and last because the Son must very soon leave them alone in the world, (vv. 6-11).

Jesus emphasizes, in verse 9, that, at the moment, He is concentrating His intercessory prayer upon this especially selected group of disciples and not upon men (even believers) in general. The prayer for all future believers comes later (beginning at verse 21). The meaning of verse 9 is, "Father, I am now praying especially for these eleven disciples; I am not at this moment praying for any other than these who have been given to Me for a special and an extremely responsible task." Jesus prayed for men of the world—even for His enemies (Lk. 23:34) and taught all His followers to do the same (cf. Matt. 5:44; I Tim. 2:1). But here, momentarily, His intercession is on behalf of a soon-to-be bereaved band of intimate friends and co-laborers. The last few hours preceding this prayer has been concentrated on preparing them for the time (soon to come) when they shall "be offended and scattered like sheep." They are not only dear to the heart of the Incarnate Son but they are the Father's dear ones also. The statement in verse 10 of the relationship between Father and Son is so astounding that it never becomes trite. The Son has the same authority as the Father; the Father has the same love as the Son. Jesus prays fervently for He knows that the Father loves all that belongs to the Son with the same fervency.

Jesus prays a special intercessory pray for these eleven for whatever they say and do from henceforth will reflect and represent Him and

His church and whatever reflects and glorifies Christ will glorify God. Jesus is glorified in them because He redeemed them and chose them by grace—not by merit. He is also glorified in them when they, by their transformed lives, let their lights so shine that men may see their good works and glorify the Father who is in heaven. Jesus is glorified when they testify to Him by preaching His kingdom. Whatever they do to bring honor and glory to the Son brings honor and glory to the Father. Therefore Jesus prays that the Father will grant them all that is needful for their carrying out the purpose for which they have been given Him.

One thing that is definitely needed is a oneness of heart and mind and purpose. Jesus would soon leave them. The Word of God Incarnate, the Holy Spirit in the Flesh, kept them (except Judas Iscariot) united in oneness of mind and heart. Jesus, by His constant expressions of love, tender rebukes, stern exhortations and patiently repeated lessons bound them together as one. And now He must leave them in a physical sense, but He prays that His Spirit living in them through His Word and in the Name of the Father may keep them in this oneness. The prayer of Jesus here, we must remember, is specifically for these eleven disciples. The same request is made by Jesus in verses 20-23 for all who believe in Him. The oneness which Jesus prays may exist in the disciples is a oneness deeper than any organizational union or hierarchical system. Jesus is not praying that the disciples organize themselves into a group with a pope and bishops and laymen. He is praying that they will so partake of the divine nature that there will be a oneness of their spirit with the Spirit of God. As Hendriksen puts it, "In God the unity is basic to the unity of manifestation." Before the disciples can present to the world a unified program of evangelization, they must be made one in Christ by allowing His Spirit to live in them. There can never be Christian unity until Christians individually and collectively surrender to the authority of God's Word and allow His Spirit to dwell in them. We shall say more about this later on. Christ here prays for the spiritual regeneration, sanctification and oneness in the divine name and with the divine nature which brings forth a unified proclamation and practice. Of course, the disciples cannot expect to attain the same essential oneness which belongs to the Father and the Son, nor did Jesus pray for such a oneness. He simply prayed that they might be "kept in His name" (His *name* means His mind, will, doctrine, Spirit, personality, authority) in order that they "may be one" with Christ and with one another in word and deed, similarly as Christ and the Father are one.

Westcott says, ". . . all spiritual truth is gathered up in 'the name'

of God, the perfect expression (for men) of what God is, which name' the Father gave to the Son to declare when He took man's nature upon Him. (Cf. Ex. 23:21)" It is this truth with which Christ the Logos captured and guarded ('kept') the disciples while He was with them. It was His deity and doctrine which "kept" them (cf. Jn. 6:68). And not one of them fell away but Judas Iscariot, the "son of perdition." The term "son" was given by the Hebrews to those who possessed the character described by the word or name following (cf. sons of Belial; sons of light, sons of the prophets, etc.). Judas was called by the One who reads the heart—son of perdition. Judas was a thief, traitor and murderer from the beginning. But Matthew was a tax-collector and James and John were hot-tempered fishermen. The difference was that the Word of God and the personality of Christ changed their natures when they surrendered their wills to Him. In fact there were many different personalities and persuasions among that band of twelve but subsequent history of the eleven demonstrates the power of the Spirit of Christ to keep them one in love, doctrine and purpose. R. C. Foster says, "This prayer, in so far as it applied directly to the early Christians was fulfilled. The apostles stood up on the day of Pentecost an absolute unit in faith and love and in the declaration of a single, tremendous proclamation. The early preaching of the gospel would not have been powerful had it not been for this unity. Difference of opinion as to method (Paul and Barnabas) developed in the apostolic church but unity of faith remained until after the gospel was given its final form in the N.T." (Parenthesis ours).

The title "son of perishing" was not a title given to Judas by foreordination of predestination apart from his own choosing but one which described the very nature of Judas' own willful determination to remain a thief and traitor. There is no indication that Jesus was including Judas in His prayer for the disciples this night. He had prayed many times for Judas, no doubt, just as He had tried by teaching and revealing to Judas that He knew his secret schemes to convert him. But Judas did not wish to be changed and had so completely surrendered to the devil that there was nothing more Christ could do to change him.

It was not the fault of Jesus that Judas had capitulated so completely to Satan. "Judas was lost by his own free-will determinedly choosing evil in the presence, and under the teachings, and in spite of the warnings, of Jesus Christ. God who, dwelling in eternity, foresees all possible contingencies, foresaw his fall, and foretold it, and made it to serve His purposes of grace in redemption, without having, in the

least degree, foreordained it. It is to be remembered that the fall of Judas, terrible as it was, is only one instance out of multitudes in which God permits men to receive gifts which they fling away; and occupy spheres for which in the end they, through their own fault, prove themselves unfit." (Sadler). Neither position in the church nor association with church people assures one of salvation. Judas accompanied with Jesus Christ, was chosen and named among the apostles, was given power to work miracles, *and was lost!* That which avails unto salvation is being "*kept* in the name of God the Father and Christ the Son." It is *Christ in us*, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27)!

Judas was not compelled against his own will and choice in the course which he followed in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled; but his fall and character was foreknown by God and foretold by God and by Judas' subsequent choice the prophecy of God did receive a completion or fulfillment. This would strengthen the other disciples afterward when they finally understood that the betrayal of Christ and the apostacy of Judas was not a "slip-up" on God. They would understand that God foreknew it all and used it all to His eternal purpose of redemption. See our comments on John 13:18.

The road to joy for Jesus was that of conflict, self-denial and then victory. Their joy is at the end of the same road as He shows in verses 13-14. They were also rejoicing, no doubt, in this audible prayer of the Master as He held them up before the Throne of Grace. They heard Him speak of their oneness and faithfulness and to know that the Master Himself was rejoicing in their stedfastness was a joy to them. Refer to our comments on John 15:1-11 for the joy of Jesus being in the disciples. For a discussion of the hatred of the world toward the disciples see our comments on chapters 15 and 16.

In verse 15 and 16 Jesus prays about a problem that has plagued Christians since the founding of the church (the problem, in fact, dates back as far as the patriarchs of the O.T.): how may God's "called out" people remain in the world and not be contaminated by the world!? The apostle Paul dealt with the same problem in I Corinthians 5:9-13 and II Corinthians 6:14—7:1. A Christian would have to go out of the world altogether to avoid any association with wicked people. What Jesus means is that Christians must not be "of" the world. Their natures are "transformed" rather than being "conformed" (Rom. 12:1-2). The Christian becomes a "new man" and does not set his mind on things of this world (Col. 3:1-17). The Christian does not withdraw his leavening or savoring influence from the world but keeps himself pure and true in the midst of the world. He is to help shed the light of salvation in the world and not to be corrupted by it.

In the midst of the world the Christian himself is also perfected as he is tried, tested and victorious. Dr. Wm. Barclay has a wonderful note on this subject and we shall quote it here:

"The first essential is to note that Jesus did not pray that His disciples should be taken out of this world. Jesus never prayed that His disciples might find escape; He prayed that they might find victory. The kind of Christianity which buries itself in a monastery or a convent would not have seemed Christianity to Jesus at all. The kind of Christianity which finds the essence of the Christian life in prayer and meditation, and in a life withdrawn from the world, would have seemed to Jesus a sadly truncated version of the faith He died to bring to me. It was Jesus insistence that it was in the hurly-burly and the rough and tumble of life that a man must live out his Christianity. Of course there is need of prayer and meditation and quiet times, times when we shut the door upon the world to be alone with God, but all these things are not the end of life; they are the means to the end; and the end of life is to demonstrate the Christian life in the ordinary work of the world. Christianity was never meant to withdraw a man from life; it was meant to equip him better for life. Christianity does not offer us release from problems; it offers us a way to solve our problems. Christianity does not offer us an easy peace; it offers us a triumphant warfare. Christianity does not offer us a life in which troubles are faced and conquered. However much it may be true that the Christian is not of the world, it still remains true that it is within the world that his Christianity must be lived out. The Christian must never desire to abandon the world; he must always desire to win the world."

The Christian is not impertinent when he longs for his home with Christ (cf. Phil. 1:21-24; II Cor. 5:1-10) in heaven away from this world, but the Christian's task is to plant that longing in the hearts of all men while the Christian himself is a sojourner and a pilgrim here. In this war of ideas and ideals—the war of truth and falsehood—the Christian disciple may have protection from the evil one. Jesus prays for the protection of His disciples and that prayer includes the request made in verse 17 for their sanctification. John wrote later in I John 5:18-19, "We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth himself, and the evil one toucheth him not. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one." Our protection comes from Almighty God but we avail ourselves of that protection by faith and obedience to His commandments. By faith and obedience to the Word of truth we are sanctified, set aside, set free from sin and the world. Therefore it is in

this sanctification by faith that we are protected from the evil one. Not only are we protected but we also enter into battle with the forces of evil by faith and sanctification (cf. Eph. 6:10-20). Our protection and victory over the evil one consists in fleeing from him and drawing nigh unto God (cf. James 4:7-8).

Sanctification is not something reserved for an elite few. Neither does it come by some mystical miracle worked by God today apart from the supernatural regenerating power of His word which is truth. All men may be purified, reconciled, justified and sanctified by faith in the Person of Christ expressed by obedience to His Word as it is given once for all in the New Testament. To be sanctified means to be "called out" from the world and set apart. We are called by the gospel as it was preached and recorded by the apostles (I Thess. 2:7-12; II Thess. 2:13-15). Of course there is a revelation of truth from God in nature and in the providential operation of the Holy Spirit apart from the supernaturally recorded Word of God. But nature and providence are very nearly inexplicable without the special revelation of God in the Word formerly spoken and now written. And so, ultimately, our sanctification to the degree which pleases God rests upon our response to His written Word.

We have what is almost a paradox. Jesus prays that the disciples may be set apart from the world in order that they might be sent into the world. It is not such a strange paradox, however, when one gives it a moment's thought. What the world definitely does not need is more worldly minded people. What the world definitely has not and cannot do is redeem itself or regenerate itself. The world "through its wisdom knew not God" and therefore it must have a supernatural wisdom. The world must have messengers who have been reborn with a supernatural nature to deliver to it the message of salvation.

And so Jesus prays that these eleven men might so set themselves apart, might deny themselves with the same self-denial which He knew, and thus become messengers fit for the service of God. Jesus Himself has given them the Word of the Father and has prepared them and now He prays that they may continue to grow in this sanctifying power as they are sent forth into the world.

Christ not only calls them and commissions them, He empowers them. For their very sakes He sets Himself apart in order that they may have a power with which to be set apart. Lenski says, "The sanctification of Jesus for his heavenly mission is to make possible the sanctification of the disciples . . . They are only to receive sanctification by a gift from the Father . . . And this gift to them is to proceed from what Jesus now does for them . . . Out of the one sanctification the

other is to proceed; thus the two are placed side by side."

Men are made holy first by the atoning blood of Christ applied to their sins through their faith in Him, and their allowing His Spirit live in them. Out of this comes the power for them to sanctify themselves. The power is not resident in men but in God but even God's power is available only conditionally. The condition is faith-surrender-obedience. Westcott says, "The work of the Lord is here presented under the aspect of absolute self-sacrifice. He showed through His life how all that is human may be brought wholly into the service of God; and this He did by true personal determination, as perfectly man . . . By union with Him they also are 'themselves sanctified in truth,' through the Spirit whose mission followed on His completed work, and who enables each believer to appropriate what Christ has gained."

There is no possibility of sanctification or holiness apart from a moral response to the supernatural special revelation of God written in the Bible. There is first of all an initial response in initial obedience which brings us into Christ and sanctifies us as the Corinthians were "washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord . . . and in the Spirit . . ." (I Cor. 6:11) when they "heard and believed and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). But sanctification is a continuing moral response to the call of the Spirit of truth as He calls by the Word of God as it is written upon our hearts. We are to abound more and more in sanctification (cf. I Thess. 4:1-8) by knowing God and receiving His Holy Spirit. We must continue to be led by the Spirit by believing the truth (II Thess. 2:13-15), which is the sanctification of the Spirit. We are to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts (I Pet. 3:15) by such a continuing intellectual and experiential knowledge of Him through His Word that we may give answer to every man who asks us concerning the hope that is in us. Hope has a sanctifying and purifying power (I Jn. 3:1-3), and by the precious promises God has given us in His Word we may escape the corruption that is in the world (II Pet. 1:1-4). Perhaps the plainest explanation of the relationship of a continuing moral response to divinely revealed truth in bringing about a continuing sanctification is found in Ephesians 4:17-32. Here the apostle makes it plain that holiness and sanctification, even after one has become a christian, is dependent upon one's moral obedience and practice of the truth . . . and that truth is *in Jesus*. Truth is Personal . . . truth is in the Person of Christ. Truth is "He" and "Him" not "it." Therefore, He must live His life in us if we are to "speak the truth each one with our neighbor." And here is the important part of it all . . . we know His Person only through our intellectual and moral response to the infallible revelation of His Personality in the written

Word of the Spirit, the Bible. Sanctification means primarily singleness of purpose, integration of all the faculties of the person toward one goal. Sanctification in Christ means singleness of purpose toward Him and His Word. Sanctification or the lack of it on the part of individual members in the church is the primary problem with the lack of unity in the whole body of Christ.

### *Quiz*

1. How did God the Father *give* these eleven disciples to the Son?
2. What does Jesus mean, they were given to Him "out of the world?"
3. Why does Jesus say He is *not* praying for the world (v. 9)?
4. What "oneness" does He pray may belong to the eleven disciples?
5. Why did the "son of perdition" fall? Was it predestined? Explain your answer.
6. Why did Jesus pray that the disciples be not taken from the world? How could they remain in the world and not be of the world?
7. What is sanctification? Who is to be sanctified? How may one be sanctified?

### PRAYER FOR ALL BELIEVERS

#### *Text: 17:20-26*

- 20 Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word;
- 21 that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me.
- 22 And the glory, which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one;
- 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me.
- 24 Father, I desire that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me. for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.
- 25 O righteous Father, the world knew thee not, but I knew thee; and these knew that thou didst send me;
- 26 and I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them.

### *Queries*

- a. Which religious bodies may qualify as the "believers" for whom Jesus prayed in verse 20?

- b. What is the glory which Christ gives to believers?
- c. How is Christ to be in the believer (v. 26)?

### *Paraphrase*

Nor am I praying these things only for these eleven men. I am also praying for all men who shall come to faith and obedience in Me through simply responding to the divinely inspired Word which these apostles shall preach and write. My prayer for all believers is that they also may all be one in doctrine, practice, love and purpose. I am praying that even as You are in Me and I am in You in an organic and essential oneness, all believers may come to this same essential oneness in Us, in order that their oneness will lend impact to the saving efficacy of the Word and the world will believe that I was sent from God the Father. And the glory of the Spirit and the divine nature which You gave Me while I dwelt in the flesh I have given unto all who believe on Me through the Word in order that by possessing this glorious nature all believers may be one even as We are One. My very nature abides in them just as Your divine nature abides in Me in order that they may all be brought to a mature and perfected oneness so that the world of unbelievers may know that I came into the world with a commission from You and that their oneness is a product of Your love for them even as Our oneness testifies to divine love. Father, My desire is that all those whom You have given Me shall ultimately be with Me in Heaven and know the ineffable joy of beholding My glory. They shall see then the divine love with which You have loved Me through all eternity in all its gloriousness. O, Righteous Father, the divine knowledge of You which I possess I manifested to the world but the world rejected Me and did not come to know You. But all My disciples, the ones who receive Me, know that You sent Me for I make Your name and nature known unto them and will continue to make it known to them in the ultimate sense in order that the love with which You loved Me may be in them and that I may be in them also.

### *Summary*

Jesus looks down the corridors of time and His heart is turned in prayer to all who shall believe on Him through the word of the apostles. The oneness of all believers on earth and their ultimate glory and joy is the concern of His heart.

### *Comment*

Verse 20 is one of those verses of the New Testament which is a veritable treasurehouse. Its simplicity leaves no question as to the agency for making men Christians—it is the word of the apostles. Jesus knows no other method but the preaching of the apostolic doc-

trine in order to bring men to faith. Neither are there any other doctrines or philosophies approved by Christ to bring about unity of all who believe on Him. This same apostle John wrote in I John 4:1-6 that only those who hear and heed the unadulterated apostolic doctrine are those of the spirit of truth. All who add to or take away from the teachings of the apostles and practice these perversions are of the spirit of error. The apostle Paul said that belief comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17). The apostolic doctrine was completed when the New Testament as we have it today was completed in about 95-100 A.D. There are no other divinely approved or authorized writings. Paul wrote that even though an angel from heaven should proclaim any message other than the apostles he should be anathematized (Gal. 1:8-9). Jude wrote that the only body of apostolic doctrine authorized to be delivered to Christians was delivered once for all time in the New Testament (Jude 3). We like what Lenski has to say here, "The Word communicated by the apostles is the means for producing faith and making believers . . . Apart from the Word there is no church, because there is no faith apart from the Word; and the church is constituted out of those and those alone who have faith. The Word is the vital means and the root of faith. At once it appears how dangerous it is to be ignorant of the Word or to alter and to falsify it in any way." It is the preaching and proclaiming and teaching of the message of the apostles in the same way as the apostles proclaimed it that brings men to faith. It must be preached as historically true and accurate; as factually credible; as supernaturally delivered and verified; as demanding a moral response; as being of itself experientially known once it is practiced. It must be preached as absolutely and exclusively authoritative in all realms of life.

It is by this same word of the apostles that individual believers are to be in Christ and have Christ in them and thus grow into the same oneness which Father and Son know. Paul makes it very plain indeed in Ephesians 4:11-16 that we must "speak the truth in love" in order to grow up into a mature oneness in Christ. And this "growing up" is laid down as necessarily a cooperative effort. First, apostles and other teachers are set apart in the church to instruct in the Lord's Word. Second, all members of the body of Christ are to so learn the word of Christ that they be no longer tossed about with every slight wind of new and fanciful doctrine like children. Third, every member of the body is to supply maturity and sustenance to the body, "according to the working in due measure of each several part." And so in verses 21 and 23 Jesus makes the oneness of believers as a unified body of individual members solely dependent upon the union of the individual

with Him. Christ in the individual and God in Christ and all perfected or made complete in one body. See our special sermon at the end of chapter 16, "Christ in You the Hope of Glory," concerning the way Christ is in the individual and the individual knows he is in Christ. The *all* important focal point is the Living Word of the Living God. By submission to the Will of the Personality (Christ) living in The Word, this Personality (Christ) comes supernaturally to dwell in us and we in Him and all believers in union with one another. The reader is directed to a careful and prayerful study of the Special Study at the end of this chapter on Unity.

In verses 22 and 24 Christ informs us that He has given His glory to all believers and that there is also a glory of His which He desires we behold in the future where He shall be seen with the Father. Christ is speaking here in verse 22 as if He had already won the victory over the Cross and the Tomb and had ascended to the Father and had sent the Spirit. We feel that the "glory" which He says He has given to all believers is none other than His divine nature in the indwelling Spirit in all believers. Speaking of the Spirit in Romans 8:1-30 Paul concludes by saying ". . . whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." The same apostle, speaking of the ministration of the Spirit, says, "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit," (II Cor. 3:18). Again, Paul wrote to the Thessalonians concerning being chosen in the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth by which God called them "though our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here, as in the others, the Spirit and the Word and the believer's Glory are all connected. And so it is that in Ephesians 3:17-19 that Paul tells us we may know experientially, feelingly, by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us by faith the breadth and length and depth and height and the love of Christ which passes knowledge and may be filled with all the fullness of God!! Yes, my friend, we can know the glory which God gave to Christ. Christ offers it to us in the Spirit by faith. The measure to which we may know and feel this glory is dependent upon the measure of our faith and submission to the will of Christ. Of course we must remember that the essence of the glory of Christ is that of selflessness and service. His glory consisted in giving Himself totally to God's will and man's salvation. When we are guided by and indwelt by the Spirit this will be our glory also.

There is a glory Christ desires for the Christian yet to be revealed. We are now recipients of this glory in a measure hindered only by our

corruptible bodies. But when Jesus comes the Second time we shall receive the consummation of this glory in all its excellence (cf. I Jn. 3:2; Phil. 3:20-21). "When by His grace I shall look on His face, that will be glory for me." Moses and Elijah appeared in glory (Lk. 9:30-31). We shall appear with Him in glory when He appears (Col. 3:4). We even now partake of the glory to be revealed (I Pet. 5:1). Our light affliction works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (II Cor. 4:17; cf. also Rom. 8:17-18; II Tim. 2:10). Jesus regained for man the glory which man forfeited when he sinned and Christ brought many sons to glory by His death and resurrection (Heb. 2:5-18).

Verses 24 through 26 form the climactic crescendo of the whole night's discourse (chapters 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17). He has already expressed His will that all disciples shall one day be with Him in glory (14:1-6). He has already explained how and why the world did not know or receive Him, (chapter 16). He has already explained the coming of the Spirit (14, 15 and 16). He has already explained the glory of giving self (chapter 13). And now He sums it all up. He made known the name and nature of the Righteous Father so that the boundless, filling, glorious love with which the Father loved Him may be in the disciples and that He Himself may also be in them. Christ dwelling in our hearts by knowledge and acceptance of the Word is more than a mere intellectual assent to the verities of the Scripture. Christ cannot dwell in us until love of the Father dwells in us, but of course love for the Father comes when we apprehend the love of the Father for us as it is expressed only in the written record, the Bible. It is a reciprocating, circular, triangular affair, with the Father, Son, and believers and the Bible the hub.

We have desisted from making extended comments of our own on unity and have offered a Special Study with comments from three Christian brethren (Bro. Beam now having gone to be with Jesus) who have spent years laboring in this field. We have much we would like to say but these men say it so well in so brief a manner we feel our readers would be the more profited than by our lengthy comments.

Rather than an expository sermon on Chapter Seventeen we have chosen to conclude this chapter with excerpts from essays by respected Christian men of long experience in dealing with the problems of Christian unity, Seth Wilson, Dean, Ozark Bible College; Carl Ketcherside, Editor and Lecturer; Earnest Beam, former Minister and Lecturer on the Pacific Coast, now deceased.

## SPECIAL STUDY NO. TWO

Excerpts from an essay by Seth Wilson, Dean, Ozark Bible College, entitled,

"OUR LORD'S PRAYER FOR UNITY IN JOHN 17"

*Why Must We Have Unity of Christians?*

1. *Jesus wants it that way.* It should be enough that Christ prayed for unity of the church, who gave Himself for her, who will claim her for His bride, who will give to her all His inheritance.
2. *The Holy Spirit through the apostles urged unity.* Read I Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:1-6; Phil. 2:2; I Pet. 4:8-11.
3. *The practice of division will condemn us.* Read Gal. 5:20,21; I Cor. 3:16,17.
4. *We are commanded to avoid or turn from those who cause division.* Read Rom. 16:17,18; Tit. 3:10,11; II John 9-11.
5. *That the world may believe.* Division among the churches makes it impossible for the schools to teach the certain truths of Christianity, and it gives to every common-school pupil the false impression that religion is not a matter of fixed truth, but only matter of feelings and that every one makes his religion for himself, and it is just as respectable as any one else's religion. However much we may wish and agitate for the public schools to teach Christianity, they simply cannot do it while divisions continue to exist. The world discounts or disregards the testimony of a divided Christendom, just as we discount the so-called "scientific" conclusions which differ from and contradict one another while all are represented as "assured results." The less we care about contradictions in our testimony, the less the world cares about our affirmations. If it does not make any difference *what* one believes, it probably does not make any difference *whether* one believes. If one church is as good as another, possibly none is as good as any, since both statements rest upon the assumption that falsehood is as good as truth, disobedience as good as obedience.
6. *Because division comes from putting human authority in the place of Christ.* At least in some part it displaces Christ as the head of the church, and that is blasphemy. See Eph. 1:20-23.
7. *Because division comes from putting the words of men in the place of the infallible word of God.* At least in some part it displaces the Holy Spirit as the revealer and spokesman of Jesus Christ and His covenant. See I Cor. 2.
8. *Because Christ is one and not divided.* We cannot be perfectly united in and with Him without becoming united with each other. If we have the mind of Christ we will have the same mind, and so on

through all the characteristics of the Christian which we receive from Christ Himself. Unity is natural and inherent in Christianity; and division among Christians misrepresents its nature.

9. *Because division wastes and dissipates the energies and resources of evangelistic workers and supporters;* furthermore, it turns a great bulk of religious effort from evangelism to party promotion and party regulation and party contentions. If all the printers' ink, if all the hours of study and conference, if all the money and men that have been employed to keep up human institutions had been used to bring men to their Savior, what glorious results might have been! As it is five centuries of vigorous denominationalism leave the churches far from holding their own against an avowedly pagan world. "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

To sum up, all the causes of division are sinful; all the results of division are shameful; all the characteristics of division misrepresent Christ and despoil the godly character. Surely division is of the devil and is his best implement for hindering the church from victory. The faith, devotion, obedience and brotherliness that produce unity are godly. The practice of unity is sweet and blessed (Ps. 133:1). The results of unity are faith and its glorious victory. Its goal is that all should be perfected into one in Christ. Can any man doubt that unity is of God and is a prerequisite to a victorious church?

#### *What is the Unity for Which Christ Prayed?*

1. Jesus in His prayer describes it briefly, but exactly: "as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee." We in them and they in us.
2. Such as the world can see: "that the world may believe." The purpose of unity is faith and conformity to Christ. A union without faith and obedience defeats its own purpose.
3. A fellowship of those who are called of God and set apart for His name, to do His work by His Spirit, using His Word—all in every place "that are sanctified." Study the word "sanctify" and its other forms with a concordance, or see the article "Sanctification" in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.
4. It is such a vital relationship as is described by figure of the members of the body in relation to the head (see I Cor. 12; Rom. 12:4,5), or of the branches to the vine (John 15:5).
5. Such as existed in the apostolic church when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4:32).
6. Such as prompted the Gentile Christians to send help to Jewish Christians in time of need (II Cor. 8:1-9; especially verse 5).
7. Such as is indicated in the following words used in apostolic exhortations: "speak the same thing," "Be perfectly joined together,"

"same mind," "like-minded," "same love," "of one accord," "preferring one another," and "with one accord and one mouth." See I Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2; Rom. 12:10,16; 15:1-6; I Cor. 12:25,26.

8. Such as is characterized by "one Lord," "one faith," "one baptism," "one body," "one Spirit," "one hope," "one God and Father over all, in all and through all" (Eph. 4:1-6).

Can any man imagine that the state of Christendom today is the unity that pleases the Lord?

Note particularly that it was unity in faith, "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints." Jesus prayed that *those who believe* might be one. It was He that said, "but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Paul, who so earnestly urged the Corinthian brethren to unity and love, closes his great letter of correction with this: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (I Cor. 16:22). In Gal. 5:20,21 divisions under every name are condemned, but in Gal. 1:8,9, Paul writes: "If any man preach unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema." In the first Epistle of John, Christian love and fellowship are upheld in their true nature and necessity, but in II John 9-11, Christians are strictly commanded to refuse fellowship to "anyone bringing not this teaching." Jesus commanded the church at Ephesus because they could not endure evil men and did try false apostles (Rev. 2:2). He held it against the churches at Pergamum and at Thyatira that they had there some that held injurious teaching (Rev. 2:14-16,20).

Unity of believers with unbelievers is so impossible that intermarriage of the two is not to be attempted (Read II Cor. 6:14—7:1). They could have a form of union, but not unity sanctified in Christ. "What portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?" "Or what communion hath light with darkness?" How can we hope to promote true unity in Christ while we disregard Christ's will and harbor unbelievers within the fellowship? Study and apply the following scriptures: Roman. 16:17-19; Gal. 1:6-9; Tit. 1:9-16; Tit. 3:10; I John 2:18-26; 4:1-6; Jude 3,4; II Cor. 10:3-5; 11:13-15; I Tim. 6:20,21; II Tim. 3:5; Eph. 5:7-12.

PROPOSITIONS from an article by Ernest Beam, CHRISTIAN STANDARD, October 8, 1949

Proposition 1. All sincerely immersed into Christ, with manifest purpose to be governed of Him, are one body in Jesus Christ, though some are now also in denominational churches and others also in church of Christ sects.

Proposition 2. All of those in next above are commanded of God to receive one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Proposition 3. The receiving of brethren in Christ is never an endorsement of weakness, immaturity, and error even as Christ's reception of us is not His endorsement of our weakness, immaturity, and error.

Proposition 4. Those who will not receive the brethren but do disfellowship them, or some of them, are, on that account, to be marked, avoided, and rejected, even as the man under the old law who did kill was himself to be put to death.

Proposition 5. The Scriptures forbid any sincere brother to violate his own conscience in religious acts and devotions whether that conscience is at present properly taught or not; and the Scriptures forbid the rest of us to ignore that conscience. Nor is our own liberty to be judged of another conscience.

Proposition 6. It is not necessary for the brethren to be of the same mind upon meats, days, circumcision, the law, colleges, missionary organizations, orphan homes, instrument, "pastor system," cups, war, premillennial views, tobacco, classes, uninspired literature, names, or other such, as conditions of salvation and of receiving one another. Those of Proposition 1 are one body notwithstanding these and like differences.

Proposition 7. Division in the body of Christ is always made by the brother who will not fellowship his brother. (This does not mean there are not times that a brother must disown a brother; there are. But the brother who disfellowships always and everywhere makes the division—those that should never be, as well as those that must be.)

Proposition 8. The brother, though right about every item in Proposition 6 above is not permitted to bind that right, as a condition of receiving, against his brother who does not yet perceive the right.

Proposition 9. The receiving of all those sincerely in Christ, by Paul, did not stop him from successful labor to overcome the wrongs of those received, but did enhance the working of it. The receiving by all of us, each of the rest of us, in Proposition 1 above, by the wonderful grace of our God, can and should work the same way.

Proposition 10. No more grace is required in my heart to receive my brother, as set out above, than is required in Christ to receive me now and hereafter. (Yea, the comparison is an unworthy one, but is used to turn the mind toward working of grace *from* us as it has come *to* us.)

Proposition 11. The Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the apostles were not compromisers and betrayers of the gospel in receiving brethren with error of whom we read in the New Testament; we are the

compromisers and betrayers of their gospel when we do not so receive one another.

Proposition 12. The Holy Spirit as certainly commands not to own all those who come among us not of genuine faith in the whole mystery of Christ revealed in Scripture (II John 7:11; I John 4:2,3) or who are not of mind to consent to "wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness" (I Timothy 6:3) as He does command us to receive the brethren of genuine faith. (We may together own the authority of the dictionary, but fail of meaning, proper usage, and pronunciation in keeping with that authority. We must together own the authority of Jesus and of His Word, or oneness is neither possible nor permitted.)

Proposition 13. It is as hurtfully erroneous to try to make God speak in the field of necessary judgment—the circumstantial of the gospel left to the judgment of the brethren and the expediency of which changes through the centuries with changing means and agencies of society—as it is not to hear God in the great realm of faith where He does speak.

Proposition 14. In all matters of faith a thing must be lawful before it can ever be expedient; in all matters of necessary judgment a thing is not to be judged of right or wrong but whether it is a good and useful means to attain the given end.

Proposition 15. The use of any and all humanly adopted means and methods must ever be kept within the realm of *enabling* what God has commanded and never used upon a par with, as an addition to, as a part of, or exalted above the thing commanded or those appointed of God. (The use of uninspired literature to *enable* the teaching of God's Word is one thing. But to make use of it as upon a par with, added to, a part of, or exalted above God's Word, is grievous error not to be tolerated. The same is true of all things whatsoever that have been left to the judgment and wisdom of men.

Proposition 16. To charge a brother with an addition to the Word who uses uninspired literature to *enable* the teaching of the inspired Word; or to "the cup" who but uses individual cups to *enable* the communion of "the cup"; or to sing who but uses the instrument to *enable* singing, decency, and order; or to the one organization of the New Testament who but uses colleges, missionary organizations, orphan homes, old folks' homes, organized classes, and journalistic organizations to *enable* orderly obedience to the commands of God—this is false accusation against brethren and divides those who are of the same faith.

Proposition 17. The adoption of any test of fellowship not clearly

demanded in Scripture is to adopt a condition of salvation—a new and added commandment—unto the perversion of the gospel. This is the very sin of Galatians the first chapter, and is the sin which has made a multitude of sects particularly among those who do not use the instrument. It is also the sin to which Paul would submit, "no, not for an hour."

QUOTED FROM MISSION MESSENGER NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 1964, EDITOR W. CARL KETCHERSIDE

2. DO YOU THINK THE PRAYER OF JESUS CAN BE ANSWERED BY RESTORING THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT?

No, I do not. The restoration movement launched by the great heroes of the faith in the early part of the nineteenth century was simply a means to an end. It was never intended to be an end in itself. Alexander Campbell wrote, "We only profess to work and walk by the rules which will inevitably issue in a pure speech, and in right conceptions of that pure and holy, and celestial thing called Christianity—in faith, in sentiment, and in practice." It is too much to expect of these noble pioneers that they would be able to either discover or translate into practice all that was essential to the accomplishment of their aims. The restoration movement was vital precisely because it was a movement. To return to it at any given point and assert we had "arrived" would be folly. When a movement ceases to move it becomes a monument to past accomplishments and dead hopes.

Alexander Campbell did not believe he had all of the answers. He freely admitted that to enter some areas of consideration "we should have to launch upon a wide and tempestuous ocean, for which our slender bark is not at this time sufficiently equipped. This may yet deserve the construction of a larger vessel in a more propitious season." Our task, as I conceive it, is not to restore a movement inaugurated by men but to recapture the ideal of God. We believe that in this we may be aided by restoring to our generation the spirit of the restoration movement. Even this must be regarded as a means to an end.

16. WHAT DO YOU RECOMMEND WE SHOULD DO TO RESTORE A PROPER FEELING OF UNITY AMONG THE BELIEVERS?

We should confess to one another that we have been partisan and sectarian in attitude and pray one for another that we may be healed of the ravages upon our hearts of this work of the flesh. We should be brought to our knees in tears over our growing sectarianism. We should set the table of the Lord for every sincere immersed believer

and invite all such to sit down around it as our brethren. We should call upon all of them, recognize and regard them as children of our Father.

It is time for us to throw off the childish attitude which has characterized the brotherhood and start acting like men. The idea of categorizing those who differ with us as "brethren in error," with the implication that we are wholly free from error and know all there is to know, is a little silly when you think about it seriously. The truth is that we are all brethren in error. Not one of us is perfect in knowledge and we all have a great deal to learn. We do not accept one another because we are free from error but because we are free in Christ —free to receive one another even while we try to work out our problems together and seek to arrive at a greater understanding. The brethren who accept me will have to overlook a lot of things just as God had to make allowances in order to receive me. I am willing to receive others on the same basis as he received me.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

There is no more time for private counsel with the disciples. The hour of darkness has come. Between chapters 17 and 18 of John's gospel, the agony of Gethsemane transpires and is recorded in the Synoptics. And now in chapters 18 and 19 of John's gospel the darkest deeds ever perpetrated by man are recorded for all men to feel for all time their shame.

Simeon the aged prophet told Mary, the mother of Jesus, some thirty-three years before this night, "Behold, this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." (Lk. 2:34-35).

In other words, Jesus was born to be a "sign spoken against" or a spectacle. The spectacle is about to begin. He will be betrayed by one of His closest friends. He will be arrested, mocked, ridiculed, falsely and illegally tried and condemned. He will be denied by the one closest to Him and the same one who swore that he would never let Him down. Then, declared innocent at first, He will, because of political expediency, be given over to His murderers. But through it all it was not the Son of God on trial—it was mankind on trial that black night. At the end of this chapter we have a sermon entitled "Mankind on Trial."

Isaiah, some 700 years before this night, had prophesied, "He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers

is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." (Isa. 53:7). Now it is about to come to pass.

Instead of the usual paraphrase we have chosen to follow the regularly printed text with a "harmony" or "unification" of all the gospel accounts of this section (Trials, Crucifixion and Resurrection). This unification will be a quotation from *The Gospels; The Unification of the Four Gospels*, by Thomas G. Deitz, published by Eerdmans.

We continue with our outline of the third section of this gospel:  
III. The Word Manifested To The Disciples and Their Acceptance of Him, 13:1—20:31

B. Public Spectacle of His Passion, 18:1—20:31

1. The Arrest and Trials, 18:1-40

a. Betrayal and Arrest, 18:1-11

b. Tried by the Jewish authorities, 18:12-27

c. Tried by Pilate, the Roman authority, 18:28-40

### BETRAYAL AND ARREST

*Text:* 18:1-11

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into which he entered, himself and his disciples.

2 Now Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.

3 Judas then, having received the band of soldiers, and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

4 Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon him, went forth, and saith unto them, Whom seek ye?

5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, who betrayed him, was standing with them.

6 When therefore he said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

7 Again therefore he asked them, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

8 Jesus answered, I told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

9 that the word might be fulfilled which he spake, Of those whom thou hast given me I lost not one.

10 Simon Peter therefore having a sword drew it, and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. Now the servant's name was Malchus.

11 Jesus therefore said unto Peter, Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

### *Queries*

- a. Where was the "garden" into which Jesus entered with his disciples?
- b. Why did the crowd "go backward" when Jesus identified Himself?
- c. Why the boldness of Peter here when later he fled with the others?

### *Paraphrase (Harmony)*

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into which he entered, himself and his disciples; a place which was named Gethsemane: (all the Gethsemane experience falls between John 18:1 and John 18:2; cf. Matt. 26:37-46; Mk. 14:32-41; and Lk. 22:40-46). And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, who betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples came, and with a great multitude with swords and staves, with lanterns and torches, and weapons from the chief priests and the scribes, and elders of the people. And Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and elders, that were come against him, Are ye come out, as against a robber, with swords and staves to seize me? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched not forth your hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness. Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon him, went forth, and saith unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When therefore he said unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground. Again therefore he asked them, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the word might be fulfilled which he spake, Of those whom thou has given me I lost not one. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he: take him, And lead him away safely, And straightway he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Rabbi; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, do that for which thou art come, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

Simon Peter therefore having a sword drew it, and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. Now the servant's name was

Malchus. And when they that were about him saw what would follow, they said, Lord shall we smite with the sword? Jesus therefore said unto Peter, Put up the sword into the sheath; all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Suffer ye them thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? How then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? But all this is come to pass, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples left him, and fled.

And a certain young man followed with him, having a linen cloth cast about him, over his naked body; and they lay hold on him; but he left the linen cloth, and fled naked.

### *Summary*

The Son of man, with legions of angels ready to answer His slightest beckoning, surrenders to betrayal by one of His disciples and arrest by the murderous rulers in order that the purpose of the Father may be fulfilled.

### *Comment*

When Jesus finished His intercessory prayer (somewhere in Jerusalem), He beckoned the disciples to follow Him and He left the city. It is pure conjecture to try to establish the exact spot of the Upper Room and to guess which gate Jesus used to go out to the garden. In fact, it is equally uncertain just where Gethsemane was located. The most probable location for Gethsemane is on the brow of the Mt. of Olives. The word "Gethsemane" means *oil press*. The word John uses is *chorion*, or "garden" which is literally, "a place enclosed, a farm." It was an olive orchard which was probably enclosed with a stone fence having within it an olive press. Jesus left the city of Jerusalem by one of the eastern gates and crossed the valley Kedron. This valley runs north and south along the eastern wall of Jerusalem, separating the city from the Mount of Olives. Most of the year the valley is bone dry. Only during the winter rainy season is there any water in the valley and then only during heavy rainfall. This valley seems to have been a favorite dumping place (cf. I Ki. 15:13; II Ki. 23:4; II Chron. 29:16; 30:14; Jer. 31:40). It was over the same dry stream bed that David, a royal type of The King of Israel, fled before his rebellious son Absalom (cf. II Sam. 15:23).

The account of the Lord's experience in Gethsemane is recorded in the other three gospels (cf. Matt. 26:37-46; Mk. 14:32-41; Lk. 22:40-46), and John, led by the Holy Spirit, deemed it unnecessary to repeat the account.

The warning of Jesus to Judas at the Passover supper, "What thou doest, do quickly" (Jn. 13:27) forced Judas to do immediately what he had not planned to do until after the feast was over. Judas may have taken the warning to mean that Jesus would leave the city the next day. We do not know the movements of Judas after he left the upper room but Samuel J. Andrews in "The Life Of Our Lord Upon The Earth" gives a good resume of what probably happened. "Going immediately to Caiaphas, or to some other leading member of the Sanhedrin, he informs him where Jesus is, and announces that he is ready to fulfill his compact and at once to make the arrest. It was not, as we have seen, the intention to arrest Him during the feast lest there should be a popular tumult (Matt. 26:5); but now that an opportunity offered of seizing Him secretly at dead of night when all were asleep or engaged at the paschal meal, and therefore without danger of interference or uproar, His enemies could not hesitate. Once in their hands, the rest was easy. A hasty trial, a prejudged condemnation, an immediate execution, and the hated Prophet of Galilee was forever removed out of their way. All, perhaps, might be done by the hour of morning prayer and sacrifice. With great despatch all the necessary arrangements are made. Some soldiers the Sanhedrin had under its own direction, the guards of the temple commanded by 'the captains of the temple,' or, as translated by Campbell, 'officers of the temple guard'; and to these they added some of their own servants armed with staves. But they must be attended by Roman soldiers in case a disturbance should arise; and to this end Pilate was persuaded to place at their command the cohort, or a part of it, under its captain, that during the feast was stationed at Fort Antonia for the preservation of order. Some of the chief priests and elders were also themselves to be present, to direct the proceedings, and if necessary to control the people. The soldiers, or some portion of them were to be provided with lanterns and torches, probably to search the garden if any attempt was made to escape. That at this time the moon was full presents no objection. They would need lanterns and torches, even in a clear night and under a brilliant moon, because the western side of Olivet abounds in deserted tombs and caves. It is possible that they thought to surprise Him asleep. It was agreed that Judas should precede the others, and, approaching Him in a friendly way, kiss Him, and thus make Him known. This indicates that no resistance was anticipated."

Judas knew exactly where Jesus would be. It may be that Judas had taken the soldiers first to the upper room and finding Jesus and the disciples gone led the authorities directly to the garden because he

knew this is where Jesus would go. Judas had often been to this garden with Jesus and the other disciples.

But they did not surprise Jesus! Jesus knew at all times exactly what was happening. He knew the unspoken thoughts of Judas' heart. Seeing the many flickering torches and lanterns borne by the multitude of soldiers as they came across the Kedron toward the garden, Jesus knew exactly their purpose. As they approached, Jesus strode forward to meet them, coming out of the darkened shelter of the olive trees.

He takes command of the situation immediately by asking, "Whom are you seeking?" Their answer was, "Jesus of Nazareth." Judas had not yet given his sign and was still standing in front of the crowd. Jesus must have taken another step or two forward leaving the disciples behind Him when He said, "I am he!" The complete calm, determined resolution, sublime majesty and commanding manner in both voice and demeanor surprised and startled those in the front of the crowd so that they stumbled backward over each other and some fell to the ground. There is no indication that Jesus did anything miraculous here to cause these soldiers to fall to the ground. There are many indications scattered through the Gospels that there was something extraordinarily subduing in the aspect and voice of Christ (when He cleansed the temple; when He had steadfastly set His face toward Jerusalem; when He walked through their midst unharmed; when they returned empty handed saying never a man so spake, etc.). Lenski thinks it was altogether miraculous and that the entire multitude fell backwards to the ground. Hendriksen says both the demeanor of Jesus and a miraculous sign both must account for the falling back of the soldiers. What Jesus did was completely unexpected! They expected Him to flee or at least hide. Barnes says, ". . . to suppose that there was (miraculous power—physical force), greatly detracts from the moral sublimity of the scene." The truth is, they were caught, instead of catching Him. Theirs was a mean, treacherous errand. They were employing a traitor as their guide. They were to surprise Him but He surprised them! He brought all their nefarious scheming into the open and put them to shame. The Lord rebuked them and uncovered for them their cowardice when He said to them, as the synoptics record, "Are you come out, as against a robber, with swords and staves to seize me? When I was among you daily in the temple, you made no move to arrest me—but this is your hour and the power of darkness."

After they had recovered somewhat from their surprise Jesus asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" and they replied a second time, "Jesus of Nazareth." "As I told you before," He replies, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, and if you are seeking me, let these other men behind me

go their way unharmed. Verse 9 seems to be John's own parenthetical insertion into the narrative here as John is writing the account years later to show that what Jesus had prophesied 6:39; 10:28 and 17:12 was in part fulfilled in this very incident.

Now Judas had already made a pact with the leaders. Judas had arranged to embrace His Master and this would be the signal for them to take Jesus by physical force and take Him away "safely" (said Judas). Judas probably feared some miraculous judgment or escape by Jesus. So Judas stepped forth and embraced Jesus with fervency, saying, "Hail, Teacher!" Jesus replied with deep pathos, no doubt, "Friend, do what you have purposed in your heart to do—but must you betray the Son of man with a hypocritical embrace?" At the signal the soldiers stepped forward and grasped Jesus' arms roughly and as they were about to take Him away Simon Peter and another disciple rushed forward, their short dagger-type swords drawn, shouting, "Lord shall we smite them with the sword?" Impulsive Peter did not hesitate or wait for a reply but swung his sword at one of the servants of the high priest, Malchus by name. It is worthy of note in passing that this record, which not only gives the name of the servant but tells that it was his right ear which was severed by Peter, certainly is *the record of one who was an eyewitness* and not the record of someone in the second century church making up silly little subjective myths about a mythical Jesus!

Jesus turned to Peter with a firm rebuke and a stern command to put the sword into its sheath. The reasons for this command and Jesus' refusal of the courageous act of Peter and the others are summarized by Hendriksen: (a) The cup which the Father had given Him, He must drink and Peter's deed is at variance with this determination of His to do so; (b) Jesus must be able to say to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world . . ." and if He allows them to fight with carnal weapons He cannot so answer; (c) If Jesus had wished to defend Himself He could have called legions of supernatural beings to His aid—Peter's act was unnecessary and uncalled for; (d) Finally, all they that take the sword will perish with the sword. This last one needs a bit of amplification. Certain rulers, magistrates and law enforcers are to wield the sword at the command of God (cf. Rom. 13:1-7; I Pet. 2:13-17; Titus 3:1, etc.). Those who wield the sword without just reason, and without receiving the orders of competent authority, are themselves liable to give life for life. National laws and governments are ordained by God and citizens of those national boundaries are to be subject to those governments as long as they do not demand that the individual violate the expressed will of God.

We have discussed before the boldness and courage of the disciples. Especially do we see it here! These men are not cowards. We do not believe that the record of them leaving Jesus and fleeing should be interpreted to mean they were cringing cowards (Matt. 26:56). We believe that Peter and John's boldness later as they entered into the very courtyard of the high priest as they followed Jesus indicates they may have felt the best thing they could do in the garden was to make good their escape in order to fight for their Master at a later, more opportune, time. Then when it finally came home to them that Jesus was not going to resist at all—that He was going to willingly submit to death—they were disillusioned and despondent but not cringing in fear. Their hopes for a powerful, reigning, temporal Messiah had vanished. They were more ashamed than afraid.

This type of attitude toward the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom did not die with the disciples. Many people today still insist that the King and the Kingdom must maintain a worldly prestige. They will boldly and courageously battle for such prestige. But when it comes to being treated in the humiliating, despicable way the Saviour was treated, they all leave Him and flee.

A couple of incidents recorded by the Synoptics and omitted by John are worthy of notice here. First, Jesus said (Matt. 26:56) that the events then happening were fulfillments of prophecies made by the Old Testament prophets. His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver is prophesied by Zechariah and His sufferings are prophesied by Isaiah. There are over 300 prophecies concerning the birth, life and passion of Christ in the O.T. prophets.

Second, the Synoptics record that a young man (Mk. 14:51-52) followed clad only in a linen cloth. He undoubtedly awoke in the middle of the night, having heard the noise of the multitude of soldiers, and being a follower of Jesus wrapped himself hurriedly and followed the throng out of the city into the garden. There he was discovered as a follower of Jesus and the soldiers grappled with him to arrest him also, but he fled leaving them holding the linen cloth (bed clothing?) with which he had wrapped himself. Some say this lad was John Mark but we cannot be sure.

### *Quiz*

1. What does the word "Gethsemane" mean and where was it located?
2. Where is the brook Kedron? Describe it.
3. Describe what you believe transpired between Judas' leaving the upper room and his leading the arresting party.
4. Why did they "fall to the ground" when Jesus spoke to them?
5. Why did Jesus say, "... let these go their way."?

6. Why did Jesus command Peter to put away his sword?
7. Did the disciples leave Him and flee because they were cowards? Explain your answer.

#### TRIAL BY THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES

*Text: 18:12-27*

- 12 So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound him,
- 13 and led him to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.
- 14 Now Caiaphas was he that gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.
- 15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest;
- 16 but Peter was standing at the door without. So the other disciple, who was known unto the high priest, went out and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.
- 17 The maid therefore that kept the door saith unto Peter, Art thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.
- 18 Now the servants and officers were standing there, having made a fire of coals; for it was cold; and they were warming themselves: and Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.
- 19 The high priest therefore asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his teaching.
- 20 Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world; I ever taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and in secret spake I nothing.
- 21 Why askest thou me? ask them that have heard me, what I spake unto them: behold, these know the things which I said.
- 22 And when he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?
- 23 Jesus answered him, if I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?
- 24 Annas therefore sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.
- 25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore unto him, Art thou also one of his disciples? He denied, and said, I am not.
- 26 One of the servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?
- 27 Peter therefore denied again: and straightway the cock crew.

*Queries*

- a. Why did they take Jesus to Annas first?
- b. Why did Peter gain entrance into the court of the high priest's palace and then deny that he knew Jesus?
- c. Why did Annas ask Jesus concerning His disciples and His teaching?

*Paraphrase (Harmony)*

So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound him, and led him to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. Now Caiaphas was he that gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest; but Peter was standing at the door without. So the other disciple, who was known unto the high priest, went out and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. The maid therefore that kept the door saith unto Peter, Art thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. Now the servants and the officers were standing there, having made a fire of coals; for it was cold; and they were warming themselves: and Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

The high priest therefore asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his teaching. Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world; I even taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and in secret spake I nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them that have heard me, what I spake unto them: behold, these know the things which I said. And when he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? Annas therefore sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

And they that had taken Jesus led him away to the house of Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. And Peter had followed him afar off, even within, into the court of the high priest; and sat with the officers to see the end. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the court, and had sat down together, Peter sat in the midst of them, warming himself in the light of the fire.

Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death; and they found it not, though many false witnesses came. For many bare false witness against

him, and their witness agreed not together. But afterward came two, and said, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands, And not even so did their witness agree together. And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But he held his peace, and answered nothing.

And the high priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God. And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. And the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, He hath spoken blasphemy: What further need have we of witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be worthy of death. And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and beat him. Then did they spit in his face and buffet him, cover his face. And some smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, prophesy unto us, thou Christ: who is he that struck thee? And the officers received him with blows of their hands. And many other things spake they against him, reviling him.

And as Peter was beneath in the court, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest; and seeing Peter warming himself, as he sat in the light of the fire, and looking steadfastly upon him, said, Thou also wast with the Nazarene, even Jesus. But he denied, before them all saying, woman I know him not I neither know, nor understand what thou sayest: and he went out into the porch, and the cock crew. One of the servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? And the maid saw him, and began again to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. But he again denied it. And after a little while again they that stood by said to Peter, Of a truth thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilean, for thy speech maketh thee known. But he began to curse, and to swear, I know not this man of whom ye speak. and straightway the second time the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said unto him, Before the cock crow twice this day thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Now when morning was come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: and they led him away into their council, saying, If thou art the Christ, tell us. But he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I ask you, ye will not answer. But from henceforth shall the Son of man be

seated at the right hand of the power of God. And they all said, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What further need have we of witness? for we ourselves have heard from his own mouth.

Then Judas, who betrayed him; when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? See thou to it. And he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver, and said, It is not lawful to put them in the treasury, since it the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was priced, whom certain of the children of Israel did price; and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

### *Summary*

By cruel and evil men Jesus is tried illegally, coerced, mocked, brutalized and condemned without proof or cause. The Jewish authorities had already condemned Him before trial. At the same trials, His most steadfast disciple denies Him.

### *Comment*

Jesus is led first to the palace of the high priest which was probably in, or at least very near, the temple courts. Here He was subjected to a sort of preliminary questioning by Annas, father-in-law of the present high priest Caiaphas. Ever since the Romans had occupied Palestine the high priests no longer held office for life as the O.T. Law legislated. Jewish high priests were now appointed by the Romans as they saw fit. According to history Annas had been high priest and had ruled from 7-14 A.D. when he was deposed by the Roman procurator, Gratus, and Caiaphas, his son-in-law, was appointed and ruled from 18-36 A.D. Five sons of Annas ruled as high priest during this final period of Jewish national life. Just why Jesus was taken to Annas first we do not know. Conjecturally speaking we would guess that it had something to do with the pride and vain glory of Annas himself that would cause him to demand Jesus be brought to him first. Perhaps Annas really "pulled all the strings" in the office and his son-in-law Caiaphas was merely the puppet high priest (cf. Lk. 3:2; Acts 4:6).

It seems highly probable that Annas and Caiaphas would both reside in the palace of the high priest. Therefore just as soon as Annas was

through with his questioning they took Jesus immediately into the quarters of Caiaphas. From there He was taken into the council chambers of the Sanhedrin. The harmonized account of all the Jewish trials indicates that they all transpired in one place for Peter did not leave the same courtyard. The palace would be built on the same order as most expensive homes in Jerusalem, around an open court. The rooms were in the rectangle opening into the inside court. The hall leading from the front door to this court was called the "porch." The gallery connecting these rooms surrounded the court and was a little higher than the court, although not like a second story.

John does not give us any information on the trial before Caiaphas and the one before the Sanhedrin. He supplies what the Synoptics do not—the questioning before Annas. John seems to be that "other disciple" of v. 16 and he was an eyewitness to the questioning by Annas. Some think this "other" disciple was not John but one who dwelt at Jerusalem and who, not being a Galilean, could enter the palace without suspicion. But John states that "the other disciple" was known to the high priest and his servants and was therefore allowed certain liberties others were not allowed. We might guess that John, being the son of a well-to-do fisherman, would have been patronized by the high priest. The authorities would want the influence of the well-to-do businessmen.

Hendriksen says of Annas that "He was very proud, exceedingly ambitious, and fabulously wealthy. His family was notorious for its greed. The main source of his wealth seems to have been a goodly share of the proceeds from the price of sacrificial animals, which were sold in the Court of the Gentiles. By him the house of prayer had been turned into a den of robbers. Even the Talmud declares: 'Woe to the family of Annas! Woe to the serpent-like hisses!' (probably the whisperings of Annas and the members of his family, seeking to bribe and influence the judges)."

The reason that John makes the parenthetical notice concerning Caiaphas in verse 14 is because of the significance of his statement that it was expedient for one man to die for the whole nation (cf. our comments on Jn. 11:49-52). He had been planning the death of Christ for a long time and he and his father-in-law were two of a kind.

The discerning reader will notice right away the differences in reporting the denials of Peter in the Synoptics and in John's gospel. There can be no doubt that all four writers expect three denials. Hendriksen offers the following solution to the differences in the four accounts: ". . . he (John) also reports on three denials, but counts differently, splitting up into two denials that which by the others is

considered the third denial. In the latter case, what by the others is presented as the third denial is by John counted as the second and the third." That would harmonize as follows:  
 1st denial—Matt. 26:69-70 Mk. 14:66-68 Lk. 22:56-57 Jn. 18:15-18  
 2nd denial—Matt. 26:71-72 Mk. 14:69-70a Lk. 22:58 Jn. 18:25  
 3rd denial—Matt. 26:73-74 Mk. 14:70b-72 Lk. 22:59-60 Jn. 18:26-27  
 R. C. Foster, in his syllabus on the Life of Christ, explains the challenges and denials in this way: "The accounts are agreed as to the first challenge. Mark says the same maid gave the second; Matthew says another woman; Luke, a man; John, a group. Evidently when the portress saw Peter out in the hall leading to the front door, she left her post and challenged him again. Another maid joined her in it; then a man servant. Peter retreated before this attack to the campfire and there a whole group added their accusation to those of the three trailing him. The second and third denials represent a succession of attacks. Peter, assailed on all sides, repeatedly denied. Mark indicates this by the very graphic and exact imperfect tense, 'He kept on denying.' In the third denial, Matthew and Mark say a group; Luke, another man; John, a kinsman of Malchus—here again a succession of accusations and denials occurred."

Why was Peter in there? Why, after having entered, did He deny Jesus? We cannot be sure. It does not seem reasonable, however, to think of Peter's denials as expressions of cowardice when he bravely entered, so to speak, the "lion's den." If Peter was a coward, why did he walk right into the midst of the arresting officers? And why, if he was a coward, did he not bolt and run when challenged the first time—why did he stay on? We believe the exact opposite of cowardice may have moved Peter to get into the palace of the high priest to courageously spy out the possibilities of counter-attack. He may even have had ideas of fighting to free Jesus there in the palace. We must remember that Peter was a rough and rugged fisherman. He was used to danger of life and limb. His denials were probably to conceal his association with Jesus until he could spy out the information needed to carry out a rescue later or until an opportune time afforded itself when he could effect a rescue there in the courtyard. Whatever his reason for denying that he knew Jesus the denial was wrong. If he denied to gain information to use in a struggle of force later it was wrong for as Jesus told Pilate later, and had told Peter earlier, His kingdom was not one of carnal warfare. The sword was not to be used. Christ must suffer. He must drink the cup the Father had given Him. Remember that once before when Jesus told the impetuous Peter He must suffer and be killed, Peter boldly said he would fight to the death for

his Master. It was then that Jesus called Peter, Satan, because Peter did not realize the nature of the Messiah or the Messianic kingdom. We believe the gospel records indicates these men would have fought to the death for the worldly type of Messiah and Messianic kingdom they had envisioned, but when they saw that their Master was submitting to humiliation and death like a "sheep led to the slaughter," they had no other recourse but to go away in despondency. The transformation that came in the lives of the disciples after the resurrection of Christ is another story.

Now the trials of Jesus have been divided into two sections: (a) the ecclesiastical trials—before Annas; before Caiaphas and the elders; and before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin; and (b) the civil trials—before Pilate; before Herod; and back to Pilate.

John omits all but a brief notice of the two trials before Caiaphas and concerns himself with the preliminary questioning before Annas and the trials before Pilate. We shall comment only on the trials recorded by John.

There are many illegal aspects of the arrest and trial of Jesus Christ. We recommend for a more detailed study of the subject a book entitled "The Trial of Jesus Christ," by Frank J. Powell, an English Magistrate, published by Eerdmans. For a devotional study of the arrest, trials and crucifixion we recommend a book entitled, "The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ," by James Stalker, pub. Zondervan.

Jesus was tried illegally at night; His arrest came by bribery; He was forced to testify against Himself; He was sentenced the very same night which was illegal; He was coerced and beaten during the trial but the most atrocious part of the trial was the prejudice, bigotry and malice aforesought of the judges. As Hendriksen says, it was not a trial, but a plot to murder Jesus.

Annas (v. 19) asks Jesus concerning his disciples, and of his teaching. Exactly what Annas asked is not certain, but it appears that he wanted some preliminary confession that Jesus by his teaching and his disciples was inciting the public to treason. Annas could use such a confession when he takes the Nazarene before Pilate. After all, had not the Nazarene taught that He was King of the Jews and that He was about to establish a kingdom. His disciples taught the same thing.

There were times when Jesus taught His disciples privately but what He taught them then He had already taught publicly. He taught in the temple courts and in the synagogues. He taught in the streets and in the fields. He taught on the mountain sides and on the sea shores. There were always plenty of Pharisees or other authorities present when Jesus taught His doctrines of the kingdom and the Messiah.

They could not trap Him this way. They were really wanting Him to incriminate Himself with some confession of wrong.

But Jesus turns the tables. He demands that they produce witnesses to testify. He has no secrets to conceal. These judges knew that they had no evidence to present against Him. The demand of Jesus that they bring witnesses to testify brings their lack of evidence into the open.

The Lord had no more than finished the words when one of the officers of the temple guard struck Him across the mouth with his open hand. Either this officer took it upon himself to strike the prisoner or he was encouraged by the high priest to do so. The *real* High Priest was scornfully rebuked with, "Answerest thou the high priest so?"

Jesus shows the utter disregard of His judges for fairness, legality, mercy or truth when He answers, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" He demands again that valid testimony be brought into the trial and that He shall not be judged and coerced with violence before some evidence is heard. The authorities had no evidence. They were not interested in evidence anyway. They had already made up their minds to kill Him regardless of the evidence. They would later bribe witnesses to testify, but even the bribed witnesses could not agree in their testimony!

While Peter was in the midst of denying Jesus with oaths and curses he suddenly saw the eyes of his tormentors turned away from him toward the gallery of the palace. They were looking at Jesus, who was now being led, amidst blows and curses, across the courtyard to either Caiaphas' quarters or a guard-room where He was to be kept for a few hours until a later questioning by the Sanhedrin. As Jesus stepped out of Annas' quarters onto the gallery His ear had caught the oaths and curses of Peter and hurt deep in His heart He turned around in the direction of Peter—at the same moment the cock crowed and Peter turned—and they looked one another full in the face. Soul looked into soul. What was in that look of the Master to the one who had denied Him? There may be a world in a look. A look may be more eloquent than a whole volume of words. It may reveal more than the lips can ever utter. One writer has commented that the following may have been in the look of the Master:

- (a) His look was a talisman dissolving the spell in which Peter was then held. Peter was so engrossed in his scheming to rescue Jesus that he needed to be brought to himself again.
- (b) The look of Christ was a mirror in which Peter saw himself. He saw what Christ thought of him. His past confessions and professions of courage and "I will fight to the death with you" came

rushing back upon his mind.

- (c) It was a rescuing look. Had it been an angry look he saw on Christ's face when their eyes met, Peter's fate might have been the same as Judas'. In that look of an instant Peter saw forgiveness and unutterable love.

We are not sure that Peter saw all this in that one look. But what he did see was enough to cause him to go out and weep bitterly. It may be that Peter's compassion for Christ in His torture and humiliation had something to do with his bitter weeping. No doubt Peter read disappointment in the eyes of Jesus as He looked. No doubt Peter was ashamed of himself when Jesus looked at him. The same Word of God pierces our very souls today in the same manner if we will allow it to do so.

Between this section of the eighteenth chapter (v. 12-27) and the next section (v. 28-40) the trials before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin occur. John does not record these trials and when we take up our comments again at verse 28 it will be where Jesus is led before Pilate for the first time.

### *Quiz*

1. Who was Annas and what sort of a person was he?
2. Who was Caiaphas and what sort of a person was he?
3. Where would these two have had their residence and what type of a residence would it be?
4. How was John able to get into the palace?
5. Why was Peter in the courtyard?
6. Name some ways in which the trials of Jesus are illegal?
7. Of what significance was the look Jesus gave to Peter?

### TRIED BY PILATE, THE ROMAN AUTHORITY

*Text: 18:28-40*

28 They lead Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium: and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover. 29 Pilate therefore went out unto them, and saith, What accusation bring ye against this man?

30 They answered and said unto him, if this man were not an evildoer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee.

31 Pilate therefore said unto them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

32 that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should die.

33 Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of Jews?

34 Jesus answered, Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me?

35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what has thou done?

36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find no crime in him.

39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

40 They cried out therefore again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

### *Queries*

- a. Why could the Jews not put Jesus to death?
- b. By what manner of death should Jesus die?
- c. What did Pilate mean when he said, "What is truth?"

### *Paraphrase (Harmony)*

And straightway in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole council, held a consultation, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him up to Pilate.

They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium: and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover. Pilate therefore went out unto them, and saith, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If this man were not an evildoer, we should not have delivered him up to thee. And they began to accuse him, saying, We would this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king. Pilate therefore said unto them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death; that the word of Jesus

might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should die.

Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered, Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?

And when he had said this, he went out again unto the chief priests and the multitudes, and saith unto them, I find no crime in him. And Pilate again asked him, saying, Answerest thou nothing? Behold how many things they accuse thee of. But Jesus no more answered anything; insomuch that Pilate marvelled greatly.

But they were the more urgent, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, and beginning from Galilee even unto this place. But when Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man were a Galilean.

And when he knew that he was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him unto Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem in these days.

Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was of a long time desirous to see him, because he had heard concerning him; and he hoped to see some miracle done by him. And he questioned him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes stood vehemently accusing him. And Herod with his soldiers set him at nought, and mocked him, and arraying him in gorgeous apparel sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

And Pilate called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said unto them, Ye brought unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: no, nor yet Herod: for he sent him back unto us; and behold, nothing worthy of death hath been done by him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

Now at the feast he used to release unto them one prisoner, whom

they asked of him. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas, lying bound with them, that had made insurrection, men who in the insurrection had committed murder.

When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him up. And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

They cried out therefore again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas.

### Summary

Jesus, having been tortured and subjected to questioning all night, is condemned to death early in the morning by the Sanhedrin, but they cannot execute their sentence. They must have permission from the Roman governor. So Jesus is taken before Pilate. Pilate finds nothing in Jesus worthy of death and wants to release Him.

### Comment

Just where the "Praetorium" was located is not certain. Andrews thinks the procurator's "pavement" or judgment stones were carried with him to different places. Andrews further believes that Pilate judged Jesus in the open paved space before the palace of Herod the Great which was situated on the north side of Mount Zion. Others think the judgment hall of Pilate was in the Tower of Antonia which may have been connected to Herod's palace.

Verse 28 has been abused by destructive critics to prove that the Fourth Gospel contradicts the Synoptics. The Synoptics all say that Jesus ate the passover on Thursday and was crucified on Friday. Verse 28, at first glance, would make one think that the Passover had not yet been celebrated. But there are two possible answers. First, however, it must be seen that John and the Synoptics do not disagree in the light of so much evidence to their perfect harmony. On the one hand these Jews who feared to enter the Praetorium may have feared defilement for the *remainder* of the passover feast. The actual festivities of the passover lasted a full week. There were other feasts besides the passover lamb on the 14th of Nisan such as the *Chagigah* which followed the day after the Passover Supper. On the other hand these Jews may have been so busy with arresting and trying Jesus that they postponed their Passover Supper and planned to eat it after the matter of Jesus' death was taken care of. These men were not above violating the law of Moses to serve their own ends.

If they should enter any place where the Roman eagle was on its standard they would have been, according to their tradition, ceremonially unclean.

They would not come in so Pilate went out to meet them. We believe Pilate must have known some of the tumblings that were going on there in the city during that passover. After all, that is what he was there for—to keep down rioting and insurrection. He had no doubt heard of the great triumphal entry of Jesus into the city on the first day of the week. He no doubt had informers keeping him informed of the arrest and trial of this Jesus by His own Sanhedrin. He was probably not too worried about this Jesus since he had no doubt heard of His meekness and His "philosophical teachings." We believe Pilate was persuaded that Jesus was just another Jewish philosopher or rabbi. Jesus' followers were not organized and were unarmed. But it seems it was also plain to Pilate that these Jewish rulers were trying to embroil him in their religious wranglings. It is plain by his question in v. 29 that he was not intending to become a mere tool in the hands of the priests and elders to execute their revengeful plans.

Pilate was a politician, first last and always. He seems to have been superstitious as most Romans were. His sense of justice went only to the point where it might cost him his official position. He later was accused of mismanagement of his procuratorship and called to Rome to answer the charges. Before he could defend himself the emperor died and tradition has it that he committed the honorable Roman suicide.

Pilate and the Jews had no love for one another. Once he caused soldiers who were under his command to bring with them ensigns with their images of the emperor. To the Jew this was sacrilege. When he threatened with death those who had come to petition him for the removal of these idolatrous standards, they called his bluff, and he yielded. At another time he used the temple-treasure to pay for an aqueduct. When a crowd complained and rioted, he ordered his soldiers to club them into submission. He felt the Jews were always causing him trouble and every opportunity he had to trouble them he enjoyed.

Here they had come to cause him some more trouble. If he became involved in a local religious dispute things might get out of hand and he would lose his position. Furthermore, he might use this opportunity to vex his enemies.

That they were vexed by his refusal to go along with their murderous scheme is evident from their impudent, sarcastic answer, "If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up unto

thee." There may even have been the hint of a threat in their answer. In fact, later they do threaten Pilate (Jn. 19:12).

Pilate is at a loss to know why these Jewish rulers would bring one of their rabbis who had fallen into disrepute because of something the rulers felt was heresy. Let these Jews take care of their own religious squabbings. But then, the Jews (Luke 23:2) came up with the accusation that Jesus was "perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king." Such treasonable acts were worthy of death and the Jews were forbidden by their Roman conquerors to execute the sentence of death upon any one.

Now the lawful method of execution for the Jew was death by stoning. Any other death was accursed by the law (Deut. 21:23). At this time, however, the Jews were not allowed to put anyone to death. Jesus had predicted that he would be crucified (Jn. 3:14; Matt. 20:19). His death to atone for man's sin and remove the curse of the law was predicted as one which would come by hanging Him "on a tree," (cf. Gal. 3:13). And so when the Romans were forced to crucify Him on "a tree," it fulfilled prophecy.

Upon hearing the accusation of the Jews Pilate thought it wise to make a thorough examination in case this religious teacher might be planning an insurrection. So, leaving the Jews outside, Pilate entered into the Praetorium and called for Jesus to be brought before him for questioning. The accusations of the Jews were utterly false. Jesus was not perverting the nation but trying to raise its moral standards; He actually taught that tribute was to be paid to Caesar; He refused to be crowned the temporal king of Israel. But Pilate had no knowledge of this.

Hendriksen thinks the emphasis in Pilate's question (v. 33) should be upon "*thou*." In other words, "Are *you* the King of the Jews?" It was inconceivable to Pilate that such an unassuming individual as this could be a king! The Roman concept of king and ruler was one of power, dignity and pride.

Jesus answers Pilate's question with a question of His own, "Are you saying this of your own accord, or have others said it to you about me?" In other words, "Why are you asking concerning my kingship—is it because you also have the concept of it which these Jews have given you or is it because you really want to know for yourself?"

With a note of contempt in his voice for the Jews Pilate answers, "No, I do not see in you any such king as the Jews see or any such danger of insurrection as they see—No, I am not a Jew, am I? But your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me for some reason which they evidently believe is a crime. What have you

done?" We think Pilate knew that the envy of the Jewish rulers over the following this Jesus had gained was part of the reason for His arrest, but he was not sure this was all the prisoner was guilty of.

In His answer, Jesus not only answers all the charges but He witnesses to this Gentile ruler. First He allays Pilate's concern over the political situation when He says, "My kingship is not of this world. If my kingship were of this world my attendants would have been fighting in order to keep me from being handed over to the Jews, but now my kingship does not spring from that source." Jesus makes it plain that He does not seek a kingdom or kingship of the world at all. He seeks no overthrow of the political structure, either Roman or Jewish. In fact, He infers that the Jewish rulers are His enemies as much as any other political group so He is not the king of the Jews as they would think of it. Furthermore, His followers were not allowed to use force to rescue Him. He had no temporal throne, no temporal army and no temporal province. The implication is evident to Pilate that Jesus claims to be some kind of a king. So Pilate's question, "So you are a king?"

Now Jesus has opportunity to witness to Pilate. "Yes," Jesus replies, "you are saying correctly that I am a king, for this royal purpose was I born." But His kingship is His rule in the hearts of men by truth. He, Himself, is the embodiment of the truth which He came to witness. He brought divine truth—supernatural truth—from realms beyond this world. He had brought to this world that which every man needs and most men long for—supernatural truth and supernatural wisdom. And men may live in this truth by listening to His doctrine . . . His doctrine as He taught it and as the apostles taught it later (cf. I Jn. 4:1-6).

Pilate had nothing but contempt and skepticism for such high idealism. "What is truth?" he scoffs. To a Roman politician of his day truth was relative. Their view of what was good and truthful was cynical pragmatism. In other words, whatever worked for their personal benefit or promotion was perfectly justifiable. One has but to study the case histories of some of the Roman Caesars to see this (Nero, Caligula, etc.).

Pilate could plainly see that this Jewish rabbi was just another religious fanatic and He was simply stirring up His own religious leaders to jealousy, but as far as committing any crime worthy of death, He was not guilty. So Pilate went out on the porch to where the Jews were waiting and pronounced Jesus innocent. But the Jews would not hear of it! They began a clamor for His death. The rulers incited the crowd to clamoring also. Meanwhile, Pilate's wife came to him with

her superstitions connected to a dream she had had concerning this Jesus (cf. Matt. 27:19-21). Pilate must be careful! Every move must be weighed! He does not want to become involved in the nasty trial and condemnation of an innocent man. But neither does he want to incur the political disfavor of the Jewish rulers. So he offers to release the prisoner Jesus according to the Roman custom of releasing a prisoner at passover time. Now there was another Jewish prisoner held by the Romans, one Barabbas, a robber and one who had in fact incited a seditious riot. But the Jews would not hear of it! They cried out, "Not this man but Barabbas . . . this man stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, and beginning from Galilee even unto this place."

Aha! Pilate ponders the thought! This Jesus was a Galilean. Herod was ruler of that province. Pilate and Herod had been at odds with one another over some political squabble for quite a while. Here was an opportunity to "kill two birds with one stone." He would be rid of the responsibility of condemning an innocent man while placating Herod at the same time. Herod was placated but the innocent Jesus was returned to Pilate for final responsibility. John leaves all this out of his account. It may be studied in the Synoptics.

### *Quiz*

1. Where was Pilate's judgment hall and the Praetorium?
2. What is meant when it is said that the Jews were afraid of defilement should they enter Pilate's judgment hall?
3. What type of a man was Pilate and what did he probably know about Jesus?
4. Why must the Romans put Jesus to death?
5. How did Jesus answer the charges against Him and witness to Pilate at the same time?
6. What did Pilate mean when he said, "What is truth?"
7. How did Pilate think he had solved his dilemma of not wanting to sentence an innocent man and yet not wanting to displease the Jews?

### SERMON NO. SEVENTEEN MANKIND ON TRIAL

Mark 14:53-65; John 18:33-38

#### *Introduction*

WHY WAS JESUS ON TRIAL? Because of the claims He made to be the Son of God, Messiah, Forgiver of sins. Because of what He did: He broke the traditions of the Pharisees and loved sinners. Because of what He was: He was righteous, sinless and condemned the evil of the rulers.

BUT WAS THE SON OF GOD REALLY ON TRIAL? Actually, those before whom He stood were on trial. These murderous judges and officials were at this moment being weighed in the balances of God. They were under the heart-searching gaze of the One who is the Judge of all the earth.

IT WAS REALLY THE MOMENT OF TRUTH FOR THOSE JUDGES. He is not a prisoner—because He is powerless, but because He wills it to be so. He made His claims, performed His deeds and lived His life, and substantiated it all by great miracles which were done openly and before His enemies.

THIS SEEMS TO BE THE ATTITUDE OF MEN FACED WITH JESUS CHRIST TODAY . . . THEY DEMAND THAT HE STAND TRIAL BEFORE THEIR PERSONAL COURT. If He conforms to their desires or ideals He can go free . . . IF HE DOESN'T BOTHER THEM TOO MUCH. But men and women must awake to the fact Jesus has made such tremendous claims to deity, with such undeniable testimony and evidence to back them up, that THEY ARE ON TRIAL.

"For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Heb. 4:12. HIS WORD WILL JUDGE MEN AND DOES JUDGE MEN NOW. Jn. 12:48.

#### *Discussion*

I. RULERS OF THE JEWS. It is near midnight, and Annas is questioning Jesus about disciples and teachings. After this Jesus is taken to the Sanhedrin gathered at night and is condemned to death on charge of blasphemy (the whole trial was illegal). Dignified religious leaders then act like hoodlums as they spit upon Him, strike Him, mock Him. To make the trial appear legal, they call the Sanhedrin together again after daybreak and try Him again. THE TRIAL WAS ILLEGAL IN MANY RESPECTS. IT WAS AFTER DARK, CONDUCTED WITH BRIBED WITNESSES, FORCE WAS USED, THE ACCUSED WAS MADE TO TESTIFY AGAINST SELF, THE WITNESSES COULD NOT AGREE, THE JUDGES HAD DETERMINED HIS GUILT AND SENTENCE BEFORE COURT WAS HELD.

Truth mattered little to these evil men. These rulers did not want a Messiah. Jesus stood before them condemned because He was upsetting their "apple carts". He cleansed the temple and publicly ex-

posed and condemned their graft which ran in the millions annually. He openly taught the multitudes of people and exposed the unbelief and greed of the rulers. IT WAS FOR ENVY AND JEALOUSY AND GREED THAT THEY DECIDED TO KILL JESUS—EVEN PILATE KNEW THIS. It was because He was hurting their pocket-books that they were trying Him. IF HE HAD NOT BOthered THEM OR THEIR BUSINESS, HE COULD HAVE PREACHED ALL HE WANTED TO.

Jesus was the prisoner bound in chains, but the judges were on trial! There are those today who think they have Jesus where they want Him. He has been tried in the courts of their hearts and found guilty of being too righteous. THEY WILL NOT HAVE JESUS CHRIST TO RULE OVER THEM BECAUSE HIS RIGHTEOUS TEACHING AND SINLESS LIFE EXPOSES AND CONDEMNS THEIR EVIL. "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil: For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light lest his works should be reproved." Jn. 3:19-20. "But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God." Jn. 3:21. Men may try to hide and dress up their evil deeds all they want but the light of God's truth exposes them for what they really are. THEY MAY CRY BIGOT AND FANATIC ALL THEY WANT AND HOLD COURT IN THEIR HEART UPON GOD'S WORD AND HIS PEOPLE, BUT THEY ARE REALLY THE ONES ON TRIAL!

And so it is with people who will not give up their sinful lives and evil habits today. They *demand* the right to do as they please. If God's Word says different, they hold court, try God as a narrow-minded bigot and condemn Him.

Jesus stood before men, some of whom had seen with their own eyes evidence that He was the Son of God. One of their number, Nicodemus, admitted it. They simply brushed aside any facts or any truth. They tried to make it appear that Jesus was guilty instead of admitting the truth and repenting and bringing their lives into conformity to His teaching.

IT WAS NOT THE SON OF GOD ON TRIAL THAT NIGHT, BUT MEN BLIND IN UNBELIEF AND GREED AND ENVY. THEIR CHARGES WERE TOO RIDICULOUS TO ANSWER . . . THEIR PURPOSE WAS EVIDENT TO ALL, MURDER. BEFORE THEM STOOD ONE WHO HAD MADE CLAIM TO BE GOD AND HAD SUBSTANTIATED IT WITH GREAT MIRACLES WHICH SOME OF THEM HAD SEEN. THEY COULD NOT

DISPROVE HIS CLAIMS, SO THEY KILLED HIM! I ASK YOU, WHO WAS BEING TRIED THAT NIGHT? PERHAPS YOU ARE IN THE SAME POSITION THIS EVENING. YOU KNOW HIS CLAIM TO BE RULER OF THE HEARTS OF MEN—YOU KNOW THAT THE EVIDENCE TO BACK HIM UP IS OVERWHELMING! YOU CAN'T DISPROVE HIM! WHY WILL YOU STAND THERE WITH THE EVIL SANHEDRIN AND CONDEMN HIM, MOCK HIM?

II. HEROD. Actually Jesus was sent to Pilate first who then sent Him to Herod. Herod had been anxious to see the Galilean. He had heard about His miracles and wanted to see Him work one (like a magic show).

Herod was a man who had let his sensual appetites take possession of him. Everything was a lark to him. He loved only to eat, drink, be merry and luxuriate in pleasure and revelry. Even that which was from God he thought to make into a show for his amusement and diversion.

There are people judging Jesus and Christianity like this today. They are interested only in eating, drinking and merry-making. If religion will thrill them or indulge in their revelry and pleasure then they will play church and join the "Sunday club." They mock and laugh at any pretension of righteousness. JESUS IN ALL HIS PURE, SINLESS DIGNITY, SPOKE NOT A WORD IN ANSWER TO THE ANIMAL HEROD . . . IT WOULD BE LIKE CASTING YOUR PEARLS BEFORE THE SWINE. Jesus was not on trial before Herod —Herod simply showed his debased nature and judged himself. So the Son of God is not on trial by the debauched and those who delight in sin today! THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE TODAY WHO SEEM TO DELIGHT IN MAKING MOCKERY OF ANYTHING THAT IS PURE AND HOLY AND SACRED WITH THEIR FILTHY MINDS AND FILTHY MOUTHS. THESE PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY BEEN GIVEN UP BY GOD! READ ROMANS 1st chapter! and II Thess. 2:8-12. Those who take pleasure in unrighteousness and will not love the truth, God sends them a strong delusion, so that they will believe a lie! They are like Belshazzar who was weighed and found wanting in the balances of God!

III. PILATE. He was intelligent enough to see that there was no valid reason for Jesus to be on trial. HE EVEN PRONOUNCED JESUS INNOCENT AND WOULD HAVE LET HIM GO. But Pilate was a coward for He knew what was right but he would not stand for it. He allowed worldly pressures to rule him. He allowed the fear of what men would think and do cause him to do something he knew to be wrong. HE BETRAYED HIMSELF WHEN HE SAID

"WHAT IS TRUTH?" HE WAS A MAN LIKE SO MANY MEN TODAY WHO SAY THE SAME! THEY MAKE TRUTH A RELATIVE THING! SOMETHING IS TRUE ONLY AS LONG AS IT WORKS! IF IT DOESN'T WORK FOR ME OR FOR SOCIETY, IT ISN'T TRUE. TRUTH IS TRUTH WHEREVER IT IS FOUND AND WHETHER IT WORKS FOR MAN'S PHYSICAL DESIRES OR NOT! SO MANY PUT THE SON OF GOD ON TRIAL TODAY BY THIS VERY SAME TOKEN! HE CLAIMED TO BE THE PRINCE OF PEACE AND THERE IS NO PEACE SO CHRISTIANITY IS UNTRUE. Jesus never claimed to give the world peace from war as men think of peace. God's word is true, whether you believe it or not, whether you like it or not, and whether it works for your desires or not. IT IS NOT HIS WORD THAT IS IN COURT, BUT HIS WORD IS THE COURT AND YOU ARE ON TRIAL!

Pilate then tried to rid himself of guilt by washing his hands and crying . . . "I'm neutral . . . Take him yourself and crucify him . . ." AND ARE THERE NOT MEN AND WOMEN TODAY WHO STAND ALONG SIDE PILATE, SAYING . . . "NO, I WILL NOT PUT THE SON OF GOD ON TRIAL, I WILL NOT BE FOR HIM OR AGAINST HIM . . .?" "I MAY BE A LOT OF THINGS, BUT I'M NOT AGAINST RELIGION!" My friend, you may not put the Son of God on trial, BUT YOU ARE ON TRIAL, JUST THE SAME! It is impossible to be neutral with the Lord Jesus Christ! "He that is not with me is against me . . . and he that gathereth not scattereth . . ."

NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS. BUT EVERY MAN SERVES ONE MASTER OR THE OTHER. IF YOU ARE NOT FOR JESUS BY SERVING HIM WITH YOUR LIFE, YOUR TIME AND YOUR MONEY . . . THEN YOU ARE AGAINST HIM AND SERVING THE DEVIL WITH YOUR LIFE, TIME AND MONEY! BY SERVING SELF WE SERVE THE DEVIL . . . FOR IF HE CAN GET US TO SERVE OURSELVES AND DENY CHRIST, WE HAVE BECOME HIS SLAVE AND WE HAVE SOLD OUR SOULS TO HIM! ELIJAH SAID, "HOW LONG GO YE LIMPING BETWEEN THE TWO,—IF BAAL BE GOD SERVE HIM . . . IF JEHOVAH BE GOD SERVE HIM".

#### *Conclusion*

And so, the Jesus revealed to you in the Gospels stands before the court of your heart this evening. He stands before you this evening as the God-man of Nazareth—the One who was as truly a man as if He had been altogether man—the One who is as surely God as if he had been altogether God—like a man, like God!

Like a man, the 12 year old tarried behind in the temple—like a God he confused the teachers with his understanding. Like a man He came to Jordan to be baptized of John—like a God He was acclaimed by the Father. Like a man He was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil—like a God He said "NO!" Like a man He fell asleep in the little boat after a hard day's work—like a God He stood forth, and with His voice "peace be still" calmed the tempest. Like a man He wept before the tomb of His dead friend—like a God he called, "Lazarus, come forth!" and was obeyed. Like a man He permitted that perfect body to be spiked to the Roman cross—like a God He died forgiving. Like a man He was placed in the tomb—like a God He came forth triumphant, the living reigning King. Here He stands before the court of your heart. **BUT HE IS NOT ON TRIAL, YOU ARE ON TRIAL!** I know you want to acknowledge His Lordship over your heart and life this evening if you have not done so. You believe in Him with all your heart . . . I know you do! Then step out this evening and come down front and say, "Lord, be my King, rule over me . . . I want to obey you in all that you have commanded . . . I want to be immersed and baptized in water for the forgiveness of my sin . . ."

When Paul stood before Felix, it was Felix on trial not Paul. When Paul stood before Agrippa, it was Agrippa on trial not Paul. **WHERE DO YOU STAND . . . DON'T BE A PILATE!**

**EVER SINCE GOD SENT HIS WORD MEN HAVE BEEN ON TRIAL. YOU CANNOT ESCAPE THIS FACT! YOU MUST DECIDE — YOU WILL DECIDE — YOU ARE DECIDING — OH, I PRAY, I HAVE PRAYED THAT YOUR DECISION WILL BE FOR JESUS!**

In 1829 George Wilson, in Pennsylvania, was sentenced by the U.S. Court to be hanged for robbing the mails, and murder. President Andrew Jackson pardoned him, but the pardon was refused. Wilson insisted that he was not pardoned unless he accepted it. That was a point of law never raised before and the President called on the Supreme Court to decide. Chief Justice John Marshall gave the following decision: "A pardon" is a paper, the value of which depends upon its acceptance by the person implicated. If it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must be hanged." And he was hanged although potentially he had been pardoned . . . he refused it by rejecting its provisions.

Potentially the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to the whole world. All men and women mature enough to make a choice, have been potentially pardoned by the New Covenant in Jesus'

blood. But, there are provisions of accepting this pardon and if we do not meet these provisions we must suffer the sentence and penalty which God has pronounced upon us for our sins . . . the sentence: DEATH . . . ETERNAL DEATH, the pardon: LIFE . . . ETERNAL LIFE.

FACE TO FACE WITH CHRIST YOUR SAVIOR, WHAT WILL IT BE? WHEN THE ROLL IS CALLED UP YONDER WILL YOU BE THERE? TO HIM THAT KNOWETH TO DO GOOD AND DOETH IT NOT, IT IS SIN . . . YOU KNOW BROTHER YOU CANNOT GO AWAY TONIGHT AND NOT KNOW.

#### EXAMINATION, CHAPTERS 16, 17 and 18

##### *Interpret These Enigmatic Sayings*

1. "It is expedient for you that I go away;"
2. "A little while and ye behold me not; and again a little while, and ye shall see me;"
3. ". . . ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice;"
4. "not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."
5. ". . . expedient that one man should die for the people."
6. ". . . My kingdom is not of this world;"

##### *Identify the Following and Tell of Their Character*

- |             |                  |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1. Annas    | 4. Pilate        |
| 2. Malchus  | 5. Barabbas      |
| 3. Caiaphas | 6. The Comforter |

##### *Who said This and Why?*

1. "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no dark saying."
2. "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth."
3. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, are in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me."
4. "Art thou also one of this man's disciples?"
5. "Answerest thou the high priest so?"
6. "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."
7. "What is truth?"

##### *Fill in the Blanks*

1. "And he, when he is come, will \_\_\_\_\_ the world in respect of \_\_\_\_\_, and of \_\_\_\_\_, and of \_\_\_\_\_;"
2. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of \_\_\_\_\_, is come, he shall \_\_\_\_\_ you into all the \_\_\_\_\_;"

3. "And this is life \_\_\_\_\_, that they should \_\_\_\_\_ thee, the only \_\_\_\_\_ God, and \_\_\_\_\_ whom thou didst \_\_\_\_\_, even Jesus Christ."
4. "And for their sakes I \_\_\_\_\_ myself, that they themselves also may be \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_."
5. "I have spoken \_\_\_\_\_ to the world; I ever taught in \_\_\_\_\_ and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and in \_\_\_\_\_ spake I nothing."
6. "If I have spoken evil, \_\_\_\_\_ of the evil: but if well, why \_\_\_\_\_ thou me?"
7. "Thou sayest that I am a \_\_\_\_\_. To this end have I been \_\_\_\_\_, and to this end am I \_\_\_\_\_ into the world, that I should bear \_\_\_\_\_ unto the \_\_\_\_\_. Every one that is of the \_\_\_\_\_ heareth my voice."

*Questions for Thought*

1. Why did Jesus tell the disciples of such dark and foreboding future persecutions? (chapter 16)
2. Why did Jesus emphasize the "word" and "truth" so much in His prayer? (chapter 17)
3. Why did Peter and John make a point to follow Jesus into the courtyard of the home of the High Priest?

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

This is John's account of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Here again the Fourth Gospel shows its supplementary nature. John omits even some of the incidents of the crucifixion which are recorded by the Synoptics (especially the words of the two thieves and the taunts of the hecklers around the cross). But John supplies some of the more tender and personal scenes and words which occurred at the foot of the cross that day.

The account of John is very evidently the account of an eyewitness, for it records even the words Jesus spoke to His mother. John alone records that it was Pilate who wrote the inscription "King of the Jews" and placed it upon His cross. Only John records that His legs were not broken but that the soldiers pierced His side with a spear and water and blood came gushing forth.

The nineteenth chapter really begins with the final examination by Pilate and tells of Pilate's final attempt to release Him. But the Jewish rulers are determined to put this enemy to their popularity to death and they bring great political pressure to bear on Pilate.

John's account of the crucifixion also supplies us with a list of prophecies which were fulfilled there on Golgotha's brow.

We now continue our presentation of the Spectacle of His Passion.

**III. The Word Manifested to the Disciples and Their Acceptance of Him, 13:1—20:31**

**B. Public Spectacle of His Passion, 18:1—20:31**

**2. The Crucifixion and Burial, 19:1-42**

- a. Pronounced Innocent, 19:1-11
- b. Condemned and Crucified, 19:12-22
- c. Those Around the Cross, 19:23-27
- d. It is Finished, 19:28-37
- e. The Entombment, 19:38-42

**PRONOUNCED INNOCENT**

*Text: 19:1-11*

1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

2 And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple garment;

3 and they came unto him, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they struck him with their hands.

4 And Pilate went out again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him.

5 Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold, the man!

6 When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no crime in him.

7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

8 When Pilate therefore heard this saying he was the more afraid; 9 and he entered into the Praetorium again, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

10 Pilate therefore saith unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?

11 Jesus answered him, Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin.

**Queries**

- a. Why did Pilate not release Jesus immediately after "finding no crime in him?"
- b. Why did the Jews not take Jesus themselves and crucify Him as

Pilate had invited them to do?

- c. Why did Jesus not answer Pilate's question? (v. 9)

### *Paraphrase (Harmony)*

And Pilate again answered and said unto them, What then shall I do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify him. And Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, Crucify him. And he said unto them a third time, Why, what evil hath this man done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him and release him. But they were urgent with loud voices, asking that he might be crucified. And their voices prevailed.

And Pilate, wishing to content the multitude, gave sentence that what they asked for should be done. And he released Barabbas, him that for insurrection and murder had been cast into prison, whom they asked for; but Jesus he scourged and delivered up to their will to be crucified. And the soldiers of the governor took Jesus, led him away within the court, which is the Praetorium; and they call together the whole band. And they stripped him, and clothed him with purple and put on him a scarlet robe. And they plaited a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spat upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head, and bowing their knees, worshipped him.

And Pilate went out again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him. Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold, the man! When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no crime in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard this saying, he was the more afraid; and he entered into the Praetorium again, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore saith unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee? Jesus answered him, Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin.

### *Summary*

The theme of this section is the repeated pronouncements of Pilate that Jesus is innocent and his repeated efforts to release Jesus. Pilate,

due to his political cautiousness and religious superstitions, is afraid to exonerate Jesus and free Him completely.

### Comment

When Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate attired in the royal robes of mockery it was a sign to Pilate that "Herod, who from his position must have known Jesus' history, had no knowledge of any seditious practices in Galilee, and regarded Him as a harmless man, whose Messianic pretensions were rather to be ridiculed than severely punished."

Pilate was convinced that, politically speaking, the Nazarene himself was harmless to Caesar's throne. In fact, as one reads the account of Pilate's efforts in this section one is aware that Pilate's conscience is telling him to release Jesus. Pilate pronounces Jesus innocent of the charges. To Pilate the Galilean is a philosopher concerned with the "kingdom of truth" and not with Caesar's kingdom.

But the Jews are not to be satisfied until the Nazarene is put to death! Pilate takes Jesus and orders Him to be scourged. Scourging was a Roman method of extracting from condemned criminals confession of guilt or secrets. The scourge, or whip, consisted of a short wooden handle to which several leather thongs were attached. Fastened on the ends of these leather thongs were pieces of lead or brass or sharp pointed pieces of bone. The victim was usually tied to a post (Acts 22:25) and the blows were applied to the back and loins, sometimes even to the face and the bowels. The body was at times torn and lacerated to such an extent that the inner flesh was exposed and made to look like the raw meat of a butchered animal. At times even the entrails and inner organs of the victim were exposed. So hideous was the punishment that the victim usually fainted and sometimes died from it. It is no wonder that after such torture, lack of rest and agony of the soul this night that another (Simon of Cyrene) was forced to carry the Nazarene's cross (Lk. 23:26) when He stumbled under its weight. The soldiers added insult to injury. They made a crown of thorns and jammed it down upon His head and began to mock Him and strike Him. The soldiers are permitted to array Him in mock robes of a king.

Pilate's purpose was basically one of political expediency. His conscience told him this was an innocent man. Especially would the courageous, unreviling manner in which Jesus bore this punishment increase his conviction that He was innocent. Yet his precarious position as governor must be guarded. He had already fallen into ill-repute with the "powers that be" in Rome over mismanagement of a previous position. He must satisfy the blood-thirst of these influential Jews. After having scourged Jesus, Pilate brings Him out for the bloodthirsty

mob to behold. Pilate hoped they would see that he "cross-examined" the Nazarene by the "scourge" and that under the whip He did not confess guilt. Perhaps Pilate also felt sure that the sight of this One so severely tortured would satisfy the mob and would be the expedient to solve the whole problem. Pilate would not have to kill an innocent man and he would appease the Jews all with one stroke. Thus Pilate displayed Jesus, "Ecce homo!"

It seems as if the mere sight of the tortured Jesus enraged the mob all the more. His patience and composure was unexpected. The malignant envy and jealousy that had engulfed their reason and their feeling led them to cry even more hatefully, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Death was the only expedient the Jewish rulers would tolerate. Death was the only alternative—it was either His death or their positions and purses.

Pilate repeats, time after time, that the "man" is innocent (cf. 18:38; 19:4; 19:6 and parallels, Matt. 27:23; 27:24; Mk. 15:14; Lk. 23:4; 23:13-15; 23:22). But Pilate will not follow the light of his conscience. He allows his conscience to be seared with the hot iron of expediency. Some are wont to say, "Let us not condemn Pilate—he did the best he could. How was Pilate to know who this Jesus was. Hind-sight is better than foresight. We who have the advantage of looking back on history should not sit in judgment upon Pilate." Some of this attitude is true but most of it is not. Pilate did not do the best he could! He knew enough about Jesus to know He was not guilty and that He should not be put to death. Pilate will be judged by the "law of conscience" (cf. Romans, chapters 1 and 2, and I Jn. 3:19-21). This was the critical moment. The Jews had accused Jesus of sedition and solicited Pilate for authority to have Him executed (the Jews could not execute anyone according to Roman law). But Pilate had investigated, questioned and "cross-examined" (scourged) Jesus and pronounced Him, "Not guilty!" Pilate was about to release Him. Pilate was not really sentencing Jesus here but was taunting the Jewish rulers. The Jews had troubled him, they had pressured him and were trying to get him to execute an innocent man. This would get him into more difficulty with Rome. Pilate, assured of the Nazarene's innocence, taunts them back. Pilate knows full well that the rulers know they have no authority to put anyone to death. So Pilate sarcastically says, "Behold, the man. I find no crime in him. If you are so bent on spilling innocent blood do not trick me into doing your 'dirty-work' for you. Here he is, I will release him—take him yourselves, and crucify him."

The reason, therefore, that the Jews do not take Jesus immediately and crucify Him is that they could not. They must force Pilate, the

Roman governor, the only one with sufficient authority, to pronounce the death sentence and execute Jesus.

The first ruse did not work! Jesus was acquitted of the first charge of treason. It was not the real charge which the Jewish rulers had charged Jesus with anyway. They had charged Him in their tribunals with blasphemy. They probably did not mention blasphemy to Pilate first for fear that Pilate would simply dismiss the whole affair as a religious squabble. But now it is the only recourse left to them.

Perhaps the Jews felt that Pilate was obligated to administer the full extent of the Jewish law since the Roman government had taken away the right of the Jews themselves to enforce their own laws. If this is true then the rulers of the Jews were asking Pilate to execute Jesus on the basis of the sentence of the Jewish law upon blasphemy.

When the Jews mentioned Jesus' claims to be the Son of God it struck a note of superstitious fear in the heart of Pilate. His wife had already come to him speaking of dreams and omens concerning this man. The pagan Romans had adopted practically all the heathen religions under the sun. Many of these heathen religions taught that the gods often manifested themselves to men in the form of man. Perhaps Pilate began to be fearful that this Galilean might indeed be one of the gods and that the vengeance of the gods might come upon him if he allowed this god to be put to death. If Jesus had, at that moment, performed a miracle in the presence of Pilate, Pilate would have released Him immediately. But Pilate's response would have been motivated by a belief that Jesus was a pagan god and not from his sense of justice and Jesus' innocence. Jesus did not so much as answer Pilate's question, "Whence art thou?" (v. 9). Barnes gives four reasons why Jesus deemed it expedient not to answer: (1) Jesus had already told Pilate the nature of His kingdom (18:36-37); (2) Jesus had already said enough to satisfy Pilate of His innocence and Pilate was convinced; (3) It is not probable that Pilate would have understood Him if He had declared to him the truth about His origin and about His being the Son of God; (4) After what Pilate had already done—showing his susceptibility to political pressure by scourging Jesus—Jesus had no reason to expect justice at his hands, and therefore properly declined to make any further defense.

One of the most common reactions against fear is boasting and bullying. This was exactly the tack taken by Pilate. Pilate's question to Jesus in verse 10 would be literally translated, "To *me* you do not speak?" As Hendriksen puts it, "Hence, in order to conceal his fear he begins to boast!" Pilate means to say, "You cannot scare me with your

claim to be one of the gods for you are my prisoner and I have the power of life and death over you."

The arrogance and presumptuousness of this mortal must be corrected and so Jesus speaks. Pilate is informed that even the small amount of power he exercises over men in this world did not originate with him or with his emperor. All mortal power is ordained from above. And all men in position of authority and power on this earth are responsible to the One God who grants such authority. Would that all men in authority in all the governments of the world might recognize and surrender to this revealed truth (cf. Rom. 13:1ff).

The "therefore" of verse 11 refers to the guilt of Pilate's sin. Pilate had been granted authority to rule and make decisions by God and was therefore responsible to God. Pilate is making his decision about God's Son and will be held accountable for his decision. But Pilate's position, and as a consequence his ability to know about Jesus, is not as privileged as the position of the Jewish rulers. The Jewish rulers have been entrusted with the oracles of God and have been given the privileged position to really know the Messiah—therefore they have the greater sin. Unto whom much is given, from him much will be required! (cf. Romans 2).

### *Quiz*

1. What did Pilate learn from the way Herod had treated Jesus?
2. Describe the Roman method of "scourging."
3. What was Pilate's purpose in ordering Jesus to be scourged?
4. Why does Pilate say, "Take him yourselves, and crucify him:"?
5. Why did Jesus not answer Pilate's question, "Whence art thou?"
6. Why did Jesus inform Pilate of the origin of his authority?
7. How does Pilate's God-given position have a bearing upon his sin in connection with Jesus?

### **CONDEMNED AND CRUCIFIED**

*Text: 19:12-22*

12 Upon this Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend; every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

13 When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment-seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

14 Now it was the Preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, Behold, your King!

15 They therefore cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

- 16 Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified.  
 17 They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha:  
 18 where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.  
 19 And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.  
 20 This title therefore read many of the Jews, for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek.  
 21 The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, write not, The King of the Jews; but, that he said, I am King of the Jews.  
 22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

### *Queries*

- a. What is the "Preparation" of the passover?
- b. Why did the Jews claim no king but Caesar?
- c. Why did Pilate insist (v. 21-22) that his title for Jesus not be changed?

### *Paraphrase (Harmony)*

Upon this Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment-seat at a place called the Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, Behold, your King! They therefore cried out, Away with him, away with him crucify him! Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify the King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. So when Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it. And all the people answered and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified. And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the purple and the robe, and put on him his garments, and led him away to crucify him.

They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, And when they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, passing by, Simon by name: coming from the country, the father of Alex-

ander and Rufus, him they compelled to go with them, and laid on him the cross, to bear it after Jesus.

And there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days are coming in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? And there were also two others, malefactors led with him to be put to death.

And when they came unto the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha: they offered him wine to drink mingled with gall: and Myrrh: but when he had tasted it, he would not drink. And it was the third hour, and there they crucified him, and with him the malefactors, two robbers; one on his right hand, and the other on the left. And Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And Pilate wrote a title also, the superscription of his accusation and put it up over his head on the cross. And there was written, This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. This title therefore read many of the Jews, for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek. The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, Write not, the King of the Jews; but, that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

### *Summary*

The Jewish rulers, seeing their "pigeon" about to escape, intimidate Pilate with subtle inferences concerning the procurator's patriotism and loyalty to Caesar. This is enough to sway the vacillating Pilate. He sentences Jesus to be crucified against the urgings of his own conscience.

### *Comment*

The subtleness of the accusation brought by the Jews (v. 12) did not cause Pilate to miss its import! They are not merely accusing Pilate here in Jerusalem, but infer that they will accuse him before Caesar in Rome. The charge will be that Pilate is incompetent to punish those convicted of treason. The Jews were sure that even such a rumor reaching the ears of Caesar would do Pilate no good. Pilate had found the Nazarene innocent of any attempt to cause sedition. But a good part of political maneuvering was then, as now, based upon rumor and public opinion. Pilate could not afford even the rumor to drift back to Rome that he let a possible rebel go.

This ended the matter with Pilate. A decision had to be made. He must listen to his conscience and release a man not guilty of anything more than what he deemed proclaiming a religious philosophy, or, he must, for expediency's sake, sentence this Nazarene, accused of seditious talk lest these influential Jews spread rumors about his incompetency which would reach the ears of Caesar causing him to forfeit his position, perhaps even his life. He quickly chose the latter. He brought Jesus out of his quarters inside the Tower of Antonia unto the public place of judgment called "The Pavement." The Tower of Antonia was a sort of a tower-castle connected with the Jewish temple on the northwest corner probably built by Herod the Great and named by him in honor of Mark Anthony. A Roman legion was stationed in the castle to guard against sedition and revolt which would be more apt to originate in the temple courts and at the great festivals of the Jews. The Roman procurator of Palestine came there often (especially at passover time) to supervise military operations at critical times. For the location of "The Pavement" see our comments on 18:28. Most probably the judgment-seat was an elevated dias like those uncovered by archaeologists in the Grecian cities of the apostle Paul's time. If so, it was open to the public. The crowd could gather around and witness the sentencing.

In verse 14 we have another of John's notations of time. The "Preparation" of the passover was Friday. It is plain that *Preparation* is the word then used to mean the sixth day of the week, Friday, when one compares Matthew 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54 with John 19:14. It is also very evident that Jesus was crucified on Friday, not on Wednesday or Thursday. *Preparation* was the day designated for preparation for the Sabbath. The entire week of passover celebration was designated simply, "passover." Thus this "Preparation of the passover" was the Friday which fell within that particular passover week (cf. Special Study No. Three at the end of this chapter entitled, "Was Jesus Crucified on Friday?").

Arndt and Gingrich's Greek lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature has this to say on the word *paraskeue* (Preparation): ". . . acc. to Jewish usage (Josephus, Antiquities, 16, 163; Synesius, Ep. 4 p. 161D) it was Friday, on which day everything had to be prepared for the Sabbath, when no work was permitted . . . for the Christians as well *paraskeue* served to designate the sixth day of the week, Friday . . ."

The next note of time in this fourteenth verse has caused some critics of the Bible to claim a contradiction. If the reader will check Mark 15:25 he will find Mark stating that Jesus was crucified at the "third

hour." Yet John says here in verse 14 that Pilate did not sentence Jesus until the "sixth hour." We have said before that John undoubtedly uses the Roman method of computing time (cf. our comments on 1:39; 4:6; 4:52, etc.). If this be so then John's "sixth hour" would be *about six o'clock a.m.* whereas Mark's "third hour" would be *nine o'clock a.m.* There would be no contradiction here. There is only a supposed problem of *about* three hours (which could actually be about two and one-half hours) between Pilate's sentencing and the actual crucifixion. Considering the fact that Jesus had to carry His cross part of the way and considering the narrow streets and the crowds thronging the way from the Praetorium to Golgotha and considering the stops that were no doubt made along the way it could easily have taken two and one-half hours. Pilate, wishing to torment his opponents, brought the humiliated, mutilated Nazarene out to the mob and cried, "Behold, your King!" with the emphasis on "*King!*"

The answer of the Jews, "We have no king but Caesar," is pregnant with inference and ambiguity! They are inferring that Pilate has not been altogether loyal to Caesar by seeking to release this Nazarene whom they have pronounced seditious. They are saying, "We have no king but Caesar—what about you Pilate?" With their lips they pledge allegiance to Rome but their hearts are far from it. In the past they have followed false deliverers and saviours. Even now if one would come and raise up an earthly army and claim a temporal throne they would recant their allegiance to Rome and side with the revolt. They are shrewd politicians (as well as being crafty priests) and are wise enough to pledge allegiance to Caesar as long as Caesar is the most powerful.

Pilate, though he conscientiously believed Jesus innocent and though he would like nothing better than to do injury to his tormentors, by releasing Jesus, surrenders to expediency and delivers Jesus to his subordinates to be crucified.

Golgotha means, in Hebrew, *skull*. Calvary comes from the Latin language and also means *skull*. The exact location of Golgotha is a moot question. Some locate it about 250 yards northeast of the Damascus gate on a hill shaped like a skull—this is "Gordon's Calvary." Most locate it where the Church of the Holy Sepulcher stands today in Jerusalem (which is inside the walls of modern Jerusalem). There is strong inference that Jesus was crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem in Hebrews 13:12 . . . "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered without the gate." This, however, may be a figure of speech indicating that He suffered "outside the camp" of Judaism having been excommunicated for blasphemy.

None of the four gospels indicate specifically that the place of crucifixion was outside the city walls. John says, 19:41, that near Golgotha was a garden in which was the tomb where they buried Jesus. Some have supposed this had to be outside the city walls. We like what Andrews, "Life of Our Lord . . ." says; "Fortunately, here, as often, it is of little importance whether the traditional site be or be not the true one. The fact of the Lord's resurrection is a vital one, but not whether He arose from a tomb in the valley of Jehosaphat, or on the side of Acra . . . The little value attached by the apostles to the holy places appears from the brevity with which they speak of them when they allude to them at all. Not to the places of His birth and of His burial would they turn the eyes of the early Christians, but to Himself—the ever-living One, and now the great High Priest at the right hand of God."

We do not know which place is correct. Golgotha was outside the city walls (cf. v. 20—"for the place where Jesus was crucified was *near* to the city;"). Where the walls were in the days of Jesus is not absolutely certain.

Death by crucifixion was the most dreaded death in all the ancient world. It was the type of death reserved for slaves and criminals. Death by this method usually followed the same routine. We quote here from Wm. Barclay: "When the case had been heard, and the criminal had been condemned, the judge uttered the fateful sentence: 'Ibis ad crucem,' 'You will go to the cross.' The verdict was carried out there and then. The criminal was placed in the center of a quaternion, a company of four Roman soldiers. His own cross was placed upon his shoulders. It is to be remembered that scourging always preceded crucifixion, and it is to be remembered how terrible scourging was. Often the criminal had to be lashed and goaded along the road, to keep him on his feet, as he staggered to the place of crucifixion. Before him there walked an officer with a placard on which was written the crime for which he was to die. He was led through as many streets as possible on the way to the place of execution. There was a double reason for that. There was the grim reason that as many as possible should see it, and should realize that crime does not pay, and should take warning from such a fate. But there was a merciful reason. The placard was carried before the condemned man, and the long route was chosen, so that if anyone could still bear witness in his favor, he might come forward and do so . . . By Roman law a criminal must hang upon his cross until he died from hunger and thirst and exposure, a torture which sometimes lasted for days. But by Jewish law the bodies must be taken down and buried by nightfall. In Roman law the criminal's body was not buried, but

was simply thrown away for the vultures and the crows and the pariah dogs to dispose of."

Such was the tortuous death to which the Son of God was subjected. In "hanging on a tree" at Calvary He bore the curse of the law for all men (cf. Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13). In being crucified as a criminal, between two criminals, He fulfilled the prophecy of Isa. 53:12, "He was numbered with the transgressors." He was made to be sin on our behalf (cf. II Cor. 5:14-19).

The "superscription, accusation, title" placed on the cross above the head of Jesus read, "THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS." This was the full title and was written in Hebrew, the language of the Jews; in Roman, the official language of the occupation government; in Greek, the international language of the day. Some have found a contradiction in the gospel records because of this inscription. Matthew (27:37) records, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Mark records, "The King of the Jews," (Mark 15:26). Luke (23:38) records, "This is the King of the Jews." John records, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews," (Jn. 19:19). Hendriksen has an excellent answer to this: "Where, just where, is the discrepancy? Is a person who has witnessed an accident a liar because he does not report *everything* that occurred? . . . It certainly was not necessary for each Gospel writer to write down *all* of the words . . . Each gives the gist, as he sees it."

Now when the chief priests saw this superscription they were enraged. They certainly did not want the world to see such an inscription over one being crucified as a common criminal. Especially this meek and humble Nazarene. The cross has always been a stumbling block to the Jews (cf. I Cor. 1:22-25). They do not to this day accept the idea of a Suffering Servant Messiah (cf. Isa. 53). He was not their king!

Pilate has conceded all he is going to! He will not give in to his agitators. In fact he is determined to have the last word. He will make the last rapier thrust—throw the last dart. All the populace in and around Jerusalem during this great passover time will see what the powerful Roman empire thinks of the Jews and their "king!" He will have his way and so what he has written will stand. Perhaps, as Hendriksen suggests, God's providence directed the hand of Pilate as he wrote the title. Surely Jesus was the King of the Jews. He was the One of whom all the O.T. prophets wrote (cf. Isa. 2; 9; 11; etc.). The title, as such, was indeed true.

### *Quiz*

1. What did the Jews mean to accomplish by crying out to Pilate, "If

- thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend . . .?"?
2. What is the "Preparation" of the passover? Was Jesus crucified on Friday?
  3. How do we reconcile the alleged discrepancy between Mark and John as they report the time of Jesus' crucifixion?
  4. Why did the Jews insist, "We have no king but Caesar"? Was their statement true?
  5. Where is Golgotha located relative to the city of Jerusalem?
  6. What significance is there in the fact that Jesus was crucified between two criminals?
  7. Why did the Jews plead with Pilate to change the title upon the cross of Jesus?

### THOSE AROUND THE CROSS

*Text: 19:23-27*

- 23 The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was made without seam, woven from the top throughout.
- 24 They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.
- 25 These things therefore the soldiers did. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.
- 26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!
- 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home.

### *Queries*

- a. What is the significance of the seamless coat?
- b. Why were the women there at the cross?
- c. What is the meaning of Jesus' words to his mother and to John (v. 26-27)?

### *Paraphrase (Harmony)*

The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore one to another, let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith,

They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

These things therefore the soldiers did. And they sat and watched him there. And the people stood beholding. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and the rulers also scoffed at him, saying, Ha, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests mocking him among themselves with the scribes and the elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe on him. He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself. And one of the malefactors that was crucified with him railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us. But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom. And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son. Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home.

### Summary

There were many different attitudes expressed by those gathered around the cross of Christ. Indifference of the soldiers; the hate of the Jews; the love of the women and John.

### Comment

It was evidently a common practice then for the Roman soldiers to take the immediate belongings of executed persons for themselves. These the soldiers either kept or sold. Just what the four garments (besides the seamless coat) were we are not sure. Some have suggested headgear, sandals, belt and cloak (outer garment), as the four items. We quote here from "Daily Life In The Time of Jesus," by Henri Daniel-Rops, pub. Mentor-Omega Books, pp. 211-212, "The coat or tunic or *chalonuk* must have been very like the *chiton* of the Greeks, but longer; it came down well below the knees, and the rabbi's coat

had necessarily to appear for a good hand's-breadth below the cloak. The ritual tassels, which were usually a very deep blue, hung from the bottom. For ceremonies, the coat was made of embroidered silk or decorated with colored stripes. Most coats were cut out and then sewn together, but there were some made of woven wool that were all in one piece, and these were very much esteemed—it was such a coat the soldiers took from Christ, the coat for which they drew lots, so that it should not be torn. The coat was kept on for work, but at night, in going to bed, it was taken off.

"The cloak, the *talith*, took the place both of our suit and of our overcoat. It was so necessary a garment that the Law required a creditor who had seized his debtor's cloak as a pledge to give it up at night-fall. It was also a dignifying garment, without which it would have been improper to appear at the Temple or before a superior. Nevertheless, it was used for all kinds of purposes—a blanket, even a bed if one had to sleep in the open, a saddle-cloth and even as a carpet to welcome great men, as we see in the account of Christ's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. It is by no means sure how these cloaks were made. Perhaps some were a simple piece of cloth with a hole for the head and others two blankets sewn together; but there must also have been some of a better cut, with separate sleeves, probably not unlike our barristers' and graduates' robes."

Archæologists have found dice which date from the Roman period and they are exactly the same as are used today. One was found to be so irregular that it might even be called "loaded." Plutarch says that when soldiers were not on duty they often played at dice. Those who drew lots for the coat of Jesus must have carried their dice with them.

The prophecy referred to by John here is Psalms 22:18. Psalm 22 is a Messianic psalm. Many of the very words which the crucified Messiah would utter from the cross are there prophesied. See our comments on John 13:18 for notes on the fulfillment of prophecy.

There were a number of differently motivated groups of people who "stood beholding" this particular crucifixion. See the *Paraphrase (Harmony)* for this section and the Sermon at the end of chapter nineteen.

Lenski thinks only three women were present. Both Hendriksen and R. C. Foster have harmonized the three gospel accounts of the women present (Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25) and believe four women were present. Mary, the mother of Jesus; Mary, the mother of James the Less and of Joses and wife of Clopas; Salome, the sister of Jesus' mother; and Mary Magdalene. These were some of the women who had followed with Jesus from Galilee (cf. Luke 23:49; Matt. 27:56). It is very doubtful that Mary, wife of Clopas, was the

sister of Mary, mother of Jesus, since that would make two women in the same family with the name, Mary. Mary Magdalene was definitely not the sister of Mary, Jesus' mother, therefore it would seem that Salome, mother of James and John, was the "sister" referred to in John 19:25.

Verses 26 and 27 constitute, together, one of the seven sayings from the cross. These seven sayings are here given in their chronological order:

- (1) "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34)
- (2) "Verily I say unto thee, Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise" (Lk. 23:43)
- (3) "Woman, behold thy son." "Behold, thy mother." (Jn. 19:26-27)
- (4) "My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46; Mk. 15:34)
- (5) "I Thirst" (Jn. 19:28)
- (6) "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30)
- (7) "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk. 25:46)

But why did Jesus, in His extreme agony and with the weight of all the problems of eternity upon His soul, take time to speak to His mother and the beloved disciple? Why does Jesus say, "Woman" instead of "mother"? The answer to the first question is obvious. Jesus is providing someone to care for His bereaved mother. She is probably a widow now—we do not hear anything of Joseph, her husband, since Jesus was twelve years of age. The other children were unsympathetic with Jesus' way of life and would give her little consolation. John, probably Jesus', cousin, a disciple whom He loved and trusted, is chosen to care for her. "And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home." There may be a number of reasons Jesus used the term "woman" when He spoke to her. Perhaps He did not use "mother" in order to spare her an increased awareness of her maternal relationship to the One in extreme agony. But ever since He reminded her in the Temple, when He was twelve, of His unique relationship with God, He has taught her that He is much more than her son. He taught her that He was her Lord and Saviour (cf. Jn. 2:4; Matt. 12:46-50). The use of "woman" here from the cross follows His other teaching on the subject. And what of the reaction of this mother to whom He spoke? The gospel writers did not deem it of importance to record for us these details. We know she wept, as any mother would. We can only imagine the agony of her soul as she beheld the spectacle. As Lenski says, it is probably that "she who had all along understood understands now."

The Roman Catholic Church has wrested these words from Jesus to His mother and John and by decree of Pius IX has made Mary "the patroness of all Christians who are here represented by the disciple John." Another of the same church says, "in the person of John Mary receives all Christians as her children. And this capacity of Mary entitles us to the right and the trust, that we place all our interest in her hands." But it is not John nor Jesus who needs the help here—it is Mary. Mary is not receiving John—John is the patron.

### *Quiz*

1. What part of Jesus' clothing was the seamless coat?
2. How did the soldiers decide who was to get this coat?
3. What prophecy did their actions fulfill?
4. Why did Jesus command His mother to John's keeping?

### **IT IS FINISHED**

*Text: 19:28-37*

28 After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst.

29 There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth.

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.

31 The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

32 The soldiers therefore came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him:

33 but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

34 howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and straightway there came out blood and water.

35 And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe.

36 For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken

37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

### *Queries*

- a. What did Jesus mean, "It is finished?"
- b. Why ask that His legs be broken?
- c. What is the significance of the "blood and water?"

*Paraphrase (Harmony)*

And it was now about the sixth hour, and a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun's light failing: And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? And some of them that stood by, when they heard it said, Behold, he calleth Elijah; After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scriptures might be accomplished, saith, I thirst. There was set there a vessel full of vinegar; so straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth, and gave him to drink. And the rest said, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to save him. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he cried with a loud voice, It is finished: and he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

And behold the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent; and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many.

Now the centurion, who stood by over against him, and they that were with him watching Jesus, that he gave up the ghost; when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, and glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. Truly this was the Son of God.

And all the multitudes that came together to this sight when they beheld the things that were done, returned smiting their breasts. And all his acquaintance, and many women were there beholding from afar: among whom were both Mary Magdalene, and Mary the Mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; the mother of the sons of Zebedee, who when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him; and many other women that came up with him unto Jerusalem.

The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers therefore came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him: but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and straightway there came out blood and water.

And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe. For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look upon him whom they pierced.

### *Summary*

The awful chasm of sin separating God and man now bridged by His perfect sacrifice, Jesus gives up His spirit as the body is put to death. The soldiers pierce His side so there can be no question about His death. All this fulfills what was prophesied concerning the Messiah by the prophets.

### *Comment*

The Synoptics include many incidental words and scenes of the crucifixion which John has seen fit to omit. John omits the following:

- a. Jesus' cry "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and the reaction of the bystanders (cf. Matt. 27:46-47; Mk. 15:34-35)
- b. The words of Jesus, "Into thy hands I commit my spirit." (cf. Lk. 23:46)
- c. The rending of the veil of the Temple and the resurrected dead walking in Jerusalem. (cf. Matt. 27:51-53; Mk. 14:38)
- d. The words of the Roman centurion. (cf. Matt. 27:54; Mk. 14:39; Lk. 23:47)
- e. The multitudes returning to Jerusalem smiting their breasts. (cf. Lk. 23:48)

John, however, is the only gospel writer who includes the account of the breaking of the legs of the two thieves and the soldier piercing the side of the dead body of Jesus. There is a disputed variation which would cause Matt. 27:49 to read, "And another took a spear and pierced his side, and there came out water and blood." But the manuscript evidence is so scant and insignificant that the translators of the K.J.V. and the A.S.V. and the R.S.V. have all omitted the reading from the text.

In verse 28 we are informed that even on the cross and at the very apex of His suffering that which was uppermost in His mind was the fulfillment of all that the scriptures had prophesied concerning Him! When Jesus knew, "that all things are now finished," He looked forward, in omniscience, to the complete work of redemption which would include even the burial and resurrection and ascension, (cf. Jn. 1:42, 47, 48; 2:24, 25; 5:6; 6:64; 16:30; 21:17).

The entire ministry of Jesus and the work of redemption from His incarnation to the sufferings, death, burial, resurrection and establishment of the church and preaching the gospel to the Gentiles is all

prophecied in the Old Testament (cf. Lk. 24:43-49 and Acts 13:29). For any reader who desires more information on the prophecies fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus we recommend The Bible Handbook, by Halley, published by Zondervan.

When Jesus said, "I thirst," verse 28 seems to imply that in the very speaking of the words the scriptures which prophesied His redemptive work were being fulfilled. This being true it would seem that there was a deeper significance to His words than merely desiring to slake a physical thirst. Jesus suffered physically upon the cross and there is no denying that! But His real agony was the agony of the "second death!" "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21). The second death (eternal death) in Hell is eternal separation from God the Father—Jesus suffered and experienced that on the cross and cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The second death includes torment and thirst (cf. Luke 16:23-24)—Jesus suffered the torments of evil men and thirst upon the cross. The second death includes darkness ("the outer darkness") and there was darkness over the whole land when Jesus was crucified.

When Jesus died upon the cross the penalty and sentence of the Law was paid and thus the Law was nailed to the cross (cf. Eph. 2:11-22; Col. 2:8-15). When Jesus died upon the cross and came forth from the tomb and sent forth the Spirit to proclaim the way of salvation all the promises of the covenant made to the patriarchs and reiterated in the Law and the prophets reached their climax (cf. Gal. 3:15-29; Acts 3:11-26) thus the Old Testament (covenant) has been fulfilled, abrogated (in its entirety II Cor. 3) and superceded. This is why Jesus said, "It is finished!"

The "vessel full of vinegar" was probably a sour wine which the soldiers were in the habit of drinking. The soldiers had offered Him a mixture (probably as an anesthetic) of wine and myrrh just before they nailed Him to His cross (Matt. 27:34). This vinegar was touched to His lips and then He bowed His head and gave up His spirit, crying, "It is finished!" and, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" Note the emphasis on His death as a voluntary act. He *gave up* His spirit!

The Jews were meticulously careful that the Law should not be broken by allowing a body to hang "upon a tree" overnight (cf. Deut. 21:23). And it would be even worse for such a violation to occur on the Sabbath (the day of "Preparation" being Friday). This was Friday evening and the sun was about to "set"—when the sun "went down" it would be the Sabbath. It would also be a very special sabbath

since it occurred within the Passover week. They were extremely scrupulous about this detail while they blatantly violated the weightier matters of the law such as justice, mercy and faith (cf. Matt. 23:23). There was not one ounce of justice or mercy or faith in them when they criminally attacked Jesus and tried Him illegally and sentenced Him on the basis of bribed witnesses.

The Romans employed a very grim method to put to death those who lingered too long after having been crucified--they smashed their limbs (legs) with an iron mallet until they died. One contemporary doctor has said, "The shock attending such cruel injury to bones can be the coup de grace causing death." This was applied to the two malefactors crucified with Jesus but the soldiers, seeing that Jesus was already dead, did not break His legs. This also fulfilled a prophecy made in Numbers 9:12 and Exodus 12:46.

The emphasis John wishes to make when he records his eyewitness account that the legs of Jesus were not broken and the piercing of His side and the blood and water flowing is the actual death of Jesus. Jesus did not swoon--He died a physical death. What caused His death is not of primary importance to John. He is not interested in the medical diagnosis or autopsy. Of primary importance is the eyewitnessed, historically verified fact that He did die.

There is one theory as to the medical cause of His death--this is the theory of death due to a "broken" or "ruptured" heart. This theory is discussed in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia article entitled "Blood and Water," in Hendriksen's commentary on John's gospel, in an article by R. C. Foster in the Christian Standard, April 10, 1965. This is the theory that Jesus died from a ruptured heart in consequence of great mental agony and sorrow. Hendriksen says, "Such a death would be almost instantaneous, and the blood flowing into the pericardium (the sac or membrane surrounding the heart) would coagulate into the red clot (blood) and the limpid serum (water). This blood and water would then be released by the spear-thrust." But to quote R. C. Foster, "We should rejoice that the physical cause of Jesus' death is not a matter of faith. At the center of the gospel is the historic fact, 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures' (I Corinthians 15:3)."

There are some commentators who believe that the blood and water which flowed from His side are to be connected symbolically to the "three witnesses" of I John 5:6-8. We believe, however that the "three witnesses" of John's first epistle concern baptism (Jesus was baptized and gave baptism as a command to be obeyed by all who desire salvation), the Lord's Supper (which is a remembrance of the blood of

Christ shed for our sins) and the Word of God (which is the Word of the Spirit bearing witness here on earth). The testimony of John in verse 35 is simply a re-emphasis that he, John, was an eyewitness to the actuality of the death of Jesus. The significance of the blood and water is to show that there was no possibility of any life remaining in the One who had been pierced.

In a tract entitled, "A Study in Prophecy," published by Hermon House, 56 Second Ave., New York 3, N. Y., there are listed all the prophecies fulfilled in the ministry of Christ. We list here only those prophecies which were fulfilled specifically at the crucifixion:

- a. Nailed to the cross (Psa. 22:16; Jn. 19:18; 20:25).
- b. Forsaken by God (Psa. 22:1; Matt. 27:46)
- c. Mocked (Psa. 22:7-8; Matt. 27:39-44)
- d. Gall and Vinegar given Him to drink (Psa. 69:21; Matt. 27:34)
- e. Garments parted and lots cast (Psa. 22:18; Matt. 27:35)
- f. Numbered with transgressors (Isa. 53:12; Mk. 15:27-28)
- g. Intercession for His murderers (Isa. 53:12; Lk. 23:34)
- h. His expiration (Isa. 53:12; Matt. 27:50)
- i. Not a bone of Him Broken (Ex. 12:46; Psa. 34:20; Jn. 19:33-36)
- j. Pierced (Zech. 12:10; Jn. 19:34-37)
- k. Buried with the rich (Isa. 53:9; Matt. 27:57-60).

The two points of emphasis made in this section (19:28-37) are: (a) the physical death of Jesus was actual and complete; (b) His death was voluntary and according to foreknowledge and plan of God and fulfilled a number of prophecies made hundreds of years before.

### *Quiz*

1. Name some of the words and scenes of the crucifixion omitted by John.
2. What did Jesus mean when He said, "I thirst?" Was it physical altogether?
3. Did Jesus suffer anything beyond the physical pain upon the cross? Explain.
4. What did He mean when He said, "It is finished?"
5. Why were the Jews so concerned about Jesus hanging on the cross overnight?
6. Is it possible that Jesus died of a "broken heart?" explain!
7. What are the two major points of emphasis in this section?

### THE ENTOMBMENT

*Text: 19:38-42*

38 And after these things Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked of Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He

came therefore, and took away his body.

39 And there came also Nicodemus, he who at the first came to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

40 So they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid.

42 There then because of the Jews' Preparation (for the tomb was nigh at hand) they laid Jesus.

### *Queries*

- a. Why the sudden bravery of Joseph and Nicodemus now?
- b. Of what significance is the "hundred pounds" of spices?
- c. Where was the tomb located?

### *Paraphrase (Harmony)*

And when even was now come, because it was the Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, there came a rich man named Joseph, who was a councilor, of honorable estate a good and righteous man (he had not consented to their counsel and deed), a man of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, boldly went in unto Pilate, and asked that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave.

And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been anywhere dead. And when he learned it of the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph. And Joseph brought a linen cloth, and came therefore and, taking him down took away his body.

And there came also Nicodemus, he who at the first came to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. So they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid. And Joseph took the body; wrapped in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock, and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, the mother of Joses sitting over against the sepulchre, And it was the day of the Preparation and the sabbath drew on. And the women, who had come with him out of Galilee, followed after and beheld the tomb, and now his body was laid. And they returned, and

prepared spices and ointments. And on the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

### *Summary*

Friends of Jesus ask for His body and give it a tender and careful burial. His body is prepared in a kingly fashion and is buried in a rich man's tomb.

### *Comment*

Here, for the first time, Joseph of Arimathaea come on the stage of gospel history. Hendriksen says, "The Arimathaea from which he came was probably the ancient Ramathaim-zophim . . . fifteen miles straight east from Joppa." The Synoptics tell us a great deal about this man. Matthew 27:57 tells us that he was a rich man; Mark 15:43 states that he was a respected member of the council (Sanhedrin) and that he was "looking for the kingdom of God" (in other words, he was a devout man who believed the Old Testament prophets and was eagerly looking forward to the coming Messianic kingdom); Luke 23:50-51 informs us that he was a good and righteous man and one who had not consented with the rest of the council to their evil purposes and deeds respecting Jesus.

It is evident that Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin for Luke records that he could have given consent with them to the death of Jesus but he did not. Why he did not we are not told. It is probable that he deliberately absented himself from the midnight quorum called by Caiaphas to condemn Jesus. Up until now Joseph, like Nicodemus, was a secret disciple of Jesus. He believed but not enough to confess Christ openly and take the consequences. Why the "boldness" now? First, there would not be nearly as much danger from the opposition now that Jesus was dead and their blood-thirstiness had been satisfied. Second, Luke gives us the hint that this man's righteous indignation had been stirred up at the unjust and inhumane treatment the council had unleashed upon Jesus. Stalker, in his book, "The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ," puts it this way, "It was the excess of wickedness in his fellow-councillors, who at length went to a stage of violence and injustice which allowed him to hesitate no longer." We find it hard to agree with Hendriksen and Lenski that Joseph's boldness is a result of his knowledge of the "atoning" death of Jesus for him. It is inconceivable that Joseph, without the resurrection of Christ, should have such a grasp of the atoning efficiency of the death of Christ when even the disciples who had companied with Jesus for over three years did not then comprehend it!

Pilate, after assuring himself by the word of one of the soldiers that Jesus was dead, consented to allow Joseph and Nicodemus to take the

body for burial. The boldness of Joseph had a contagion which was caught by Nicodemus. He brought a hundred pounds (about seventy-two pounds in our weights today) of burial spices. This was enough spices to bury a king. The spices were sprinkled profusely upon each strip of the linen bandaging as the body was wrapped limb by limb. The Jews did not embalm as the Egyptians. These spices would not hide the sickening odor of decaying flesh long. The body of Lazarus began to "stink" in four days (cf. Jn. 11:39). Because this was Friday evening and the Sabbath would begin at sunset, most of the usual customs of Jewish burial were foregone. The dead body would not be carried to the "upper chamber" of a house where his relatives and neighbors could come and mourn and say good-bye for the last time. The dead body would not be carried to the tomb on the litter-type funeral bier. There would be no hired mourners or funeral procession; no hired flutists and no rending of the garments.

According to Henri Daniel-Rops, in his book "Daily Life In The Time Of Jesus," the typical tomb was "a kind of cave or excavation, a vault cut into a rock cliff, with a little vestibule before it. One had to bow one's head to go into the vault itself. Sometimes the same entrance would lead to several vaults: as many as eight have been found together. The body was laid upon a bench specially cut in the rock, and no doubt surrounded and covered with aromatic herbs, often a great many of them. The tombs of the poorer people were closed by being walled-up, but the grander tombs had a more solid kind of gate, which is still to be seen in Palestine: it is a great round, like millstone, set in a deep groove and held open by a wooden wedge; as soon as the wedge is taken away the heavy stone sinks into its place and guards the entrance from all comers, thieves or hyenas."

Just such a tomb became the burial place of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was located in the immediate area of His crucifixion, Calvary. It was a new tomb (no one else had ever been placed in it for burial); it belonged to a rich man and had been hewn out of solid rock located in a lovely garden. The tomb chamber was so low the women had to stoop to look in (Jn. 20:11) and the stone rolled before the door was exceedingly heavy (Mk. 16:4). For a discussion of the place of the crucifixion see our comments on Jn. 19:12-22.

There are two important points to emphasize in the burial of Jesus. First, His burial in a rich man's tomb was a fulfillment of prophecy (cf. Isa. 53:9). Second, Pilate and his soldiers were certain that Jesus was dead—He had not swooned or fainted. Blood and water gushed from His side, He had stopped breathing—He was dead and now Joseph and Nicodemus may take Him and bury Him.

*Quiz*

1. Where was Arimathea probably located in Palestine?
2. Name four things about the character of Joseph of Arimathea which are related to us by the gospel writers.
3. Since Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin how could he have kept from voting at the sentencing of Jesus?
4. Why was Joseph, formerly a secret disciple of Jesus, now so bold as to ask for His body for burial?
5. What did Nicodemus contribute to the burial?
6. Why would the usual customs of Jewish burial be foregone?
7. What are two important points of emphasis connected with the burial of Jesus?

**SPECIAL STUDY NO. THREE  
WAS JESUS CRUCIFIED ON FRIDAY?**

by SETH WILSON

When the question, Was Jesus crucified on Friday? is raised, it may be hard for you to find a clear and definite statement about it in the Bible. Good Christians may think He had to be in the tomb longer than the time from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning because of the expression "three days and three nights" in Matthew 12:40.

It doesn't matter too much on what day Jesus was crucified; but it does matter much how people use the Scriptures and how they trouble the church over such questions. Any view that denies that Jesus ate the Passover meal at the regular time is in direct conflict with plain statements of fact in three inspired books of the New Testament. Yet such a view is often taken by people who think that they are upholding the strict accuracy of Jesus' words against centuries of false tradition.

This is merely a question of historic fact, not affecting our obedience to the commands of the Lord, and not essential to our reverent appreciation of Him. It should not be made a "test of fellowship" or source of contention. But as a matter of fact it makes all the better example for a study of how to get the truth of God's Word by considering all the facts and letting the passages which are definite and clear in meaning determine the interpretation of those which are not so sure.

**What Does The Bible Say?**

This is a Bible study. Get your Bible and read the passages cited. Space will not permit quoting them.

All the Gospels say that Jesus was crucified and buried on the day called the *Preparation*. Read Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:14, 31, 42; and Matthew 27:60-62. The word translated *Preparation* was used as a name for the day which we call *Friday* in modern Greek.

John 19:14 says, "It was the preparation of the passover." Some have thought that this means the day on which the Passover lamb was prepared; but it can mean simply "Friday of Passover week." Comparison with all the facts will show that this is what it does mean. Beginning with the Passover sacrifice and supper, seven days of unleavened bread were observed; and the entire week was called the Passover (See Luke 22:1; John 2:23; 18:39). Mark 15:42 explicitly states, "It was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath." The same meaning is shown in John 19:31. The regular weekly Sabbath was Saturday.

#### But Which Sabbath?

The first day of unleavened bread might be called a Sabbath, because it was a day of rest according to the law (Leviticus 23:7, 8), and so was the seventh, or last, day. Some suggest that the Sabbath immediately following Jesus' death was not Saturday, but the first day of unleavened bread, which could fall on any day of the week.

In the law (Leviticus 23:4, 6), the seven days of unleavened bread were counted after the Passover meal, beginning Nisan 15. But all leaven was put out on the day the Passover was prepared, Nisan 14; so the day that the lamb was killed came in time to be called the first day of unleavened bread. (See Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:7.)

But if either of these days—the one just preceding the supper, or the one following it—was actually called a Sabbath, still *neither of them could be the Sabbath day that followed the burial of Jesus. For Matthew 26:17-20; Mark 14:12-17 and Luke 22:7-16 all state with absolutely unmistakable clarity that Jesus was alive and eating the Passover supper in the evening following the first day of unleavened bread when the lamb was sacrificed.* If the day following the supper was the day of rest (or special Sabbath) it was still not the day after Jesus was buried, because it was the day of crucifixion.

Therefore, we see that, if there was in that week any day called a Sabbath other than Saturday, it had to be one that was past by the time Jesus was buried, and not the day following His burial. The day of preparation, then, on which He was crucified, could not be any day other than the day before the regular weekly Sabbath which we call Saturday.

One good brother has suggested that the *seventh* day of unleavened bread was the Sabbath which "drew on" as Jesus was buried. That would mean that Jesus was subjected to six or seven days of trials, mockings, and delays between the time He was arrested and the day of crucifixion. The Gospels do not show any intention of indicating that. The trials before the priests and the Sanhedrin were at night and

dawn (Luke 22:66); that before Pilate was early (John 18:28); all happened in quick succession.

Moreover, no account gives any hint of more than one Sabbath between the burial of Christ and His resurrection on the first day of the week. Just turn and read how clearly Friday, Saturday, and Sunday are recorded in Luke 23:54 to 24:1. "And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. And the women also . . . beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre." The word Sabbath here is singular.

#### Properly Read, John Agrees

John's account agrees completely with these statements. John 13:1 does not say that the last supper was before the Passover, but that Jesus knew before the Passover that He must depart at this time. John 13:29 does not prove that the Passover meal was to come later. The disciples who supposed that Judas was sent to buy something for the feast may have had in mind the seven-day festival. Or if it was possible at that hour to buy provisions they might have been for the meal now beginning. (In John 13:2 the Greek does not say "supper being ended," but "supper being come.")

John 18:28 does not prove that the Pharisees had not eaten the Passover meal, because they called all seven days connected with it "the Passover." Anyway, the Passover meal was eaten at night, and such defilement as they feared in Pilate's hall would end at sunset.

John 19:31 shows plainly that the preparation was the day before the Sabbath. Calling that Sabbath "a high day" does not make it other than a Saturday Sabbath. It only means that it was considered especially sacred because it came in Passover week.

#### "Three Days And Three Nights"

Since the history states so plainly the fact that Jesus was crucified on Friday, it is necessary to take the prophetic figure of speech about the sign of Jonah (Matthew 12:40) as an inexact expression intended to agree with the statement which is made a dozen times, that Jesus arose "on the third day." (See Matthew 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 27:63, 64; Luke 9:22; 18:33; 24:7, 21, 46; Acts 10:40; I Corinthians 15:4; and Mark 9:31; 10:34 in K. J. V.) "After three days" is used in Mark 8:31 (9:31 and 10:34 in A.S.V.) to mean the same as "on the third day." While those do not seem the same to us, it is evident that they did mean the same to the Jews. (See also 2 Chronicles 10:5 and 12;

Esther 4:16 and 5:1; Matthew 27:63, 64.) "Three days and three nights" is just a fuller form for saying "after three days"; and both could mean in popular speech the same as "on the third day." Any expression means just what it is used to mean. The facts of the record show with what meaning the expression was used by Jesus. We must not put into it a meaning that will deny or disregard the facts; but the facts must control our interpretation.

### SERMON NO. EIGHTEEN BEHOLDING THE CRUCIFIED ONE

Luke 23:33-35a

#### *Introduction*

I. SPECTACLE OF THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST. After the betrayal and arrest come the trials. He was shamed by His own (high priest). Herod plays with Him like a cat would a mouse. He mocks Him and allows Him to be smitten in the mouth. Then Jesus is returned to Pilate a second time. Pilate has Him scourged with a whip made of leather and bone until His back is a bleeding mass of raw flesh. Pilate wants to release Him. But the Jews cry "Crucify Him, his blood be upon us and upon our children . . ." Release unto us Barabbas the murderer. And, for political reasons, Pilate releases Him to be crucified.

And so the humiliated, tortured, betrayed, exhausted Son of God goes out bearing a 300 pound cross of wood. Through the streets of the city He goes, stumbling, dragging this cross along as the throngs cast stones and spit upon him. Up the long hill of Golgotha. There He is grabbed roughly by the soldiers and laid down upon the cross, BUT HE OFFERS NO RESISTANCE. The steel spikes are brutally driven into the quivering flesh of His hands and then His feet. The excruciating pain is relayed from the nerves to His brain. And what comes from his mouth? Agony and screams? NO! Hate and curses? NO! Wonder of wonders, His lips part to speak a blessing—"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

II. "AND THE PEOPLE STOOD BEHOLDING . . ." What did they behold in the crucified One? What did those around the cross see? They saw much the same thing as men and women see in the Crucifixion today. THE CRUCIFIXION WAS NECESSARY. IT WAS IN GOD'S PLAN FOR JESUS CONTINUALLY TAUGHT "I MUST DIE . . ." IT WAS A SPECTACLE OF LOVE FOR MAN TO BEHOLD. IT WAS A PLANNED SPECTACLE FOR IT WAS PROPHECIED. Lk. 2:

#### *Discussion*

I. THE ROMANS. They beheld Him through eyes of *Indifference*.

Pilate made two tries to release Him and saw that politics demanded His death so he washed his hands of the whole matter. WHAT WAS ONE MORE DEAD JEW?? AFTER ALL PEOPLE DIE EVERY DAY. He had many responsibilities of more importance than the squabbles of the Jews. HE JUST HAD OTHER THINGS TO DO MORE IMPORTANT THAN LISTENING TO THIS NAZARENE'S CLAIMS OR BEING TOUCHED BY HIS INNOCENCE. Notice the calloused indifference of the soldiers who methodically nailed him to the cross and then sat down to gamble over his garments. There are multitudes today who look at the Crucified One through eyes of indifference. THEY COULDNT CARE LESS THAT A MAN DIED SOME 2000 YEARS AGO. THEY ARE TOO BUSY WITH MORE IMPORTANT THINGS SUCH AS POLITICS, PTA, KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES. THEY HAVE SO CALLOUSED THEIR HEARTS AND THEIR EMOTIONS THAT THEY ARE NO LONGER TOUCHED WITH THE LOVE SHOWN IN THE CROSS.

They thought they saw *Weakness*. Pilate said, "Don't you know I have the power of life and death over you . . . and still you say nothing in your own defense?" This Nazarene had even taught the doctrines of weaklings according to them. WHO EVER HEARD OF TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK? GOING THE SECOND MILE? RETURNING GOOD FOR EVIL? BUT A LOOK AT ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES SHOWS THIS TO BE THE GREATEST ACT OF COURAGE HISTORY HAS EVER WITNESSED. MY LORD WAS NO WEAKLING NOR COWARD! HE WAS A MAN OF ALL MEN. THOSE WHO STOOD WATCHING HIM WERE THE WEAK, SPINELESS, GROVELING COWARDS. THESE WERE AFRAID TO FACE UP TO THE DEMANDS AND CONSEQUENCES OF HIS TEACHINGS. THE WEAKLINGS CANNOT TURN THE OTHER CHEEK, AND WILL NOT GO THE OTHER MILE.

They thought they saw *Foolishness*. He claimed to be a King, but where was His kingdom? They scoffed at Him as a religious crackpot. He had claimed to be a God . . . but none of their gods had ever acted like He did—HOW FOOLISH! WITH THEIR GODS IT WAS OPPOSITE—MEN DIED FOR THEIR GODS. He claimed to be dying in the place of men. This the wise heathen philosophers could not accept as sensible. The Greek philosophers at Athens scoffed at Paul's preaching the gospel of the cross and resurrection. (Acts 17).

**HEAR WHAT MODERN UNBELIEVERS HAVE TO SAY**

. . . Dressed in the pious robes of ecclesiastical finery, giving the unsuspecting world the impression he is a follower of Christ, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, former head of the World Council of Churches says, "We hear much of the substitutionary theory of the atonement. This theory to me is immoral. If Jesus paid it all or if He is the substitute for me, or if He is the sacrifice for all the sin of the world, then why discuss forgiveness? The books are closed. Another has paid the debt, borne the penalty, I owe nothing. I am absolved. I cannot see forgiveness as predicted upon the act of someone else. It is my sin. I must atone."

The theologians today do not see Jesus dying for our sins. They see him merely dying a tragic death for his misguided conviction that he had a special mission. **IT WAS NO ACCIDENT IT WAS PLANNED BY GOD—READ THE PROPHETS, AND SEE HOW GOD MOVES IN AND THOUGH ALL OF HISTORY!**

"If a prince or a king, passing by an execution, should take the condemned man's place and suffer in his place the deed would ring through all history, and be quoted as an amazing instance of heroic pity; and well deserved would be all the words of praise and admiration which would record and eulogize it. Yet, our Lord Jesus did this, and infinitely more for those who were not merely criminals, but enemies to His own throne and person. This is a wonder of wonders. But it meets with small praise. The most of men around us have heard of it, and treated it as of little import; as an idle tale; as a pious legend; as a venerable fable; as an unpractical myth. Even those who know, believe and admire are cold in their emotions with regard to the story of the atonement. Herein is love which ought to set our hearts on fire, and yet we scarcely maintain a smoldering spark of enthusiasm." So said Spurgeon.

"We preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling block and unto Gentiles foolishness . . ." "For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness . . ." **DO YOU STAND WITH THE GENTILES AS YOU BEHOLD THE CROSS ? ? ?**

**II. WHAT DID THE JEWS SEE AS THEY BEHELD HIM?** To them His crucifixion was a *stumbling block*. What did they cry as they circled the cross? "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross . . . He saved others, himself he cannot save . . ." **THEY STUMBLED AT THE IDEA OF A CRUCIFIED AND HUMILIATED JEWISH MESSIAH.** They had made up their

minds ages ago just what type of Saviour they would accept. THEY WANTED A SOCIAL REFORMER, A POLITICAL LIBERATOR WHO WOULD LEAVE THE RELIGIOUS STATUS QUO ALONE. NEEDLESS TO SAY THERE ARE MULTITUDES OF PEOPLE TODAY WHO STUMBLE AT THE SAME THING. THEY LOOK AT THE CHURCH AS A FAILURE! THEY HAVE TRIED TO USE AND ABUSE THE CHURCH AS A SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENT, TO LIBERATE AND CONTROL POLITICS, BUT THEY WON'T HAVE IT TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE SOULS OF MEN!

They stumbled at His *claims to be divine*. I believe Jesus could have gotten by and perhaps even have been honored if He had claimed to be just another prophet. Many would allow Him this much today. But when He claimed to: forgive sins, come before Abraham, be the Messiah, and demanded rule over their hearts THEY CRIED BLASPHEMY . . . THEY COULD NOT ACCEPT ANY TEACHING THAT ASSOCIATED HIM WITH GOD.

MODERN THEOLOGIANS REBEL AT THE IDEA THAT GOD HAS ASSOCIATED HIMSELF WITH MAN OR HAS COME INTO THE REALM OF HISTORY. THEY SAY HE MUST BE WHOLLY TRANSCENDENT—"WHOLLY OTHER." THEY SAY WE LIMIT GOD'S POWER AND HOLINESS WHEN WE SAY THAT HE CAME IN THE FORM OF FLESH. TO THE CONTRARY, TO RELEGATE GOD ONLY TO THE REALM OF THE "WHOLLY OTHER" LIMITS HIS POWER AND HOLINESS. HOW COULD A GOD WHO HAD NO DESIRE TO BE TOUCHED WITH OUR INFIRMITIES, TO REVEAL HIMSELF TO US IN HISTORY, BE RIGHTEOUS AND HOLY AND LOVING ? ? ?

They felt *they were rid of One whose righteousness they could not stand*. As long as He was alive, they could not live with themselves, their consciences cried out against them, AND MEN AND WOMEN TODAY REJECT JESUS IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY BE ABLE TO DO AS THEY PLEASE, HAVING PUT BLINDERS UPON THEIR OWN CONSCIENCES. NO ONE WANTS TO MEASURE HIMSELF BY THE PERFECT STANDARD . . . JESUS CHRIST. WHEN HIS PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS SHOWS US OUR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, WE TRY TO HIDE OURSELVES IN SOME WAY OR AN-

OTHER, USUALLY BY "COMPARING OURSELVES WITH OURSELVES."

They saw in the *Crucified One* their *scapegoat*. Their High Priest had said, "It is expedient that one should die for the nation, lest the Romans come and take away our nation and our place." IS HE NOT BEING USED AS A SCAPEGOAT TODAY? SOME HAVE ACCEPTED CHRIST BUT, UPON FINDING THEY CAN'T HAVE HIM AND THE WORLD TOO, THEY FALL AWAY AND "CRUCIFY AFRESH THE SON OF GOD, BY COUNTING THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHEREWITH THEY WERE SANCTIFIED AN UNHOLY THING." cf. also Heb. 6:1-6. AND THEN WHAT DO THEY DO? THEY USE HIS CHURCH AND HIS SAINTS AS THEIR EXCUSE FOR BACKSLIDING. THEY HARP ON THE HYPOCRITES . . . OR THEY HARP ON THE IDEA THAT CHRISTIANS ARE TOO UNCOMPROMISING, TOO INTOLERANT, FORGETTING JESUS HIMSELF SAID THERE ARE ONLY TWO WAYS—TWO CLASSES OF HUMANITY, SAVED AND LOST. WHERE DO YOU STAND TODAY AND BEHOLD THE CRUCIFIED ONE? ARE YOU WITH THE JEWS? IF YOU ARE A BACKSLIDER, YOU ARE WITH THEM.

III. WHAT DO BELIEVERS BEHOLD? One of the thieves beheld the Son of God and in faith and trust committed His soul to Him. We see *sin condemned in the flesh*. Jesus came in the flesh and lived a sinless life in the flesh, tempted in all points like as we are and WON THE VICTORY OVER SIN AND BECAME THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE FOR OUR SINS! He fulfilled the requirements of the law of God, even the sentence and penalty of the law which says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die . . ."

*We see there the propitiation for our sin.* WE BEHOLD JESUS AS HE SUFFERED THE AGONY OF THE SECOND DEATH FOR US. AND THEN WE READ AS HE HIMSELF REVEALS FROM HEAVEN TO JOHN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION—THAT SUCH AS ARE BELIEVERS, OVER THEM THE SECOND DEATH HATH NO POWER.

We see God manifesting Himself as being *Just and the Justifier*. God decreed in His law that *sin must be punished*. If He went back on His word, He would be a powerless, unjust God. BUT HOW CAN HE HAVE LOVE AND SAVE MEN AND STILL PUNISH SIN? HE ACCOMPLISHED IT ALL IN THE CROSS OF

**CALVARY WHERE HE PUNISHED SIN AND SAVED MAN  
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST!**

*We see sin as it was never shown before* in all of its evilness. As a sinner man is a slave who must be redeemed, an enemy who must be reconciled, a dead corpse which must be resurrected and given new life, a captive whose powerful oppressors must be overthrown and a criminal who must be justified. WE SEE THE HOLY AND PERFECT HATE WHICH GOD HAS FOR SIN IN THE GIVING OF THE LIFE OF HIS SON.

*We see the love and power of God manifested.* The word of the cross may be foolishness to some. "BUT TO THOSE WHO ARE BEING SAVED IT IS BOTH THE POWER AND THE WISDOM OF GOD . . ." GOD'S INFINITE WISDOM KNEW THAT THE CROSS WOULD BE THE ONLY WAY TO DRAW MEN UNTO HIM IN SINCERE FAITH. "And I, if I will be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friend." "For the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts . . . for while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly . . ." A man may decide many things in this life simply by human reason and knowledge. BUT WHEN IT COMES TO THE SALVATION OF HIS SOUL, HE MUST HAVE A POWER THAT IS BEYOND HUMAN REASON. THAT POWER IS PROVIDED IN THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. IT IS GOD'S DIVINE SEAL. GOD, DESIRING TO SWEAR WITH AN OATH, COULD SWEAR BY NONE GREATER THAN HIMSELF, SO HE SEALED HIS PROMISE BY SIGNING HIS OATH IN HIS OWN BLOOD . . . THE BLOOD OF HIS SON UPON THE CROSS . . .

*Conclusion*

YOU SAY, I WANT SOME ASSURANCE . . . I WANT SOME AUTHORITY . . . I WANT SOME POWER BEHIND ANY PROMISES OF SALVATION. THERE IT IS IN THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. His death was sufficient for your sins. His resurrection is power for your new life. The entire New Testament says it is so. YOU MAY BECOME A NEW CREATURE . . . YOU MAY HAVE YOUR SINS BLOTTED OUT. YOU MAY HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT COME AND LIVE WITH YOU.

HOW DO YOU CONTACT THIS DEATH? By faith? YES, BUT MORE! For contacting His death comprehends all of our obedience. By simply repenting? YES, BUT MORE! By prayer? YES,

BUT MORE! By making public confession of faith? YES, BUT MORE. IT IS FULL AND COMPLETE OBEDIENCE. Rom. 6 . . . "We are baptized *into his death*; planted together with Him . . ." Col. 2 . . . "We are buried with Him in baptism." IT IS HERE THAT THE FINAL ACT IN OUR CONTACTING THE DEATH TAKES PLACE.

HOW DO YOU LOOK UPON THE CRUCIFIED ONE THIS EVENING? I pray with all my soul that you look with faith trusting and seeking to obey Him in all things. "He has become the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Remember what He told Nicodemus. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life." John 3:13

YOU KNOW THE ACCOUNT OF THE ISRAELITES AND THE SERPENT OF BRONZE ON THE STAFF . . . THOSE BITTEN OF THE FIERY SERPENTS WERE CURED WHEN THEY LOOKED, IN FAITH AND OBEDIENCE, UPON THE BRONZE SERPENT LIFTED UP THERE IN THE WILDERNESS. BUT IF THEY DELAYED . . . PROCRASTINATED IN UNBELIEF, THEY DIED!

There was an old man converted at the age of 68. One day he sat crying as the minister was preaching on the text, "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Later, with tears streaming down his cheeks, he approached the preacher. The preacher asked him what was the matter . . . "Oh, sir that text—it is true!" he replied.

"I did not know the Lord until I was 68. I stopped at my son's home this morning and said, "Come on son, and go with me to church this morning . . . and he laughed as he replied, "No, Dad, I've got plenty of time; I'll wait until I am 68 to get religion, like you did."

"I walked on down the street until I came upon my grandchildren playing and said, "Come on kids, let's go down to Bible School this morning." "No, they replied, we are busy, Grandpa; we will wait until we are old to start going to Sunday School and church like you did."

"Sir, he said to the preacher, I would give my right arm if I could live my life over."

Napoleon, the little general, paced the floor of his tent. Half of his troops had been destroyed and the battle yet raged. A messenger rushed in with the shout, "Tidings, sire, You have won the victory."

"Yes, replied Napoleon quietly, I have won the victory but another such victory would cost me my kingdom." YOU MAY HAVE WON THE VICTORY OVER THE SERMON: YOU MAY HAVE WON THE VICTORY OVER CONSCIENCE, OVER PRAYERS OF

MOTHER, OVER PLEADINGS OF YOUR WIFE, BUT ANOTHER SUCH "VICTORY" MAY COST YOU YOUR ETERNAL SOUL!

## CHAPTER TWENTY

"My Lord and my God!" This might well be the theme of this chapter. It records the climactic "sign" of a book filled with records of lesser "signs." And, as John adds in his postscript, Jesus did many other "signs" in the presence of His followers but John and the other gospel writers have witnessed and recorded enough supernatural signs to lead men to believe in His deity (cf. Jn. 20:30-31). The physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead, as He Himself foretold, was the apex of all His signs. This is the *one* event in the life of Jesus Christ which gives credence, meaning and relevance to all else He said or did! One is tempted to wax eloquent for page upon page concerning this event but we believe Dr. Merrill C. Tenney, Dean of the Graduate School, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, has summarized it so well we prefer to quote from his book, "The Reality of the Resurrection" here:

". . . the resurrection of Christ . . . marks the intersection of the temporal and eternal worlds, of material existence and spiritual life. Because the event is supernatural, it expresses the essence of God's revelation; because it is historical, it is a genuine part of human experience. The resurrection is a permanent witness to the love, power, holiness, and redemptive purpose of God and is also a fact which must be accepted as part of history. It cannot be dismissed as a speculative venture of the intellect which is possibly, but not necessarily, true.

For this reason the resurrection is perpetually relevant to the intellectual and spiritual problems of the world. The event provides a foundation for faith; its imagery contains the framework for a new life . . . By this one great fact all theology can be integrated. Revelation, incarnation, redemption, sanctification, and eschatology reach their fullest development in the demonstration of the divine triumph over death."

We feel compelled to repeat here some quotations by famous men showing their convictions concerning the resurrection of Jesus.

Warfield said, "The resurrection of Christ is a fact, an external occurrence within the cognizance of man, to be established by other testimonies and yet which is the cardinal doctrine of our system: on it all other doctrines hang."

Lyndhurst (famous British jurist) said, "I know pretty well what evidence is; and, I tell you, such evidence as that for the Resurrection has never broken down yet."

William Lyon Phelps (Yale) said, "Our faith in God, in Christ, in life itself, is based on the resurrection; for as Paul said, if Christ be not risen from the dead then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

Theodosus Harnack said, "Where you stand with regard to the fact of the Resurrection is in my eyes no longer Christian theology. To me Christianity stands or falls with the Resurrection."

Tenney said, "The resurrection demands the attention of those who contemplate the basic problems of death and life, for it has thrust into them a new factor which must be included in evaluating the whole of human experience. Any attempt to explain the process of history will be incomplete without it. The resurrection is permanently relevant to any scheme of thought."

John omits some of the appearances of the resurrected Jesus. Even the Synoptics do not include them all. Acts and the epistles (esp. I Corinthians 15) include a few of the appearances omitted by the gospels. In fact, Acts 1:3 informs us that He "also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God;" by which we realize many of the appearances Jesus made to His disciples may not be recorded at all!

Generally speaking the Gospels record the *fact* of His resurrection; the Epistles show the *theological* and *experiential* implications of it; and Acts records the *results* or fruits of it.

We have included at the end of this chapter a topical sermon and a special study on the resurrection of Christ. We would like to offer here a short bibliography of material helpful in a study of the resurrection of Christ.

1. The Certainty and Importance of the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, by R. A. Torrey, mimeographed essay available from O.B.C. Bookstore
2. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ—Its Proof and Significance, by A. Dale Crain, mimeographed essay available from O.B.C. Bookstore
3. The Reality of The Resurrection, by Merrill C. Tenney, pub. Harper & Row
4. Therefore Stand, by Wilbur Smith (Chapter 8), pub. W. A. Wilde Co.
5. The Basis of Christian Faith, by Floyd E. Hamilton (Chapter 17), pub. Harper & Row.

We are now prepared to continue our presentation of the outline of the Spectacle of His Passion.

### III. The Word Manifested To The Disciples and Their Acceptance

of Him, 13:1—20:31

B. Public Spectacle of His Passion, 18:1—20:31

3. The Victorious Resurrection, 20:1-31

a. The Empty Tomb, 20:1-10

b. The Appearance to Mary, 20:11-18

c. The Appearance to Ten Disciples, 20:19-25

d. The Appearance to Thomas, 20:26-29

e. The Aim of the Gospel, 20:30-31

We have chosen to continue presenting a harmony of all the gospel accounts rather than a paraphrase. We have followed a harmony of the Appearances prepared by Russell B. Watts, a former student at Ozark Bible College, who referred to works by J. W. McGarvey, R.C. Foster, H. H. Halley, S. J. Andrews and A. C. Wieand.

### THE EMPTY TOMB

*Text: 20:1-10*

1 Now on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb.

2 She runneth therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb.

4 And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb;

5 and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in.

6 Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying,

7 and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself.

8 Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 So the disciples went away again unto their own home.

### *Queries*

a. Why did Mary think someone had taken the body of Jesus?

b. What did the disciple "believe" (v. 8)?

c. Why did the disciples go to their own home?

*Paraphrase (Harmony)*

Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early while it was yet dark, on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb when the sun was risen, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they were saying among themselves, who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb?

And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And looking up, they see that the stone is rolled back: for it was exceeding great. And they entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, while they were perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel: and as they were affrighted and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

And he saith, Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold, the place where they laid him! He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying that the Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out, and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them: and they said nothing to anyone; for they were afraid.

Now when he was risen early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She runneth therefore and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen clothes lying; yet entered he not in. Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beheldeth the linen cloths lying, and the napkin,

that was upon his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but rolled up in a place by itself. Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away again unto their own home.

### *Summary*

Several of the devout women followers of Jesus come to anoint His body with spices. They witness the rolling away of the stone by the angel and enter the tomb to find the body of Jesus gone. They all flee in fear and trembling and only Mary Magdalene has the presence of mind to go and tell Peter and John who in turn run to the tomb and find the burial cloths but the body of Jesus gone. Although perplexed and unable to fathom the meaning of the empty tomb there seems to be a spark of faith ignited in the breast of John.

### *Comment*

On the sabbath day following the crucifixion of Jesus and after the burial of His body by Joseph and Nicodemus, the Pharisees and chief priests petition Pilate to make sure that nothing shall happen to cause the disappearance of the body of Jesus. They remembered His teaching that He would rise from the dead. Pilate commanded the official seal of the Roman government to be put across the stone door of the tomb and a guard of Roman soldiers to be placed before the tomb and to watch until after the third day at least, (cf. Matt. 27:62-66). In spite of all the miracles Jesus had performed, including raising the dead Lazarus from the tomb, of which these Pharisees and priests had knowledge still they thought they had at last defeated the Nazarene. If, as the text in Matthew seems to indicate, these rulers went to Pilate on Saturday morning they violated the sanctity of the Sabbath—one of the very charges they brought against Jesus!

The followers of Jesus would not desecrate the Sabbath and waited therefore until early in the morning of the third day to come to the tomb. The women began their journey to the tomb in the first hours of the morning of the first day of the week just when the midnight darkness of night is beginning to fade away and the dawn is beginning to break—even before the sun is visible (S. J. Andrews places the time at about 4:45-5:00 a.m.).

Whether the women were present when the angel rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb is not certain. They were concerned as they made their journey toward the tomb as to how they were going to gain entrance to anoint His body since the stone door was far too heavy for them to roll away.

The women then entered the tomb and seeing the body gone they were puzzled and distraught. The angel gave them the first "glad tidings;" "He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said . . . go tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee."

Mary Magdalene either did not hear the angel's message or she did not even stay to enter the tomb with the other women but ran to tell Peter and John immediately upon seeing the stone rolled away. She was there with the other women for she uses the pronoun *we* when telling the news to Peter and John (20:2). Mary sobs out the dreadful picture as she has surmised it from just seeing the tomb's entrance violated—"They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him." Peter and John do not wait for another word but bolt out of the house on a dead run for the garden and the tomb. Meanwhile, wild with joy and awesome fear the other women flee the tomb to tell the disciples the message of the angels. Why they do not meet Peter and John we are not told. McGarvey harmonizes: "They have scarcely left the spot, when the swift-footed John bounds up to the open door, stoops down and looks with eagerness into the vacant tomb. The impetuous Peter follows hard after, rushes past his companion into the sepulchre, and gazes around. They both for a moment look thoughtfully at the napkin lying here and the linen clothes lying yonder, then they solemnly walk away."

Mary evidently did not hear what the other women heard from the angels. Considering the hateful viciousness of the enemies of Jesus she may have surmized that these enemies had stolen the body in order to desecrate it even more or to use it to capture His followers.

Peter, an older and larger man than John was not able to run as fast as the younger John, so John outran him to the tomb. But John hesitated at the entrance to the tomb while Peter rushed on into the tomb. The fact that the grave clothes were so orderly laid aside was a sign of lack of haste. The very fact that the linen bandages were there at all infers that the body was not taken by grave robbers in haste for they would have little need to lay aside the cloths in such a manner.

What did the disciple John believe after entering the tomb and observing the neatly placed grave cloths. Did what he saw there satisfy him entirely? Was he so credulous a person that in this moment he wanted so desperately to believe he was able from the empty tomb and the linen cloths to come to a "resurrection faith" without any further evidence? We know this is not so for the disciples were incredulous—they would not believe at first. They were hard-headed men who refused to believe that He was raised from the dead, except on more

evidence than the report of the women (cf. Luke 24:11, 41). Thomas was more stubborn than all the rest requiring to see the nail prints in the Master's hands before believing. There does seem, however, to be a spark of faith ignited in the heart of John here. Westcott puts it this way, "The use of the word (believed) . . . points to the calm patient acceptance of a mystery as yet in part inexplicable with full confidence in the divine love . . . indicating something still to be more fully shown, and the apostle waited in trustful expectation for the interpretation."

Whatever the faint glimmer of hope within the apostle's breast it was not built upon any knowledge of the Old Testament prophecies and promises concerning the resurrection of the Messiah (20:9) or any evidence other than the empty tomb. It seems strange that the disciples did not remember all the many prophecies Jesus Himself had made concerning His resurrection! The women believed on this basis (cf. Luke 24:1-11). Perhaps the disciples were too busy with seeking places in the kingdom when Jesus made His prophecies to remember them or their Jewish prejudices as to the nature of the Messiah caused them to misunderstand or count His prophecies of no significance.

There may have been hope (cf. Luke 24:19-21) but they would not believe until they had actual concrete evidence. The talk of the women seemed to them an "idle tale" (Lk. 24:11). So, with the body of the Master gone they could hope but they could do little else by remaining at the empty tomb so they returned to their dwelling in Jerusalem.

While we are thinking about the empty tomb let us consider some of the attempts of the skeptics to supply an answer to the fact of the empty tomb. One thing is certain, the tomb was empty. The record states that even the enemies of Jesus testified to His certain death and the empty tomb. As Wilbur Smith puts it, "Something happened to the body of Jesus when it was taken down from the cross. The New Testament testifies that it was placed in a tomb . . . On Sunday morning, for one reason or another, that tomb was empty, as everyone admits—Christian, unbeliever, disciple, scoffer, Jew and Gentile, conservative, and modernist." Notice here what the historical record witnesses as to the empty tomb: (a) The women testify to it being empty; (b) Peter and John found the tomb empty; (c) The guards appointed to watch the tomb came and reported the tomb was empty; (d) The Sanhedrin did not even so much as question the story of the soldiers or go and see for themselves but concocted a lie that the soldiers were to repeat in order to offer an explanation for the empty tomb!

Consider this first attempt by the enemies of Christ to explain the

absence of His body from the tomb: (a) It was a story spread by bribery; (b) It was ridiculous—how could the soldiers *know* what happened to the body if they were asleep! (c) The disciples would not steal the body—they would not want to risk further antagonism of the Roman soldiers and other authorities and they had absolutely no reason for stealing the body and furthermore their subsequent lives makes such an allegedly diabolical plot unthinkable!

In considering the other attempts to explain the empty tomb we have borrowed from both A. Dale Crain's essay and "Therefore Stand," by Wilbur Smith. There is a theory that the body of Jesus was stolen by His friends (Joseph, Nicodemus and the disciples). There is positively no evidence that this was done. If His friends did remove the body, why did the Sanhedrin have to bribe the soldiers to tell it. Another skeptical theory is that the enemies of Jesus stole the body. But what is the motive for this?! Certainly there could be no greater help to the cause of His enemies than to keep the body *in* the tomb! Furthermore, if they had removed it and hidden it, why did they not produce His body when the apostles began to preach His resurrection in the very courts of the temple?! That would have stopped Christianity for good!

There is a theory that the women went to the wrong tomb. Could anyone forget within a few short hours where a precious loved one had been buried? If the women went to the wrong tomb then the angels were in the wrong tomb and Peter and John went to the wrong tomb! Furthermore, this was not one tomb among many in a public burial ground but was in a garden, belonging to a rich man, hewn out of solid rock, near the place of His crucifixion, with guards and a Roman seal upon it! And the women didn't know which one it was—or forgot?? This is so ridiculous a theory that even many skeptics ridicule it! Another theory is called the "Swoon Theory." According to this theory Jesus did not actually die, but merely fainted away and was revived by the coolness of the damp tomb and rose up and rolled away the stone Himself. How could anyone who had endured physically what Jesus had endured revive Himself in some seventy-two hours enough to roll away a stone which possibly five women could not move?! He had been beaten to the point of fainting with the Roman scourge; He had not had rest for two nights; He had been crucified and left to hang for six hours; His side had been pierced and a great amount of His blood had flowed from the gaping wound; He had been wrapped and bound in grave cloths. This theory makes the record a complete and deliberate contradiction and lie for the record says that even Pilate was satisfied that Jesus was dead. If Christ did merely swoon then the apostles are liars and Christ is the greatest fraud the world has ever

known. There is a theory called the "Vision Theory" which explains the resurrection as a supernatural but ephemeral vision given to the apostles and women and others. If the appearances of Christ were not bodily appearances why do the gospel writers make it so plain that Christ showed the nail prints in His hands and the wound in His side—why did He eat with the disciples?! There is the "Optical Illusion" theory which says that a ghost-like appearance of Jesus was produced in some natural way. This would not explain the empty tomb at all. Furthermore, Jesus made enough appearances, both night and day, to enough people, in such close proximity to the subjects that it would be impossible to defraud all those to whom He appeared! Finally, there is the "Hallucination" theory which relegates the claimed appearances to the realm of subjective apparitions of the imagination. Still, we have the record of the empty tomb—was that a hallucination too!? St. Paul claims that He appeared to over five hundred people at once—are we then to suppose over five hundred identical, individual, subjective hallucinations? Besides the Lord made varied appearances over a period of forty days in many widely separated places to all types of people (even to one of His enemies, Saul of Tarsus). The empty tomb makes the hallucination theory an absurdity.

The factual and historical evidence for the empty tomb is so overwhelming that skeptical scholars are baffled as to how to explain this phenomenon. One skeptic has said, "The empty tomb must be thought out on doctrinal, not historical or critical grounds." The relevance of the resurrection and its meaning may be theological, but the facts surrounding the resurrection such as the empty tomb and the appearances of Jesus are strictly historical matters. The people are real people; the places are geographically definite, the enemies were not mythical beings.

### *Quiz*

1. What happened after the burial of the body of Jesus by Joseph and Nicodemus?
2. When did the women come to the tomb? Day and time?
3. Why, when the angel told the women Christ had risen, did Mary Magdalene say to the disciples, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb"?
4. What did John "believe" (v. 8)? What is the meaning of v. 9?
5. Refute the story explaining the empty tomb spread by the soldiers.
6. Give five other theories of the skeptics and refute them.
7. The meaning of the resurrection is theological but what of the facts surrounding the account of the resurrection?

## THE APPEARANCE TO MARY

*Text: 20:11-18*

- 11 But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb;
- 12 and she beholdeſt two angels in white ſitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.
- 13 And they ſay unto her, Woman, why weepes thou? She ſaith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.
- 14 When ſhe had thus ſaid, ſhe turned herſelf back, and beholdeſt Jesus ſtanding, and knew not that it was Jesus.
- 15 Jesus ſaith unto her, Woman, why weepes thou? Whom ſeek-est thou? She, ſuppoſing him to be the gardener, ſaith unto him, Sir, if thou haſt borne him hence, tell me where thou haſt laid him, and I will take him away.
- 16 Jesus ſaith unto her, Mary. She turneth herſelf, and ſaith unto him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to ſay, Teacher.
- 17 Jesus ſaith to her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and ſay to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.
- 18 Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples, I haue ſeen the Lord; and that he haſt ſaid these things unto her.

*Queries*

- Why did Mary not recognize Jesus when ſhe ſaw Him?
- How did ſhe recognize Him at His calling her name?
- Why did Jesus ſay, "Touch me not"?

*Paraphrase (Harmony)*

But Mary stood just outside the entrance to the tomb weeping alone in the garden. And while ſhe was continuing to weep ſhe stooped and peered into the tomb and there ſhe ſaw two angels ſitting where the body of Jesus had lain—one at the head and one at the foot. The angels ſpoke unto her ſaying, woman, Why are you weeping? She replied, Because they have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they haue placed His body. Then ſhe turned and, without realizing that it was Jesus, noticed him ſtanding near-by. Jesus asked her, Woman, why are you weeping—whom are you ſeeking? Suppoſing him to be the gardener, ſhe plead with him, Sir, if you haue taken him from the tomb, tell me where you haue laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus called her name gently, Mary! Startled, ſhe turned and ſpoke to him in Hebrew, ſaying, Rabboni! Teacher! Jesus restrained her, ſaying,

Do not hold on to me now. I have not gone up to the Father yet. Go and tell my brethren that I am soon going to return to my Father and your Father, my God and your God. And so Mary Magdalene told the disciples, I have seen the Lord and she told them what Jesus had said to her.

### Summary

Jesus appears to the weeping Mary Magdalene. Overcome with joy she makes a move as if to fall at His feet and cling to Him. He cautions her that He has not made His final return to their midst but must soon ascend to the Father and that she is to go and witness to His resurrection.

### Comment

Peter and John have left the garden. Mary Magdalene has returned to the garden tomb alone. She evidently did not meet the other women and hear from them what the angels have said concerning His resurrection. Now that she has time to contemplate the awfulness of her suspicions she bursts into tears. "They" have taken his body. Just who she suspects we do not know—perhaps she thinks the Jews have taken His body. She stoops and looks in the tomb to confirm her suspicions. For the first time she sees the angels and they begin to converse with her about her sorrow. Mary is still persuaded that the body of Jesus has been taken. As she is answering the angels there is perhaps a sound in the garden which causes her to turn and see the figure of a man approaching. The light was still dim and there may have been an early morning fog and Mary's eyes were blurred with tears. She did not recognize the man. He began to ask her her reason for being in the garden. He wanted to know the reason for her sorrow. What other man would be there at that hour and be questioning her as to her presence except the gardener. Supposing him to be the gardener she assumed he would know if the body had been removed and so she questions him.

Jesus spoke her name. It would be in that gentle but firm tone which she knew so well. Startled and surprised with joy and relief, she immediately recognizes Him and cries out, "Rabboni!" The word means "Teacher," or "Great Teacher." It is a title of profound respect among the Hebrews. Only seven great leaders of the Jews have ever been given the title (among whom were Gamaliel I and Gamaliel II). As she cried out "Great Teacher," she made a movement as if to fall at His feet and cling to Him. The Greek word *haptethai* is used of that clinging to the knees or feet which was adopted by suppliants.

Jesus forbade her doing so saying, "Do not hold to me." Why did Jesus forbid her to do so? Not because it was indecent; nor because

she wanted to test the reality of His resurrection for He did not forbid Thomas such a test; nor because her doing so would in some mystic way disturb the process of glorification; but because He wanted Mary (and the other disciples later) to understand that this was not His permanent return to visible fellowship with His disciples. He had promised His disciples to "return in a little while" (Jn. 16:16) and perhaps Mary felt that the little while was over and He was now to be visibly with them forevermore. Hendriksen paraphrases thusly, "Do not think, Mary, that by grasping hold of me so firmly you can keep me always with you. That uninterrupted fellowship for which you yearn must wait until I have ascended to be forever with the Father." Before the visible fellowship is restored Jesus must ascend to the Father for His Highpriestly work ("the little while") (cf. also Acts 3:19-26).

Then Jesus commissions Mary Magdalene to go and tell the disciples, not specifically of His resurrection as the angels commissioned the other women, but Mary is to tell them that Jesus is ascending (present tense) unto the Father. Although He will yet appear for forty days He is in the act of ascending to the Father.

Jesus now calls the disciples by a new name. He has called them "children," "sheep," "disciples," "friends," "branches," and other names but now He calls them "brothers!" This new relationship has a significant bearing on His commission to Mary. She is to tell the "brothers" that Jesus, the elder brother, is going up to be with *His* Father and *their* Father, *His* God and *their* God! (cf. Heb. 2:5-18).

And so Mary, went with all speed, to tell the disciples as they mourned and wept (cf. Mk. 16:10-11) just what Jesus had told her to tell. But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her they would not believe it. The words seemed as an idle tale to them (cf. Lk. 24:9-11).

### Quiz

1. Why did Mary think Jesus was the gardener?
2. What does the word "Rabboni" mean?
3. Did Jesus say, "Touch me not?" What did He actually say?
4. Why did Jesus forbid Mary to cling to His feet?
5. What new relationship between Jesus and the disciples is emphasized?
6. What did Mary Magdalene have to tell the disciples that was different from the message of the other women?

### THE APPEARANCE TO TEN DISCIPLES

*Text: 20:19-25*

19 When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were,

for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

20 And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord.

21 Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit:

23 whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

### *Queries*

- a. Why did Jesus show them His hands and His side?
- b. What is the significance of the commission by Jesus in v. 21?
- c. Does v. 23 teach that the apostles were the successors to the sacerdotal authority of Jesus in right to forgive men their sins?

### *Paraphrase (Harmony)*

Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city, and told unto the chief priests all the things that were come to pass. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave much money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and rid you of care. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying was spread abroad among the Jews, and continueth until this day.

And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was threescore furlongs from Jerusalem. And they communed with each other of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, while they communed and questioned together, that Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk? And they stood still, looking sad. And one of them, named Cleopas, answering said unto him, Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he who would redeem Israel. Yea and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass. Moreover certain women of our company amazed us, having

been early at the tomb; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going: and he made as though he would go further. And they constrained him, saying; Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in to abide with them. And it came to pass, when he had sat down with them to meat, he took the bread and blessed; and breaking it he gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Was our not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up that very hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they rehearsed the things that happened in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of the bread, and that he appeared to Cephas.

When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having.

And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit; whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish. And he took it, and ate before them.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them

when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

### *Summary*

The Lord, after appearing to Mary Magdalene and the other women, chooses to manifest His resurrected glory to two of His disciples on the way to Emmaus. Overjoyed with their experience they return to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples. Jesus then appears before all the disciples except Thomas, commissions them, empowers them and eats with them.

### *Comment*

Between the appearance to the women and the appearance to the ten disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem, Jesus appeared to two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus. These two disciples were despondent at the death of Jesus because all their glorious Messianic hopes had died, they thought, with Him there on Golgotha's brow. They had heard rumors that He was alive—His tomb was empty—but they had not seen Him. Perhaps these disciples were going to Emmaus to rest, get away from all the uproar in Jerusalem, and to think over the events of the last few days. Emmaus was probably only 7 or 8 miles from Jerusalem. Jesus met them or overtook them and walked on with them to Emmaus but they did not recognize Him . . . "their eyes were holden." Barnes notes that it was not some miraculous veiling of their own eyes that occurred but that He appeared to them in a form they were not used to seeing (cf. Mark 16:12) and they were not expecting to see Him anyway and they simply did not recognize Him as He walked and talked with them. As He began to remind them of the Old Testament Messianic prophecies and apply them to Himself, their hearts began to "burn within them." And then, as they were eating with Him, the familiarity of it all opened their eyes and they recognized Him. And they arose that very hour and hurried back to Jerusalem to report to the rest of that little band of despondent disciples. Just who these two disciples are we are not certain. One was Cleopas and the other seems to be most probably, Peter. There are some commentators who believe the second disciple was Luke because of the fact that only Luke records the event and his record has the flavor of that of an eyewitness. Just how Jesus vanished out of their sight is not certain either. The account seems to indicate that it was a miraculous "vanishing." This would be in keeping with His miraculous entrance into a room which had the doors shut to outsiders.

In John 20:19 we notice a special emphasis on "the first day of the

week." John might just as well have said, "Now when it was the evening of the first day." But he emphasizes by saying, "Now when it was evening of *that* day, the first of the week." The first day of the week, being the day of Christ's resurrection, is the chief of days, the day of Christian worship (cf. Matt. 28:1; Mk. 16:2; Lk. 24:1; Jn. 20:1; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10).

There was something about the sudden appearance of Jesus in their midst where they were gathered on that evening that must have been beyond natural for the disciples were "terrified and affrighted." John seems to record that the doors were "fastened" to show some significant difference regarding the properties of the risen body of Jesus. The idiom of the Greek indicates that the Lord's appearance in their midst was with breath taking suddenness and completely unexpected. They had "fastened" the doors on account of their fear of the Jews. Their Master had been slain and there may have been word rumored that the Sanhedrin was looking now for the disciples of the Nazarene to condemn them also.

Jesus was suddenly in their midst, speaking in a calm and soothing manner, "Peace be unto you." It was a familiar phrase for He had used it often in addressing His disciples. The disciples were terrified believing they were beholding one who had returned from the unseen realm of the dead—a spirit, Luke tells us. But immediately Jesus held forth His hands and showed His feet which were pierced with the prints of the nails. He commands, "handle me, and see!" To dispel their doubts and fears He bids them prove to themselves beyond any doubt that the One in their midst is the same One with whom they walked and talked the last three years.

This is one of the unique features of the revelation of Jehovah-God, whether that revelation be in the Old Testament, in the Incarnate Word, or in that revelation given by the apostles—the invitation, yea, the command, to test and prove the credibility and authenticity and divine nature of such a revelation. No other religion has ever been so insistent, *that its claims be tested and verified and none has ever offered such undisputable evidence, for such verification.* The disciples were not asked to place their trust in some mystic philosophy, nor in imaginative man-made gods—they were given empirically verifiable evidence for the supernaturalness of Christ. The resurrection of Christ was not only His spirit but His body also.

But how, if Christ was resurrected in a body, was He able to be suddenly in their midst if the doors were "fastened." We like the conclusion given by Hendriksen, "Scripture gives no answer. Some day we'll understand."

Our text here in John does not say whether they "handled" Him or not. Luke (Lk. 24:41) seems to indicate that they did not but "still disbelieved for joy, and wondered" until He ate the broiled fish with them. Then they were glad and rejoiced.

So Jesus said again, Peace be unto you. Then He gives them their commission: "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." There is more than a command here—there is also a warning and a promise. Just as the great Apostle, Jesus, was sent to preach the will of God and to be persecuted and suffer for His glory, even so the apostles were sent to preach and be persecuted for His glory. They were to "fellowship His sufferings" (Phil. 3:10). There is also the promise of victory. They would also know "the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3:10). They were to receive a divine commission and they were to be given divine credentials through the power to work miracles (cf. Heb. 2:4).

"So send I you, to labor unrewarded

To serve unpaid, unloved, unsought, unknown,

To bear rebuke, to suffer scorn and scoffing,

So send I you, to toil for me alone

Verse 23 has long been a problem. The Roman Catholic Church has used this verse to teach that the so-called successors of the apostles (the popes and priests) have the authority to forgive men of their sins. Such a doctrine is technically called "absolution." Not even the apostles themselves had any authority of their own to grant absolution—the forgiveness of sins. One need only to turn to Acts 8:14-24 to find one example of an apostle being asked to grant absolution in the case of a man confessing his sin. The answer of the apostle Peter is, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee." This passage in John 20:23 does not grant the apostles the power of absolution. The verbs *apheontai* (they are forgiven) and *kekratentai* (they are retained) of this verse are in the perfect tense in the Greek. Now the perfect tense means "an action having been completed in past time with a continuing result." Literally translated verse 23 would read, "whose soever sins ye forgive, they have already been forgiven them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they have already been retained." It is very interesting indeed that in the other two instances where Jesus similarly commissioned the disciples (Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:18) the verbs are also in the perfect tense! There the verbs are *dedemena* (has already been bound) and *lelumena* (has already been loosed).

In founding the church, declaring the will of God and preaching the gospel of repentance and remission of sins by the blood of Christ and men's obedience to the gospel, the apostles merely declared on

what terms, and to what people God extended forgiveness of sins. What ever they preached on earth had already been decided in heaven. Only God can forgive sins. The apostles and all who have preached since are merely heralds of the covenant which has already been ratified, once for all, in heaven.

The apostles were given here by Jesus a symbolic prophecy of the special baptism of the Holy Spirit when He "breathed." The literal baptism of the Spirit would come upon them on the day of Pentecost and would empower them with miraculous power in order to confirm the already-ratified message which they were to preach afterward. The Holy Spirit did not give them any inherent authority to grant absolution of sin.

### *Quiz*

1. How does John put emphasis on the "first day of the week?"
2. How did Jesus get into the room of the doors were "fastened?"
3. What, according to Luke, did Jesus say when He showed them His hands and His feet?
4. What all did Jesus mean when He said, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you?"
5. Show how verse 23 does not give the apostles or any other mortals the right to forgive men their sins.

### THE APPEARANCE TO THOMAS

*Text: 20:26-29*

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them, Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst; and said, Peace be unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

28 Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

### *Querries*

- a. Why did Jesus think it necessary to make a special appearance for Thomas' sake?
- b. Why are they who have not seen and yet have believed said to be "blessed?"

### *Paraphrase (Harmony)*

And afterward he was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hard-

ness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen.

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou has believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

### *Summary*

Thomas, who was absent at the Lord's first appearance to the disciples, was told of His appearance insists upon more proof. The Lord Himself appears especially for Thomas. All Thomas' doubts flee.

### *Comment*

Thomas, the twin, was absent at the first meeting together of the disciples. Why he was absent we are not told. Perhaps he was investigating further the reports of the women about the empty tomb. Immediately after the Lord's appearance to the "Twelve" (ten disciples in all) that first Sunday night, they went as a body and found Thomas and told him excitedly, "We have seen the Lord!" (v. 24). But for some reason, known only to Thomas, he could not satisfy the despondent longing of his own heart with just their testimony—*he had to see for himself!* If it is fair to characterize Thomas from two previous statements of his (Jn. 11:16; 14:5), we may think of him as one who tends to be pessimistic—to see the dark side. It was not that Thomas was a confirmed agnostic or skeptic—he believed readily enough when there was enough evidence to sweep away his natural inclination to despondency. Actually, Thomas was no more a "doubter" than the other ten disciples—he was just not at the right place at the right time. The other ten disciples were filled with the same despondent doubt (even though they had the testimony of the women and the two back from Emmaus) until Jesus appeared to them that first Sunday evening. Thomas simply demands the same evidence which was necessary for the other ten to overcome their doubts. Foster says, "The gradual development of their faith and the fact that fear, doubt, misunderstanding, and the obstinate insistence upon absolutely indubitable evidence caused them to be slow to believe but it adds to the power of their testimony as witnesses."

The disciples have not left Jerusalem and gone into Galilee as the resurrected Lord has commanded them through the women (cf. Lk.

24:3-8; Mk. 16:2-8) and another week has elapsed according to 20:26. As Hendriksen points out John is "employing the inclusive method of time-computation." Thus "after eight days" would be the next Sunday evening when the disciples had gathered together again—probably in the same place as on the previous Sunday evening. Again the doors were "fastened." But again Jesus appeared suddenly and stood in the midst of them. Again He calmed their beating hearts with, "Peace be unto you."

It is worthy of note that Jesus has, in all His appearances at this time, appeared only on the first day of the week. There can be little doubt that He did it to especially consecrate and dedicate this day in the minds of the apostles. We notice also that the disciples have not yet come to that boldness and courageousness of faith which they later knew (Acts 4:13; 4:19-20; 5:29). They still have the doors "shut" for fear of the Jews.

Jesus does not waste any time but gets immediately to the point of this appearance. He commands Thomas to come forward and "touch and see and believe." The question is always asked, "Did Thomas actually touch His hands?" In all probability he did! (cf. Lk. 24:39; I Jn. 1:1-4). There is no possibility of hallucination or extreme credulity here! Either Thomas actually saw and "handled" the resurrected body of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth (as well as the women and the other disciples) or the writers of the gospel accounts are the most dastardly deceivers and frauds the world has even known. There are just two alternatives: either the evidence is overwhelmingly sufficient to call forth faith and surrender to the divine, omnipotent, omniscient, resurrected Lord Jesus—or—the gospel writers deliberately lied and duped millions of their contemporaries and the gospels then are not morally worthy of consideration for they are lies. Only two alternatives are worthy of honest men: let us hear no more that the gospels are untrustworthy historically speaking but may form the basis for morality and social action—this is neither reasonable nor morally upright.

There was no question lingering in the mind of Thomas. He was of an "honest and good heart." Once the evidence was sufficient he surrendered his mind and heart to the demands of the fact. It is as Alexander Campbell has written, *facts are moral*, they demand a decision. Facts are the basis of faith and faith is the motivating force of feeling. The facts caused Thomas to trust (have faith) and thus leading to the emotion of his heart and soul poured out in, "My Lord and my God!"

There must be no doubters among the men upon whom Jesus is to thrust the responsibility of establishing the church and preaching the

gospel in the face of a whole world against it. There must not be the slightest hesitancy, question, or problem about His victory over death and Satan. There must be absolute and abiding conviction on the part of each one commissioned to this great task. Furthermore, Jesus appeared to Thomas out of His love for Thomas. God desires to give every man enough opportunity to know of Christ's victory over death and Satan, but now the responsibility to present the facts to every man is upon those who are His disciples. Jesus will not appear to men again until He comes to judge the world. Then those who pierced Him will see Him—but then it will be too late!

R. C. Foster notes, "John opens his gospel with a profound statement concerning Jesus as the incarnation of God. He closes his gospel with this great declaration of Thomas which is a result of actual experience and association. Thomas sums up in one dramatic explanation the message of the entire gospel. The disciple who doubted the most gives at last the final statement of his faith. Thomas hails Jesus as God and Jesus accepts the identification as Thomas worshipped Him."

Why does Jesus pronounce this last "beatitude" of blessing upon those who believe without having seen? Faith which results from seeing is good; but faith which results from hearing is more excellent. If men had to verify every basis of life or every statement of history to their own senses before they acted, virtually nothing would ever be accomplished! We could not all personally and minutely verify everything we accept as fact and allow as motivating principles in our lives. The faith of multitudes through the centuries has rested, not upon their own personal sensory perceptions, but upon the testimony of competent witnesses. We do not accept the fact that Washington was the first President of the United States of America on the basis of our own sight, but of the testimony of accredited witnesses.

Another matter to be considered here is the weight of the accumulation of testimony over against the possibilities of our own senses being deceived. It is no wonder Jesus said, "blessed are they who, though not seeing, are yet believing."

### Quiz

1. Why did Thomas refuse to accept the word of the other apostles?
2. Was Thomas any worse than the rest of the apostles in his doubt?
3. What day did Jesus appear to the eleven, Thomas being present?
4. What two alternatives are left for those who read of the gospel account of Thomas' experience?
5. Why are those who believe without having seen blessed above those whose faith needs to see?

## THE AIM OF THE GOSPEL

*Text: 20:30-31*

30 Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.

*Queries*

- a. What are the "other signs" of verse 30?
- b. May belief in Jesus' deity be attained in any way except through the gospel record?

*Paraphrase*

Jesus did indeed perform many other signs in the presence of His disciples which have not been recorded in this book. The signs of Jesus which are recorded in this book have been written in order that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Anointed One, the Son of God, and that continuing to believe you may have life eternal in His name.

*Summary*

The purpose of the recorded gospel is to engender faith in the deity of Christ resulting in eternal life.

*Comment*

This is the climax of the Fourth Gospel—not the conclusion, but the climax. Chapter Twenty-one is the conclusion in the form of an epilogue.

It is quite clear from John's statement here in vv. 30-31 and from just a cursory reading of the other gospel accounts that none of the gospels ever set out to give, nor claimed to give, a full account of the life of Jesus. What they have recorded, however, is historically and factually accurate. The brevity of the accounts in no way denies their historicity!

But why are the gospel records so brief? Would it not be to our advantage to know every detail of Jesus' life as a youngster and a growing man? It is also quite clear that the gospels are not intended to be complete biographies of Jesus' life. We like the statement of R. C. Foster in his Life of Christ Syllabus: "The narratives of the life of Christ are condensed in order to be the more effective. They are sufficient for the purpose of presenting adequate evidence, extensive enough to challenge a life-time of study, and yet not so voluminous as to overwhelm the reader with a mass of unnecessary records. The brevity

of the scriptures is one of the foremost proofs of their divine inspiration. Contrast the gospel narratives with any biography in print, whether of Napoleon, Lincoln, or any other famous person!"

The purpose of John has been all along to show that Jesus of Nazareth is the Incarnate Word—the Very Son of God, co-equal with the Father—indeed Immanuel, God with us! This was John's stated purpose in his Prologue (1:1-18). These climactic verses 30-31 show us that from start to finish the Fourth Gospel is a book of signs that Jesus is the Son of God. This is the first purpose of the book.

If the deity of Christ be established and told in a vivid and captivating way then men will be led to believe in Him and gain eternal life. This is the stated second purpose of the gospel record: to bring men to faith and salvation in obedience to the will of Christ (i.e., in His name). The purpose of the gospel record has just been vividly portrayed in the experience of Thomas: he has been brought to a complete faith in the deity of Jesus and commits his life unto Him. "The Fourth Gospel began with the unfolding of the mystery of life which has its source in the Word. It closes with the offer of life to all who will accept Jesus.

It is worthy of note that John uses the present tense of the verb *pistēo* (believe) and so literally it means to believe and keep on believing. Hendriksen says, "Note: continue to believe. Remember Cerinthus, who was trying to undermine the faith of the Church in the deity of Christ! That faith must be strengthened. The enemy must be repulsed."

It may be that John had in mind, writing his gospel toward the end of the first century, a refutation and defense against Gnosticism. But the use of *pistēo* in the present tense is so common an idiom of the New Testament writers simply to state the nature of saving faith that it seems beside the point to connect it with a refutation of Gnosticism.

Whatever the case, John climaxes his gospel with his version of the good confession. But, as Foster suggests, it now includes the profounder meaning of the crucified and risen Christ, and of the Son of God who has given final proof of His claims.

### *Quiz*

1. Did the gospel writers intend to give a full account or biography of the life of Jesus? How do you know?
2. Why is the brevity of the gospel records more to our advantage?
3. What are the two purposes of the gospel record?
4. How do these two verses tie in with and climax the entire Fourth Gospel from start to finish?

SERMON NO. NINETEEN  
 (TOPICAL)  
 IMPERATIVES OF THE EMPTY TOMB  
 Mark 16:1-7 I Cor. 15:57-58

Michaelangelo, the immortal artist, stood in company with his fellow artists one day contemplating a masterful painting of the crucifixion of Christ. He was heard to say, "Why do we fill our churches and art galleries with portrayals of His crucifixion, as if it all ended there? He is risen, He is alive."

I. YES, CHRIST IS RISEN

A. Credible witnesses

1. Testimony of others is accepted as an indispensable source of knowing the truth of much of what we know
  - a. IN FACT A GREAT DEAL OF WHAT WE BELIEVE TO BE TRUE IS ACCEPTED ON THE TESTIMONY OF OTHERS BECAUSE WE DID NOT OURSELVES SEE IT!
  - b. The essential matter is to test and verify the credibility of the witnesses who testify
2. Competency
  - a. Were they eyewitnesses? YES
  - b. Were they credulous? NO
    - (1) Thomas; Peter & John
    - (2) even wrote of themselves that they did not believe He would rise from the dead!
3. Honesty
  - a. NOTHING TO GAIN & EVERYTHING TO LOSE BY THUS TESTIFYING TO HIS RESURRECTION (life, fortune, etc.)
  - b. No witnesses ever had more motive for denying what they saw with their own eyes, yet "... we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."
4. Number of witnesses
  - a. apostles, women, 500 brethren who saw Jesus all at once . . . alive when Paul wrote I Cor.
  - b. There is a point reached where calling more eyewitnesses becomes ludicrous . . . WELL OVER 500 EYEWITNESSES SHOULD ESTABLISH THE FACT BEYOND ANY REASONABLE DOUBT!

To doubt the resurrection of Christ is unreasonable and irrational in the light of the evidence for it.

## B. Conversion of enemies

1. A great company of the Hebrew priests became obedient to the faith (Acts 5)
  - a. THESE MEN WOULD HAVE CHECKED ALL THE EVIDENCE BEFORE THEY BECAME FOLLOWERS OF THE NAZARENE!
2. Saul of Tarsus
  - a. If there was ever a man in the first century who knew all arguments against the resurrection of Christ which the Jewish Sanhedrin could ever draw up, that man was the Apostle Paul, and yet in spite of all this he believed and preached it as his central theme in the face of persecution etc.
  - b. Two great unbelieving scholars set out to disprove Christianity . . . one the resurrection, the other the conversion of Saul of Tarsus . . . both met again as Christians
  - c. Also Governor Lew Wallace (author of Ben Hur) and Sir William Ramsay (converted archeologist, etc.)
3. Paul says that some even of Ceasar's own household became followers of the Way!

## C. Contemporary history

1. Josephus (says He arose and appeared to His disciples); Tacitus (80 A.D.) Pliny; Suetonius (90 A.D.)
2. These and many other historians confirm the following facts concerning early Christianity of the 1st century
  - a. Christ was a real historic person and founder of Christianity
  - b. He was worshipped as one divine
  - c. Christians met on the 1st day of the week to celebrate the resurrection of their Christ
  - d. They were pure morally and were very influential in society
  - e. Christianity spread with astonishing rapidity
  - f. The church was terribly persecuted but the Christians, by their hope in a resurrection, withstood the persecutions

## D. The Empty Tomb

1. Stands in overwhelming emptiness and silence as one of the most unanswerable points of evidence
2. Even unbelievers admit 3 things about Jesus
  - a. He lived as a historic personage
  - b. He was crucified and buried
  - c. His tomb was empty!

3. Many are the theories as to how it became empty
  - a. Disciples stole body (when heavily guarded by soldiers —would they then die for their own lie!)
  - b. Enemies stole body—why didn't they produce the body later ! ! !
  - c. Jesus did not die but swooned and rolled back the stone —nearly dead from beating then hanged on the cross for 6 hours
4. The answer given by those there and best qualified to know ..
  - a. Jewish authorities admitted tomb was empty
  - b. Then they bribed soldiers to tell a lie (if were not bribed and was not a lie why did not someone successfully refute the gospel accounts when they were published in the 1st century?)
  - c. Not even a good lie at that . . . "DISCIPLE STOLE THE BODY WHILE WE WERE ASLEEP!" HOW COULD THEY KNOW IF THEY WERE ASLEEP! IMAGINE SOMEONE TESTIFYING LIKE THIS ON THE WITNESS STAND IN OUR COURTS!

UNBELIEVERS SAY CHRIST WAS NOT RAISED FROM THE DEAD . . . I SAY PROVE IT!

THERE STANDS THE EMPTY TOMB IN PALESTINE TODAY!

IN THE N.T. THERE IS HISTORIC EVIDENCE WHICH WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY ANY COURT TODAY!

LET THE UNBELIEVER PRODUCE SOME EVIDENCE . . .

THE QUESTION IS NOT COULD IT—OR COULD IT NOT HAPPEN . . . THE QUESTION IS ONE OF FACT AND EVIDENCE . . . THE QUESTION IS DID IT . . . OR DID IT NOT HAPPEN

THE EVIDENCE SAYS YES IT DID HAPPEN AND THERE IS NO FACTUAL EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY !!!

E. The Existence of the Church and its institutions or ordinances

1. The church, the 1st day of the week of the Lord's supper, baptism are all here . . . WHAT IS THE CAUSE BEHIND THESE MONUMENTS
2. If one should doubt that George Washington ever existed and did the mighty feats recorded of him . . . we would not only refer to historical testimony, but to the effects of his life and to the monuments erected in his memory!

DENY THE CREDIBILITY OF THE SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY CONCERNING JESUS, HIS DEATH AND RESUR-

RECTION AND YOU HAVE AN EFFECT (THE CHURCH), WITHOUT AN ADEQUATE CAUSE (THE RESURRECTION).

3. The church of the 1st century and ever afterward accepted the doctrine of the resurrection and practiced the ordinances NOW THE PEOPLE OF THAT TIME WERE FULLY CAPABLE OF CHECKING THE TESTIMONIES OF THE APOSTLES AND OTHER PREACHERS . . . BUT THEY COULD NOT AND DID NOT REFUTE THEIR PREACHING AS BEING LIES!

4. No other truth could have so completely transformed the lives of so many millions through the ages  
a. Indeed no other truth has . . . no other religion has!

YES, CHRIST IS ACTUALLY, FACTUALLY, HISTORICALLY RISEN FROM THE DEAD . . . SEEN BY EYEWITNESSES IF THE EVIDENCE IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO PROVE THE HISTORICITY OF THE BODILY RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST . . . THEN EVIDENCE FROM HISTORY AND EYEWITNESSES IS OF NO VALUE AT ALL TO PROVE ANYTHING IN THIS WORLD! TESTIMONY IS COMPLETELY UNRELIABLE IF IT IS UNRELIABLE IN THIS CASE THERE IS BETTER EVIDENCE, OF MORE CONVINCING CERTAINTY FOR THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS THAN ANY OTHER FACT OF HISTORY WHICH IS BEYOND OUR IMMEDIATE SENSORY PERCEPTIONS

MOST EVERONE BELIEVES THAT LEE HARVEY OSWALD MURDERED PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY . . . BUT THERE IS NOT NEARLY AS MUCH EVIDENCE FOR IT AS FOR THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

## II. IMPERATIVES OF THE EMPTY TOMB

### A. The Bible is God's Word!

1. The Creator of the universe has expressed His nature, His will, His purpose for man.
2. He has demonstrated the unsearchable richness of His love
3. He has demonstrated that He will keep all His promises
4. He has demonstrated that there is POWER for the believer in this Word of His

### B. Heaven is as real as the resurrection

1. He has gone to prepare a place of eternal rest and peace for us
2. There will be no tears, no death, no sin, no separation, no war there

- 3. A real place so glorious that human language is not adequate to fully describe it.
- C. Hell is as real as the resurrection
  - 1. There is no rest there day or night
  - 2. The smoke of their torment goeth up forever and ever
  - 3. It is the dwelling place of all that is false, ugly, evil
  - 4. It is a place of conscious remembrance and eternal regret
  - 3. One in practice
  - 4. In obedience to truth revealed, unity . . . in opinion, liberty . . . in all things love
  - 5. Christ purchased the church with His blood . . . you must be saved by His blood . . . you must be a member of His church . . . to do so you must obey His plan of salvation
- G. One Way of Salvation
  - 1. He, His person, His accomplishment, His atonement, His commands . . . this is the one Way of salvation
  - 2. No man has ever been given authority to add to or take away from His Word (Gal. 1:8-12)
  - 3. Hear, Believe, Repent, Confess, Be Immersed
  - 4. Be faithful unto death  
(cf. Luke 16:19-31)
  - 5. A real place so terrible that human language is not adequate to fully describe it
- D. Man's immortal spirit is as real as the resurrection
  - 1. Man is not just flesh and bone and blood.
  - 2. He is a living soul, created in the spiritual image of God, his Maker
  - 3. Man is morally free and responsible to make a choice between salvation or condemnation as it is offered to him by God's grace
- E. Christ is coming again just as surely as He came forth alive from the tomb
  - 1. He is coming in time and in history (not in thought or feeling)
  - 2. He comes with His angels to judge and render vengeance
  - 3. No one knows the day nor the hour, but everyone will know when He does come, for every eye will see Him
- F. There is only one church, the universal body of Christ, and that is the one which conforms in belief and practice to the church described in the New Testament
  - 1. One in name
  - 2. One in doctrine

*Conclusion***I. THERE IS DIVINE POWER IN THE RESURRECTION (Phil. 3:9-10)**

- A. The power of Christianity is not in the esthetic value of great cathedrals—nor in somber ritual and tradition—nor in emotional singing or heart-tending sermon illustrations
- 1. THE POWER IS IN THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE TOMB . . . IN TIME AND IN HISTORY
- B. It gives a hope that is alive (I Peter 1:3)
- C. It brings joy unspeakable and full of glory (I Jn. 1:1-4)
- D. It sanctifies or purifies (I Jn. 3—Acts 17:32)
- E. It gives power to our witness for God (Acts 4:33)
- F. It gives us a power to be steadfast and to labor (I Cor. 15:58)

**II. AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE RESURRECTION**

- A. If Christ be not raised then preaching is foolishness, vain and useless
- B. If Christ be not raised then faith and hope and love are senseless, vain and silly . . . if there be no life after death, let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die!

**III. YOU MUST MAKE A CHOICE, YOU WILL MAKE A CHOICE, YOU HAVE MADE A CHOICE**

- A. Our only hope is in Christ and His resurrection
- B. Gandhi, Joseph Smith, Martin Luther . . . their bones and their tombs are with us to this day . . . there is no hope in them
- C. Philosophy, science and all the other schemes of men are helpless and hopeless
- D. Let the so-called scientists and philosophers talk about "prehistoric" this and that all they want—

AS FOR ME, I WANT MY LIFE HERE AND HERE-AFTER FOUNDED ON HISTORIC CERTAINTIES

I WILL TAKE THE HISTORICAL, EYEWITNESSED RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST OVER "PRE-HISTORIC" GUESSES ANY DAY

HOW ABOUT YOU?

**CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE**

An epilogue is defined: "A concluding section, as of a novel, serving to complete the plan of the work." The twenty-first chapter of John's gospel is his epilogue. It is parallel to the closing verses of the Synoptic Gospels which give the different instances of the "Great Com-

mission." This is John's "Great Commission." Merrill C. Tenney calls the epilogue, "The Responsibilities of Belief."

Lenski, Foster and others refer to this chapter as a "Supplement." Most commentators feel that John formally closed his gospel record with the end of chapter twenty and that this chapter is an appendix to it. Westcott says, "The general scope of the contents of this chapter is distinct from the development of the plan which is declared to be completed in chapter twenty." We believe the contents of chapter twenty-one are *not* altogether distinct from the development of the plan of the rest of the Fourth Gospel. It was the plan of the Fourth Gospel to record the revelation of and Incarnation of the pre-existent Word. Chapter twenty-one is the commission of the Incarnate Word to His disciples to preach and teach His Word.

We have chosen to accept this twenty-first chapter as a part of the continuity of the whole plan of the Fourth Gospel and yet standing in relationship to the whole as an epilogue. We outline it thusly:

IV Epilogue: "Feed My Sheep" 21:1-25

- A. Omnipotent Lord, 21:1-14
- B. Obedient Love, 21:15-23
- C. Overwhelming Evidence, 21:24-25

It is questioned by those with liberal presuppositions that John is the author of this last chapter. Foster says that chapter 21 is the hub of internal evidence that John the apostle wrote the whole book. The strange omission of the name of John in the whole book leads one to believe the "beloved disciple" is John the Apostle. Chapter 21 makes quite definite this identification and clearly affirms he is the author of the entire book. Besides, there are no extant copies of the Fourth Gospel which give any indication that this 21st chapter was other than a definite part of the Fourth Gospel. The style of chapter 21 is identical with the Johannine style throughout the book. All the evidence, both internal and external, is on the side of Johannine authorship for the last chapter.

There are a number of interesting and edifying things to be learned in Chapter Twenty-one. We will notice the reactions of Peter. We will learn about the love which Peter confesses for his Master. We will hear Jesus' commission for the disciples. We will discover what Jesus thinks about the curiosity of his followers concerning their future.

*Omnipotent Lord*

*Text: 21:1-14*

1 After these things Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and he manifested himself on this wise.

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with thee. They went forth, and entered into the boat; and that night they took nothing.

4 But when day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach: yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

5 Jesus therefore saith unto them, Children, have ye aught to eat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7 That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea.

8 But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits off), dragging the net full of fishes.

9 So when they got out upon the land, they see a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now taken.

11 Simon Peter therefore went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, the net was not rent.

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and break your fast. And none of the disciples durst inquire of him, Who are thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus cometh, and taketh the bread, and giveth them, and the fish likewise.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

### *Queries*

- a. Why did Peter and the others go fishing?
- b. Why did Peter jump into the sea?
- c. Why did none of them ask, "Who art thou?"

### *Paraphrase*

Now Jesus had commanded His disciples to go to Galilee and wait for Him there. After His appearances to them in Jerusalem He mani-

fested Himself to seven of them who had gone to Galilee, to the sea of Tiberias. These were the seven disciples of Jesus who were together there on the sea of Galilee; Simon Peter, and Thomas called Twin, and Nathanael who was from Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee—James and John, and two other disciples. Simon Peter said to the others, I need to return to my fishing business while I await the Lord's coming to Galilee. The other disciples said, We must provide for ourselves while we are waiting and we will return to our fishing also. So they embarked in a large fishing boat and sailed forth onto the sea. They fished all night and yet they did not catch one fish. In the semi-darkness of the early dawn Jesus stood on the beach a great distance away from the fishermen and the disciples did not know that it was Jesus there on the beach. Jesus called out to them, Lads, you haven't anything to eat, have you? They called back, No, we haven't. Jesus called back, Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will catch fish. The disciples, supposing that the man on the beach was familiar with the best places for fishing, threw their net over into the sea on the right side of the boat. There were so many fish caught in the net that the disciples in the large boat were unable to draw it into the boat. John, the beloved, said to Peter, It is the Lord! Peter, realizing it must be the Lord, wrapped himself in the outer clothing he had taken off (for he had stripped down to his underclothing to facilitate his fishing), and jumped into the shallow sea and began making for the beach. The other disciples who had come alongside the large boat to help with the weighted net came on to the shore dragging the net full of fishes rather than hoisting the net into the boat for they were only some one hundred yards offshore. And when the disciples all got out of their boats onto the beach they saw that a fire had been burning for some time and cooking in the fire was fish and bread. Jesus beckoned, Come, bring some of the fish which you have caught. Simon Peter hurried back to the boat and hauled in the net. There were one hundred fifty-three great fish in the net and all the fishermen were astonished that the net had not torn with such a tremendous catch. Jesus invited them, Come, let us have breakfast. All of the disciples stood still in reverent awe and none felt obliged now to question who He was for they all knew that He was their Lord. Jesus then came to the fire and taking the bread and the fish, gave some to each of the disciples. This was the third time Jesus appeared to the apostles in a body after He was risen from the dead.

### *Summary*

Jesus shows himself alive a third time to the apostles and offers

again empirical proof of His Lordship in order that He may later charge them, "Feed my sheep!"

### *Comment*

Jesus "showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God" according to Acts 1:3: Here in Galilee is one of those occasions. He had commanded the disciples through the women (Matt. 28:7, 10; Mk. 16:7), to go into Galilee. They did not go immediately and Jesus appears to them in company twice in Jerusalem over a seven day period (cf. Jn. 20). Now they have arrived in Galilee and have resumed their former occupations as they wait for the Lord's promised appearance here.

John's use of the name "sea of Tiberias" is another indication that he intended his gospel account to be read by readers all over the Roman world. "Tiberias" is the Roman name for the sea of Galilee.

Why did Peter and these other six disciples go fishing? Some say they had lost faith and interest in continuing as disciples of Jesus and simply had returned to their former occupations. Those who make this interpretation generally base it on a questionable exegesis of the question Jesus asked Peter, "Lovest thou me more than these?" (Jn. 21:15). We prefer the view that the disciples were merely occupying the time while they waited for the Lord in plying their trade as fishermen. Some of them (Peter at least) would need to provide some sort of financial support for their families. Men of the sea, active, hard-working, industrious men could not remain inactive while they waited for Jesus to come.

"Jesus did not condemn them for going fishing, but directed them to a miraculous catch. Peter is no more to be condemned for seeking food by this accustomed trade than Paul for supporting himself by tent-making while he preached as opportunity offered. Peter and the rest were here in Galilee in obedience to the express, repeated command of Jesus. Having come to Galilee, they could do nothing for their Master except wait His coming and further commands. To supply themselves with food by a means that was honorable and available was simple common-sense." R. C. Foster.

Fishermen had an honorable place in society. They supplied one of the most important items in the ordinary diet. They also had the reputation of being unusually pious. There were those who used hooks to fish in the days of Jesus for archeologists have found copper, brass and iron hooks of that period. But most of the commercial fishing was done with nets. The first type of net was the "throwing" type, a round one

of perhaps twelve feet in diameter, with leads all around the edge, and it was designed to catch fish by dropping over them. The second type was the "seine" type which was much like our seine-nets today. One end of this net was held by a man on shore while others in a boat played the long net out in a large semi-circle winding up with the other end of the net on the same shore. Then the men on both ends drag the net to shore bringing in their catch. The disciples probably used both types of nets. But it would seem they were using the seine type net this night.

The fishing trade required large investments to commence. The nets were expensive and needed a great deal of maintenance. The boats would be even more expensive and need even more maintenance.

When the fish were caught they had to be separated. Some fish were worth more than others on the market. Also for the Jewish fishermen there would be the unclean fish they were not allowed to sell—those without scales and fins.

"The fisherman's life strengthens his character: it is work that insists upon courage and firmness, as well as patience; and it is clear that those fresh-water sailors, the fishermen of the Sea of Galilee stood out from all the other workers who are mentioned in the Gospel. They seem to have been men of strong and ardent minds, open, hearty, enthusiastic spirits—'Sons of thunder,' as Christ called two of them . . . Even today one may see the Galilean fishermen skipping for joy at a good catch; and under the fierce sun they may be heard chanting at the top of their voices. It is understandable that for the work He meant to undertake, Christ should have called upon these strong, brave, spirited men and their loyalty. He said to them, 'Come and follow me; I will make you into fishers of men.' And Simon and Andrew and then James and John, left their nets on the ground." Henri Daniel-Rops "Daily Life in The Time of Jesus."

They fished all night and caught nothing. It was a big sea. They had probably put their net into the sea over and over again in many different places. They were tired and they had spent a frustrating day and night. In the darkness of the early dawn they looked toward the shore and saw a man standing there. The darkness, the distance and a probable mist arising from the surface of the sea kept them from recognizing Jesus.

Jesus then called out from the shore, "Lads, you don't have anything to eat do you?" The Greek word *paidia* may be translated "lads, boys, children." Jesus stated the question as if He expected a "No" answer. He wanted to focus their attention on the fruitlessness of their night's

labor in order to emphasize the more the miraculous nature of what was about to happen. This He did to build their faith in Him and to demonstrate the divine assistance they would have during their labors in His name.

So Jesus instructed them, "Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will catch fish." Still not recognizing Him as their Master, thinking perhaps He was one of the local fishermen with a knowledge of where the fishing was currently the best, they followed His instructions. To their wonderment the net became so full of fish they were unable to haul it into the boat and eventually the net, which seemed ready to burst at any moment, was towed to shore behind the boat.

John, the beloved disciple (cf. 13:23), then recognized Jesus and told Peter, "It is the Lord!" Perhaps John began to recognize Him when He called out from the shore and then at the miraculous draught of fishes could restrain himself no longer and forgot the fish and pointed toward shore and cried out to Peter.

Impetuous Peter was not about to wait until the boat reached the shore. He grabbed his outer tunic (he had probably taken off all his clothing but his undergarments), wrapped it around himself and jumped into the sea and started making for the shore. Whether he swam or whether it was shallow enough for him to wade ashore we do not know. The disciples were only about 100 yards off shore in the boat. R. C. Foster notes that the Greek language here indicates Peter fastened the "girdle" and tucked the tunic up into his girdle before leaping into the water. This may indicate he was intending to wade ashore without getting all his clothing wet. Peter may have been impetuous but his impetuosity at this particular instance is an example we all might well follow. Would that all His disciples were so eager to be near Him and to come to Him.

Practically all the commentators show the interesting parallels between this experience on the sea of Galilee and the one some three years before as recorded in Matt. 4:18-22; Mk. 1:16-20; Lk. 5:1-11. In both instances they toiled all night and caught nothing; in each case they had gone fishing of their own volition; in both they were commanded by Jesus to make another effort; in the first the nets broke; in this one the net seemed ready to break momentarily; in both Peter exhibited his impetuosity; in both Jesus gives them a solemn commission to evangelize.

Why did Peter act so impulsively? Who knows? It was just his nature, it seems, to act this way. What would you have done considering

all his recent experiences if you had been Peter? Perhaps you too would have leaped into the water and hurried to meet the resurrected Lord. These disciples were real men—not robots or the idealistic characters of fiction. Some of them were as different in personality and temperament as some of us today!

Now in verse eight we find an example of the Greek idiom which is not altogether familiar to the English language. We find John shifting from the regular noun to the diminutive form using both forms to describe the same thing. In 21:6 he speaks of the *ploion* (boat) and in 21:8 he speaks of the same boat only this time it is *ploiarion* (little boat). John does the same thing in 6:17-20 and 6:22. Peter went wading on ahead. The other disciples came slowly in the boat hauling the catch of fish which were still very precariously enclosed within the overtaxed net.

To their amazement, when they stepped out on shore they found the Master had a fire going, was broiling fish and preparing bread for a morning meal. How the fish were obtained by Jesus we are not told. We are neither told that He obtained them in a supernatural way or a natural way. Most commentators believe He supplied them supernaturally. The recent events and the excitement of the present hour would lead one to think this also must have come about in some supernatural way.

In their excitement and haste to meet the Lord they had forgotten their net full of fish straining on the tow rope still tied to the side of the boat and being lashed about by the waves of the surf. Jesus directed them, Bring of the fish which you have now taken. Perhaps Jesus had another reason for such directions than His concern that the miraculous catch might be lost by neglect. Perhaps He wanted to re-emphasize the magnitude of the miracle. This we believe is all the significance there is to the number—153—of fish caught. The number is given simply to signify the marvelousness of it all. They had fished all night and caught nothing. Jesus merely said, Cast your net on the right side of the boat, and in one cast they caught one hundred fifty-three *large* fish. So many the net was about to break. Many commentators, both ancient and modern, are, we believe, too taken up with allegorizing, symbolizing and spiritualizing numbers. For example Cyril of Alexandria said the 100 represents the "fulness of the Gentiles"; the 50 stands for the remnant of Israel which will be saved; 3 stands for the Trinity to whose glory all things are done. Augustine, according to Barclay, explains it this way: 10 is the number for the Law (10 commandments); 7 is the number of grace (7 gifts of the Spirit); 7 plus 10 equals 17; 153 is

the sum of all the figures, 1 plus 2 plus 3 plus 4 . . . and up to 17. Thus 153 stands for all those who either by Law or by grace have been moved to come to Jesus Christ.

Whether the number has a mystical meaning or not, it most certainly points out that the one who wrote the Fourth Gospel was an eyewitness for he knew every detail even to the number and size of the fish that morning. The amazing thing to the fishermen was that such an enormous catch could be contained in the net without the net breaking.

Jesus bids them, "Come, have breakfast." So overwhelmed with His majesty and awed with His omnipotence now not one of them dared interrogate Him. They all knew! There were no doubts, no questionings in their minds and hearts now. Perhaps the events of the night had so awed them that they stood off in reverential fear. None dared to say, Is it really you, Lord?

In fact, the indication is that they did not even dare to come close to the fire and feed themselves at His invitation. It seems that Jesus had to take the bread and the fish and "come" toward them and give it to them.

The main point to get from this section is exactly the point the disciples got and the one Jesus intended; a dramatic and awe-inspiring demonstration of the omnipotence and omniscience of Jesus Christ, the resurrected Lord of heaven and earth.

Verse 14 must, of course, be understood as denominating the third appearance to the disciples (apostles) being gathered together in a body. He appeared at least a third time to other disciples (both women and men) before this but this is His third appearance to His specially called disciples—apostles.

### *Quiz*

1. Why were these men in Galilee?
2. Why did they go fishing? Did the Lord approve or disapprove?
3. Tell something about the fishing trade; the tools, the men, etc.
4. Why did they not recognize Jesus on the shore?
5. Why was Peter so impetuous? Is impetuosity always wrong?
6. What is the significance of John's recording of the exact number of fish?
7. What is the main point of the experience of the disciples here?

### *Obedient Love*

*Text: 21:15-23*

15 So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto

him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 He saith to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep.

17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

19 Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

20 Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; who also leaned back on his breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter therefore seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

23 This saying therefore went forth among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, that he should not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

### *Queries*

- a. What did Jesus mean by, "more than these?"
- b. What is the significance of Peter's replies, "thou knowest."
- c. What is the meaning of Jesus' reply to the curiosity of Peter concerning John in verses 20-22?

### *Paraphrase*

So when they had finished their breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you really love me with more devotion than these others. Peter answered Him, Yes Lord! You know that I have a deep personal love for you. Jesus said to Peter, Then feed and nurture the young and tender "lambs" of my flock. Jesus said again, Simon, son of John, do you love, reverence and respect Me with mind as well as heart? Peter replied a second time, Yes Lord! You know that I love you as my Lord and Saviour and dearest Friend. Jesus said to Peter,

Then care for and protect my sheep. For the third time Jesus said, Simon, son of John, do you, in your own words, really have a deep personal affection for Me. Peter was pricked in his conscience when the Lord asked him a third time, using his own words, Do you have a deep personal affection for Me? So Peter answered, Lord, you know all things and you are able to look upon my heart; you know I love you so. Jesus said, Feed my sheep.

Jesus continued, I say to you most solemnly, Peter, when you were young with vitality and freedom you bound yourself with your belt and went just about wherever you wished to go; but instead of that liberty which you enjoyed in your youth, you shall, in your old age, be a prisoner for you shall be bound and taken where you would not wish to go. Jesus said this to signify the way Peter would die and how it would glorify God. And as He was saying these things He also said to Peter, Follow Me. As Peter followed Jesus aside from the rest, he turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved also following (this is the same disciple who had leaned back on Jesus' bosom at the Passover supper—the one who said, Lord, who is he that is betraying you?). And when Peter saw this disciple coming aside to Jesus he said, Lord, what is going to happen to this one? Jesus replied, If it is my will that he remain even until I come, what concern is it of yours? You follow Me! After hearing this some of the brethren began to spread this saying among themselves, that Jesus had said this disciple would not die. Jesus, of course, did not say, He will not die; He simply said, If it is my will that he remain even until I come, what concern is it of yours?

### Summary

Jesus emphasizes that He expects total commitment from His disciples and this commitment is to be based on intelligent, spiritual, personal love.

### Comment

At some time near the end of the meal of fish and bread that morning (or after the meal was concluded) Jesus turned to Peter and startled him with this question, "Simon, son of John, do you really love me more than these others?" The pronoun (these) in the Greek is *touton* and may be either masculine or neuter. The succeeding context shows beyond doubt that the masculine (these other disciples) was intended. We remember the proud boast Peter made (Matt. 26:31-33; Mk. 14:27-29; Lk. 22:31-33; Jn. 13:37) the night of the last supper, "If all these leave you, I'll never leave you, even if I must go to my death with you Lord!" It was at that very moment Jesus prophesied "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times." Now, in the

light of Peter's downfall Jesus wants to know if Peter is still so sure of himself! Foster lists three reasons why he believes Jesus means "do you love Me more than these other disciples," instead of "things — i.e., things representing your worldly vocation such as nets and boats and fish." (a) There was nothing wrong with fishing *per se*, that is, Jesus did not condemn Peter for fishing and accuse him of loving Him less for fishing; (b) The three-fold question parallels the three-fold denial; (c) If Peter had understood Jesus to mean he was questioning whether he planned to desert his Master and go back to his old fishing trade, it seems incredible that Peter would not have answered immediately and precisely, "You know that I love you more than these *things*." It is more in keeping with the humility Peter must have felt when asked that he did not even so much as say, "You know that I love you more than these *other men*." He had fallen into that prideful trap before.

Two Greek verbs are used in an interesting interplay upon the word *love* in this section: Jesus uses the verb *agapao* in His first two inquiries and the verb *phileo* in the third question. Peter replies with *phileo* in all three answers. There are some commentators who are dogmatic in their assertions that *agapao* always means the "higher, spiritual devotion, not an impulse from the feelings, but more intellectually oriented love" while *phileo* always refers to the lower type of love "intimate, personal affection among human beings, brotherly love." This is not borne out by the New Testament usage of the two words.

- a. Both words are used of God's love for man (*agapao*: Jn. 3:16; 14:23; 17:23; I Jn. 14:10-19) (*phileo*: Jn. 16:27; Rev. 3:19)
- b. Both words are used of God's love for the Son (*agapao*: Jn. 3:35; 10:17; 15:9; 17:23-26) (*phileo*: Jn. 5:20).
- c. Both verbs are used of the love of men for Jesus (*agapao*: Jn. 8:42; 14:15, 21, 23, 24, 28; 21:15-16) (*phileo*: Jn. 16:27; 21:15-16; Matt. 10:37; I Cor. 16:22).
- d. Both verbs are used of the love of men for other men (*agapao*: Jn. 13:34-35; 15:12, 17; I Jn. 2:10; 3:10; 4:7, 20) (*phileo*: Jn. 15:19).

The text now under consideration seems to indicate that the words were, as the Arndt and Gingrich Lexicon says, "used interchangeably." There is also the frequent interchange of other synonyms within this very chapter (e.g., *boskein—poimainei* = feed; *arnia—probatia* = sheep; *elkuein—surein* = haul), which indicates John's fondness of the use of interchangeable synonyms.

Yet there also seems to be a certain distinction of meaning between the two which the English language is unable to convey. R. C. Trench,

in his "Synonyms of the New Testament" puts it this way:

" . . . there is often a difference between them, well worthy to have noted and reproduced, if this had lain within the compass of our language; being very nearly equivalent to that between 'diligo' and 'amo' in the Latin . . . In that threefold 'Lovest thou Me?' which the risen Lord addresses to Peter, He asks him first, *agapas me*; at this moment, when all the pulses in the heart of the now penitent Apostle are beating with a passionate affection toward his Lord, this word on that Lord's lips sounds far too cold; . . . he therefore in his answer substitutes for the *agapas* of Christ the word of a more personal love, *philo se*."

Foster says "it is clear there is some difference and the use of both words in John 21 would indicate there is some different shade of meaning indicated. The fact that when we are commanded to love our enemies *agapao* is used, suggests the shade of meaning that we are not commanded to make a confidante or an intimate personal friend of an enemy—this might not be possible. But we are to treat all, even our enemies, with kindness and generous regard."

We will make Peter say something he certainly did not intend to say if we insist on a decisive and immutable distinction between the two words. We would have Peter replying to the Lord, "You know I love you Lord, but I do not love you with the highest devotion which man should have toward God (*agapao*); I only love you as a close personal friend (*phileo*), with a lower type of love." For Peter this was the right word. It expressed the deep, warm, heartfelt affection of this impetuous man. There does seem to be a decisive difference in the two words, but not as pronounced a difference as some commentators insist upon.

Why did Jesus use *agapao* when asking the first two questions, "Lovest thou me?" and then use *phileo* when He asked the third time? Most commentators believe Jesus was mildly rebuking Peter by questioning whether Peter even had the lowest type of love for Him. But Peter, by using *phileo* in each of his answers was using a word by which he meant to affirm both his lofty devotion toward God whom he revered but had never seen, and his personal love for Jesus whom he has seen and recognizes as God's Son, just as Thomas had (Jn. 20:28). As we quoted Dr. Trench above, for Peter the word *agapao* just did not fully describe his feelings so he used *phileo* and the Master simply used Peter's own word of feeling as the basis for His final challenge.

We feel it would be profitable to quote here a few excerpts from

Wm. Barclay's book, "More New Testament Words." an excellent work on word studies of New Testament Greek. In his chapter on Agape, Mr. Barclay says:

"The commonest words for love in Greek are the noun *philia* and the verb *philein*. There is a lovely warmth about these words. They mean to look on someone with affectionate regard . . . *Philia* and *philein* are beautiful words to express a beautiful relationship.

"It would not be true to say that the NT never uses anything else but *agape* and *agapan* to express the Christian love. Some few times *philein* is used . . . *Philia* was a lovely word, but it was definitely a word of warmth and closeness and affection; it could only be properly used of the near and dear, and Christianity needed a much more inclusive word than that. Christian thought fastened on this word *agape* because it was the only word capable of being filled with the content which was required . . . This *agape* . . . is a deliberate principle of the mind, and a deliberate conquest and achievement of the will. It is in fact the power to love the unlovable, to love people whom we do not like. Christianity does not ask us to love our enemies and to love men at large in the same way as we love our nearest and our dearest and those who are closest to us; that would be at one and the same time impossible and wrong. But it does demand that we should have at all times a certain attitude of the mind and a certain direction of the will towards all men, no matter who they are."

Now it should not be too difficult to see why Peter used the word *phileo*. His love for Christ was more than an "at large" love—it was a love of "warmth and closeness and affection."

We believe there is some relationship between the charge Jesus made to Peter ("Feed my sheep") and the question He asked ("Lovest thou me?"). If Peter loves the Master, Peter will feed the Master's lambs. Whatever is done for the lambs is done for the Master (cf. Matt. 25:31-46; Acts 9:1-6). Is this not why Jesus used the word *agapao*—as if to say, "Peter, do you love me?" "You say you love me, then love my lambs and feed them." Peter's personal, warm and affectionate love for Jesus is well and good, but this love for Jesus must be directed toward His flock "at large" as well or it isn't even *phileo* love for Jesus (and this is why Jesus changed to Peter's terminology in the last challenge).

Jesus did not doubt Peter's love for Him—He was challenging, preparing and commissioning Peter to go and love the Master's lambs. This was not simply a reconciliation between Master and disciple for this had already occurred in the first appearance of Jesus to Peter in

Luke 24:34. It was not to restore Peter to his apostleship among the select eleven for as Foster says, "the angel made it plain in the first message after the resurrection that Jesus did not consider that Peter had forfeited his apostleship (Mark 16:7). It was to challenge Peter, to strengthen him (to make him firmer in his love by reminding him of the humiliation of denial three times), to instruct him that loving Christ means to feed His sheep, and to confirm his place of leadership among the eleven. Jesus also elicited these confessions of love from Peter to prepare him for the prophecy of his death about to be made.

There certainly are great principles for all followers of Christ to learn from this private intercourse between Jesus and Peter. Those who have dedicated themselves to "feed the flock" (whether evangelists or elders) must love Christ above all else and before all others. Love for Christ, deep, personal affection is the only force that will motivate and fortify His servants against the many disappointments and dangers in "feeding the flock." We may also learn that love is expressed by obedient service (cf. II Cor. 8:5-8; 8:24; 9:13). Love is not just desire; love is the desire to give—to spend and be spent for another.

There is an interesting play of synonyms for "feed" in this context. In verses 15 and 17 Jesus used the word *boske* which means "feed; do the part of a herdsman and provide the flock food." In verse 16 He used the word *poimaine* which means "shepherd the flock, protect, care for, lead the flock." This is the commission of the Chief Shepherd to the under-shepherds to give themselves to the ministry of feeding, protecting, guiding and leading the flock of God (cf. Jn. 10; Acts 20:18-38; I Pet. 5:1-11, etc.). The important food for the flock is the spiritual food. Peter was called and charged to carry out this great task and he eventually laid down his life for the sheep.

It is also interesting to note the way Jesus used synonyms for sheep and lambs. In verse 16 and 17 the word *probatia* (sheep) is used. In verse 15 He used the word *arnia* which is a diminutive meaning "little lambs." The "little lambs" are mentioned first. The unsophisticated ones, the weak ones, the young ones must be tenderly nurtured. The older ones, even the experienced ones, must also be cared for and fed. We must all grow up together in stature into the full measure of godliness in Christ (cf. Eph. 4:11-17).

In verse 18 Jesus culminates his charge to Peter to "feed the lambs" with the revelation that Peter shall lay down his life for the flock. The figure of speech used by Jesus was vivid. The Jews, in walking or running, gathered up (girded) the long folds of their outer garments and fashioned them about their waists like belts, that their progress might

not be impeded. The figure then expresses the freedom to go as one pleases unimpeded and unfettered. In fact Peter had just so "girded" himself and made his way to Jesus on the shore unfettered and unrestrained. But in his later years it shall not be so. Solemnly Jesus told him that he would stretch forth his hands to be fettered and bound and he would be led according to the will of another.

Most commentators believe this "stretching forth of the hands" indicates Peter was told he would die by crucifixion. This is highly probable since Peter's Master was put to death in this way and it was a common form of Roman execution administered upon non-citizen "malefactors." Works by Eusebius and Tertullian relate the traditional manner of Peter's death to be crucifixion head downward. Whatever the manner of death it was to glorify God. Peter was to be among the first martyrs (from the Greek *marturos*). *Marturia* means to "testify or bear witness." Peter's life and death in faith bore witness to the glory of God. Just as the death of the first recorded Christian martyr, Stephen (Acts 7:54ff), glorified God and was instrumental to some degree in the conversion of the great apostle Paul, the death of Peter for the sake of Christ and the church was undoubtedly a great testimony to the power of the word of God and instrumental in the conversion of many other people. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psa. 116:15; cf. also Rev. 14:13).

Now after speaking this Jesus admonished again, "Follow me." One commentator thinks Jesus began after this admonition to draw apart from the disciples to vanish from their company until His next appearance, and that Peter may have taken Jesus literally and began to withdraw from the group and walk after Jesus. This seems the most probable explanation for Peter turning to see another disciple "following."

There can be no doubt that this other disciple who followed was John the beloved (cf. our notes on Jn. 13:23). Both Peter and John (and James) were of the "inner circle" three, and Peter was involved in the incident at the supper where the "other" disciple is described in the same way.

Foster says, "Follow me—in the light of the preceding context seems to mean 'follow me in my example of dying on a cross.' But the succeeding context seems to indicate that Jesus was leading Peter off to a little distance from the group and that John followed—or perhaps He was leading all of the disciples hence." It may be that both the spiritual and the literal are meant to be understood by the apostles.

The main point is Peter's question about the "other" disciple and the

Lord's answer to Peter. Peter, having been challenged, commissioned and having had his destiny revealed to him, said, "Lord what about him?" Peter had missed the mark again! He had allowed his natural mind to take over again. He was out of focus. He was not focused on what Jesus had sought to emphasize. He was worrying about "times and seasons." Jesus replied, as He had before to His own mother, and as He would to the disciples later, "It is none of your business to know this . . . if it is My will that John remain alive even until I come again in contrast to your death before I come, it is My affair and not yours. The destiny of this other disciple is minor; the major task for you is to follow me," (cf. our notes on Jn. 2:1-5; also cf. Acts 1:6-8). If a man is going to be a soldier, he must have a soldier's training. Sighing after happiness; brooding over the life we've missed—these are out of place with the Christian soldier. Men are not coddled and indulged when they are trained as soldiers. Orders are given and no questions are solicited. Immediate and implicit obedience is called for. The Lord will tell us all we have need to know. We are His friends. What would be detrimental to us He will withhold (cf. our notes on Jn. 15:12-16). We are not to know times or seasons, but to go to the ends of the earth witnessing.

Some disciples misunderstood the point of Jesus' reply to Peter. The word was spread among the brethren that Jesus had said John would not die. Barnes points out that first, the words of Jesus might easily be misunderstood and second, the false rumor might gain credence when it was seen that John survived all the other apostles. So John, writing this gospel record in the twilight of life, deemed it necessary to correct this rumor and so said simply, "Jesus did not say that the 'other' disciple would not die—Jesus said, 'If it is my will that the other disciple remain until I come, it is none of your affair, Peter'." We believe it is significant that John repeated precisely what Jesus said and offered no interpretation. John learned the lesson Jesus intended. His disciples need not know all—but all they need to know is revealed. The primary thing the disciples of Jesus need to do is to love and live the revealed teachings of their Master, leaving times and seasons to the wisdom and will of a loving Father. There are many Christians who need to be, as Hendriksen says, turned from curiosity to their calling. It seems there were many brethren in John's day in the same curious frame of mind. They were majoring in minors. We like the conclusion given by Mr. Barclay:

"Some would say that John was the great one, for his flights of thought went higher than those of any other man. Some would say that

Paul was the great one for he fared to the ends of the earth for Christ. But this chapter says that Peter, too, had his place . . . To each Jesus had given his function. It was Peter's function to shepherd the sheep of Christ, and in the end to die for Christ. It was John's function to witness to the story of Christ, and to live to a great old age and to come to the end in peace. That did not make them rivals and competitors in honor and prestige; that did not make the one greater or less than the other; it made them both servants of Christ. Let a man serve Christ where Christ has set him. As Jesus said to Peter: 'Never mind the task that is given to someone else. Your job is to follow me.' And that is what He still says to each one of us. Our glory is never in comparison with men; our glory is the service of Christ in whatever capacity has been allotted to us."

### *Quiz*

1. What did Jesus have in mind by more than "*these*"?
2. Discuss the difference and similarities in the two Greek words for *love* used in this context.
3. Why did Jesus use the same word Peter was using in His third question to Peter?
4. Why did Jesus ask these questions of Peter? Was it to restore Peter's apostleship?
5. What two words are used for *food* and what is indicated by each?
6. What two words are used for *sheep* and what is indicated by each?
7. What is the lesson Jesus intended for all disciples in His reply to Peter's question about the "other" disciple?

### *Overwhelming Evidence*

*Text:* 21:24-25

24 This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true.

25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written everyone, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written.

### *Queries*

- a. Which disciple wrote these things?
- b. Why were the "many other things which Jesus did" not recorded?

### *Paraphrase*

The same disciple of whom it was rumored, He will not die, is the one that is hereby giving his testimony to these things in the life of

Jesus Christ and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is reliable for it is eyewitness testimony. Of course, there are many other deeds and words of Jesus, and I suppose that if each one were written down in detail, there would not be room in the whole world for all the books required to contain the record.

### *Summary*

John ends his record of Jesus' life with an affirmation as to the reliability of his testimony and an apology that it was impossible for any one to have written a complete record of Jesus' deeds and words.

### *Comment*

We hesitate to comment on these last two verses inasmuch as there is good manuscript evidence to show that it was not a part of the original. The Sinaiticus manuscript (c. 350 A.D.—otherwise known as Aleph), gives evidence that verses 24 and 25 were added and the original Aleph manuscript was subjected to inspection by ultra-violet process and it was found that these verses were not included in the Sinaiticus codex when it was first written but were added later. The Bodmer II Papyrus (P<sup>66</sup>) omits these two verses (Bodmer II dates about 250 A.D.). It is reported that one of the best manuscripts of John found just recently, designated P<sup>75</sup>, also omits these two verses (this manuscript also dates sometime between 200-300 A.D.). The latest revision of the Greek text by Nestle in its critical apparatus notes that Aleph omits verse 25. Perhaps more manuscript evidence will be forthcoming soon to establish either the omission or the inclusion of these verses. Until then we will make comments, with the reservations stated above, on these two verses.

Foster thinks that the elders of the church at Ephesus, where John probably resided when he wrote the Fourth Gospel, added verses 24 and 25. Hendrickson is of the same opinion and so is Westcott. Their argument is based upon the change of person which they say indicates a change of authorship. Macknight, however, in his "Harmony of The Gospels," says it is agreeable to John's manner (cf. Jn. 19:35) to speak of himself in the third person (cf. also I Jn. 5:18 and III Jn. 12). Macknight then believes John himself to be the author of these two concluding verses. Whoever authored them they are a strong affirmation of the reliability of his record. If it is by the Ephesian elders they probably were endowed with the supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit to "discern the spirits" and were adding their verification to the record for the benefit of the churches in which the record would be read.

Verse 25 is hyperbolic. It is a common figure of speech of the people of that area. One has only to read the Prophets to see this. This exaggeration serves to express the great magnitude and importance of the words and deeds of Jesus which *were* recorded.

Scripture itself testifies that there were things said and done by Jesus not recorded in the books about His life (the Gospels). In Acts 1:1-4 we are told that Jesus appeared to the disciples and spoke concerning the kingdom of God over a period of 40 days. Some of these things are recorded, some are not. In Acts 20:35 we have recorded a statement of Jesus not to be found in any of the Gospel accounts.

There are many spurious apocryphal gospels and other accounts which purport to be records of deeds and sayings of Jesus. They are so utterly out of harmony with the tenor of the inspired accounts and the historical evidence is so definitely against their canonicity that they are completely unreliable.

The main point is that John has recorded enough that men might come to believe and love Jesus Christ and become heirs of salvation in His name (Jn. 20:30-31). If men will not believe on the basis of what has been written, they will not believe even if someone would rise from the dead (cf. Lk. 16:31). John has written enough. The omnipotence, omniscience, compassion, love and glory of Jesus Christ has been recounted with factuality, emotion and a moral penetration that is able to capture the volition of man. Anything less would be insufficient—anything more would be redundant. Let us remember the admonition of this same apostle when he wrote the Revelation he received on Patmos (Rev. 22:18-20). We say, "Amen" to Lenski when he closes his commentary with, "Soli Deo Gloria"—Glory to God alone is our prayer for this commentary.

Turn right now, without letting another moment go by, and reread the Prologue, John 1:1-18. After these hours of soul-gripping study of John's Gospel can you not say with all that is in you, "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth!"

### Quiz

1. What manuscript evidence is against verses 24 and 25 being a part of the original?
2. Who wrote these verses (if they are a part of the text)?
3. Prove that Jesus did and said things which are not recorded in the gospel accounts.
4. Is the brevity of the gospel record detrimental?

*Special Study No. Four — Outline Notes*  
By Russell Watts

## Introductory Notes:

The number of the Lord's appearances during the forty days following the resurrection, before His ascension, is generally said to be nine. Of these, five were on the day of the resurrection, one on the Sunday following, two at some later period, and one when He ascended. As to place, five were in Jerusalem, one in Emmaus, two in Galilee, and one perhaps on the Mount of Olives. If to these we add the appearance to James (mentioned only by the apostle Paul in I Cor. 15:7), which probably was at Jerusalem; then add also the appearance to Paul mentioned in I Cor. 15:8, we have eleven appearances. Most writers come to this conclusion, differing only on some fine points concerning some of the appearances.

However, we do not need to say that these recorded and stated appearances were the only actual ones. Acts 1:3 "To whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God." It is quite possible that there were other unrecorded appearances during this period of forty days.

## I. The appearances on the day of the resurrection. (5)

- A. To Mary Magdalene, at the Tomb, just outside Jerusalem.
  1. Problem of when was this, at what time in the morning?
    - a. How to harmonize Matt. 28:1 with Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1 and John 20:1.  
The first part of the verse must be interpreted by the added specification of what is added in the last part of the verse.
    - b. When did the women arrive at the tomb?
      1. Luke says, "Very early in the morning."
      2. John says, "early, while it was yet dark."
      3. Mark says, "and very early on the first day of the week"
      4. Matt. says, "as it began to dawn, toward the first day of the week."
    - c. We must consider where they came from.  
Probably from Bethany about two miles away.
    - d. The time was probably about 5 A.M. for at this time of the year the sun would rise about 5:30 A.M. Objects would be discernible one-half hour before sunrise very likely.

2. Problem: did Mary come alone or with others and perhaps run on ahead so that she was first at the tomb?  
 She undoubtedly came with the rest. Then, seeing the stone rolled away, she ran immediately to tell John and Peter before even going to the tomb.
    - a. When telling Peter and John, Mary used the pronoun *we* signifying that she was not alone.
    - b. After telling Peter and John she returned to the tomb, probably following Peter and John. Then while she was alone outside the tomb the Lord appeared to her.
  3. John writes of this appearance in detail, John 20:11-18.
    - a. The account is personal to Mary.
    - b. She alone acknowledged the questions of Jesus.
    - c. Jesus addressed her in the singular.
- B. The other women, soon after appearing to Mary; while they are on their way to tell the message of the angels. (Matt. 28:9, 10)
1. Who were these other women? How many were there?  
 (Lk. 24:9-11)
    - a. Mark 15:41, says that many other women came up to Jerusalem.
    - b. These names are mentioned: Mary Magdalene, Mary, mother of James, Salome, Joanna, Susanna and "many others."
    1. John mentions only Mary Magdalene.
    2. Matt. mentions Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary." Matt. 28.1.
    3. Mark mentions Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome.
    4. Luke mentions Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the "other women."

Thus we see there are five, and possible others.
  2. Many variations of order are given for this account, due to our not being able to tell whether these women arrived at the tomb in one or two groups.
- C. Jesus appears to Peter. (I Cor. 15:5; Luke 24:33, 34)
1. McGarvey places this before the appearances to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and at Emmaus.
  2. R. C. Foster writing in *Standard Bible Teacher*, Vol. 38, No. 2; Apr.-May-June 1936, article "The Risen Christ in Galilee," places this appearance after the Emmaus appearance.

3. Wieand Harmony places the appearance to Peter first.
4. Lightfoot supposes one of the two at Emmaus to have been Peter.
  - a. Since there are not actual details given, it is hard to harmonize the accounts.
  - b. From Luke 24:34, it seems as if Jesus did appear to Simon (if the Simon talked of is Peter) before He did to the two disciples at Emmaus. McGarvey harmonized this verse with I Cor. 15:5.
- D. Jesus appears to the two Disciples going to Emmaus. Mark 16:12, 13; Luke 24:13-35.
  1. Who were these two disciples? One was Cleopas, of whom nothing further is known. (Luke 24:18)
    - a. Some say the other was Luke, for he writes almost like one that might have been present during this experience.
    - b. Lightfoot (mentioned above) supposes him to be Peter.
  2. About Emmaus and its location from Jerusalem.
    - a. Luke 24:13, "village named Emmaus which was three score furlongs from Jerusalem."
      1. How far is this? If the ruins called el Kukeibeh is the ancient city of Emmaus, then it would be a distance of seven and thirteen-sixteenths of a mile from Jerusalem. The village has not yet been identified beyond dispute.
    3. Time of this meeting. Probably leaving Jerusalem about noon, and allowing for a slow walk, they would arrive in Emmaus a good while before sundown.
    4. Although the Lord met these two while on their way, their eyes were holden until the meal was being eaten. Luke gives the cause in Luke 24:31, "And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight." Mark gives the affect or their reaction in Mark 16:13, "And they went away and told it unto the rest: neither believed they them."
  - E. Jesus appears to the ten. Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25.
    1. Thomas is absent at this time.
    2. Place and time?
      - a. Place — In Jerusalem. In all probability, they were gathered in the same room in which they had eaten the paschal supper.

- b. Time — In the evening, for the two disciples who went to Emmaus arrived back in time to tell them of their experience.
  - 3. The actual appearance of Jesus in the room.
    - a. John writes that when they saw Jesus they were glad.
    - b. Luke writes that they were terrified and affrighted.
    - c. Why the apparent difference?
      - 1. Luke tells the immediate reaction as Jesus stands in the midst of them. How did he get here? They knew nothing of the possibilities of a resurrected body.
      - 2. John tells their attitude after they had been satisfied this was not a ghost, but their Lord!
- II. Jesus appears to the eleven, Thomas being present this time. Mark 16:14; John 20:26-31; I Cor. 15:5.
- A. When and Where? In Jerusalem, probably the same place as where Jesus appeared to the ten. When? The following first day of the week. (Jn. 20:26).
  - B. Main object of thought. Getting Thomas to believe.
    - 1. While so doing, this was also reassuring proof for the others.
    - 2. Thomas asked to place his hand into Jesus' side.
      - a. Thomas' answer, "My Lord and my God!" (Jn. 20:28).
- III. Jesus appears to the Seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee. John 21:1-25. Only John records this incident.
- A. Time — Some suggest the next Lord's Day; the day is actually unknown.
  - B. The seven disciples: Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John, and two other disciples.
  - C. Order of events that happened:
    - 1. Peter and the others probably gathered in Peter's home in Capernaum.
    - 2. This waiting made them impatient. Thinking of an honest means of getting food, Peter said "I am off to fish tonight." The rest join in, "We are going with you."
    - 3. With all the old enthusiasm, they go fishing, but luck was against them that night, mindful of an experience three years earlier.
    - 4. At early morning someone appeared on the beach and asked, "Lads, have you anything to eat?" Their answer was, "No!"
      - a. Advice from the man on the shore. "Cast on the right side of the boat."

- b. The results; 153 fishes were caught in the net.
- c. John at this, turned to Peter and said, "It is the Lord."
- d. Peter immediately started swimming for the shore.
- e. They all had fish for breakfast.
- 5. Jesus turned to Simon Peter and probed the recesses of Peter's heart to secure for him the humility necessary for service.
- 6. Peter asks about John.
  - a. Jesus' answer: John 21:22, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

IV. Jesus appears to the five hundred in Galilee. Matt. 28:16-20; I Cor. 15:6.

- A. Problem: Some would separate this appearance, and make two appearances here, one to the eleven separately, then to the eleven as counted with the five hundred.
  - a. If Jesus gave the Great Commission at this time, would he give it to the eleven gathered together with so large a group?
  - b. But in Matt. 28:17, "some doubted," could be evidence that the groups were together.
  - c. Solution, if we separate these two appearances it eliminates this problem.
- B. Where is this mountain that is spoken of in Matt. 28:16?
  - 1. Some possible places:

The Place of the Sermon on the Mount  
 The Mount of Transfiguration  
 The place where He choose the twelve  
 The place on the east side of the lake  
 where Jesus fed the 5,000.

V. Jesus appears to James. I Cor. 15:7.

- A. No details given of this appearance.
- B. Who is this James?
  - 1. Possibly one of Jesus' half-brothers, who had been converted after the resurrection.
  - 2. Later served as pastor of the Church at Jerusalem.

VI. Jesus appears to the eleven in Jerusalem and leads them to the place of Ascension. Mark 16:19, 20; Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:2-12.

- A. Luke, who also wrote Acts, gives us the account of this in both of his writings, one a continuation of the other.
- B. What Jesus told them at this time.
  - 1. Charged them not to depart from Jerusalem.

2. They were to wait for the promise of the Father.
3. Jesus told them they would be baptised in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.
4. They questioned Him about restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time. He answered, "It is not for you to know times nor seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority."
5. Jesus charged them to be witnesses for Him in all places, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth.
6. Jesus ascends into heaven.

VII. "And last of all, as to a child untimely born, he appeared to me also." I Cor. 15:8. This is the last appearance, which is to the Apostle Paul, and is recorded for us by Luke in Acts 9:3-9.

A. Paul says he saw the Lord.

Summary:

The forty days, or five weeks and five days, beginning on the day of the Resurrection which was from Sunday, April 9th, (17th Nisan) to Thursday, May 18th, may be divided into three periods. (1) That in Judea from Resurrection day to the departure into Galilee, (About twelve days). (2) That in Galilee, (About twenty-three days). (3) That after the return to Jerusalem to the Ascension, (About five days).

During the first period, from Resurrection Sunday to the Sunday following inclusive, there were six appearances, five on Resurrection Sunday: (a) to Mary Magdalene; (b) to the other women, 5?; (c) to the two at Emmaus; (d) to Peter; (e) to the Ten; on the next Sunday (f) to the Eleven.

During the second period, after the arrival in Galilee, there were three recorded appearances: (a) to the seven disciples at the Sea of Galilee; (b) to the five hundred, the eleven being with them or separately just before them; (c) to James.

During the third period, after the return to Jerusalem to the ascension, there were two appearances actually counted as one; (a) to the apostles first assembling somewhere in the city; (b) to them in the city to lead them out to Bethany.

Last of all, time and place, A.D. 37 on the Damascus Road He appeared to Saul, later called Paul.

Some reasons or purposes for the Lord's appearances:

1. To convince the disciples that He was indeed risen. The appearances are proof of the resurrection, the empty tomb, grave clothes, testimony of the angels, were proof and the disciples continued to doubt.

2. For continuity and the progressive nature of the Lord's redemption work. (Not only in seeing the Lord in His resurrected body, but most important, hearing what He taught after His resurrection.)

**EXPOSITORY SERMON NO. TWENTY  
EPILOGUE**  
*John 21:1-25*  
*Introduction*

- I. RECALL THE PROLOGUE IN OUTLINE  
II. RECALL THE MAIN BODY OF THE GOSPEL IN OUTLINE  
III. NOW LOOK AT THE EPILOGUE

An epilogue is not an afterthought but a restatement *in condensed form* of the whole drama. It is a recapitulation; a summation; a conclusion.

There are two main subjects treated in this epilogue which sum up the basic message of the fourth gospel; the revelation of the Incarnate Word and the response and commission of the disciples.

*Discussion*

- I. OMNIPOTENT LORD 21:1-14
- Disciples in Galilee at His command to meet with Him there
  - Disciples fishing to support their discipleship
    - They had not renounced their discipleship and reverted to worldly ways
    - Jesus did not condemn them for fishing, but helped them
  - Christ reveals His glory
    - By supernatural omniscience in knowing where to cast the net (and probably by commanding the fish to be there)
    - By eating breakfast with them and showing the reality of His resurrection in the body
  - This last miracle recorded by John serves to recap the very theme of the whole drama recorded in his gospel—The Word Become Flesh and Demonstrating His Glory.
    - His supernatural deeds and words and personality is the very bed-rock basis of our faith in Him
    - The demonstration of His omnipotent majesty *had* caused the disciples to say:
      - "Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life."
      - "My Lord and my God!"
    - The gospel was written by eyewitnesses to bring us to the same faith and trust in the person of Jesus Christ.

4. It is not intended that we should have a reckless faith—our faith is founded on historical fact—but such a faith ought to cause reckless and wholehearted devotion such as Peter demonstrated in jumping into the sea and rushing to the Master's presence.

## II. OBEDIENT LOVE 21:15-23

- A. Christ always gives a basis for our loving Him and trusting Him
  1. His power and deity
  2. His compassion and concern
  3. His sacrificial love (We love Him because He first loved us)
  4. This generates faith and love and obedience on our part
- B. Peter challenged to love and obedience
  1. Christ challenged Peter to a stronger love by asking him three times. This pricked the conscience of Peter who had so boastfully declared "Even if all these deny thee, I will never deny thee" and then denied Him three times.
    - a. This was not to reconcile Peter to Jesus for this had already been done at the first appearance of Jesus to Peter
    - b. It was not to reinstate Peter as an apostle
    - c. It was to develop Peter's love and obedience and to show to the other disciples his place of leadership
  2. Jesus used both the Greek words, *agapae* and *phile* for love
    - a. *agapae* is a love of faith—including the intellect and the will and less of the purely emotional
    - b. *phile* is a love of personal warmth more from emotion than any other element.
    - c. A combination of both is the only type of love worthy of being given to Christ (see our comments on this section)
  3. Out of such love will grow service
    - a. Jesus challenged Peter to feed (*boske*) His "little lambs."
    - b. Jesus challenged Peter to tend (*poimaine*) His sheep.
    - c. Peter is commissioned to be a shepherd for the sheep—in fact he is told that he will lay down his life for the sheep just as the Good Shepherd had done.
  4. Peter was not to worry about another—to know times and seasons
- C. There is a great lesson here for us
  1. If we love Him we will keep His commandments

2. If we love Him we will feed His sheep and lambs
3. If we love Him we will be willing to lay down our lives for His church
4. We are not to compare ourselves with others (II Cor. 10:13-18). We ought not be concerned with the lot of others; we dare not be jealous; we need not be anxious over times and seasons; WE ARE SIMPLY TO FOLLOW THE LEADING OF JESUS AS HE COMMANDS IN HIS WORD AND LEADS US BY HIS PROVIDENCE!

### III. OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE 21:24-25

- A. John was an eyewitness and his testimony is true
  1. There are abundant extant manuscripts of this Fourth Gospel—some which were written within 50-100 years after the death of the apostle himself.
  2. History of the early church fathers tell us that John was an eyewitness to these events.
  3. His gospel agrees with but also supplements the other records.
- B. There were so many sayings of Jesus and so many deeds that it would have been impractical, if not impossible, to have recorded them all.
  1. The records we have are more than sufficient to bring all who will to faith in Christ and to regeneration
  2. We have the faith once for all delivered—let no man add to or take away.

### EXAMINATION, CHAPTERS 19, 20 and 21

#### *Identify These*

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Gabbatha    | 4. The Pavement    |
| 2. Golgotha    | 5. sea of Tiberias |
| 3. Preparation | 6. Praetorium      |

#### *Describe These*

- |                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Nicodemus            | 3. Mary Magdalene |
| 2. Joseph of Arimathaea | 4. Thomas         |

#### *Questions for Discussion*

1. Discuss the political implications and pressure brought to bear upon Pilate and his resultant decision to crucify Jesus.
2. Discuss the day and time of Christ's crucifixion and its bearing upon the harmony of all the accounts of His passion.
3. Discuss the way in which the gospel records recount the factuality of His death and its bearing upon the factuality of the resurrection.

4. Discuss the death of Christ as an atonement for our sins.
5. Discuss the meaning of the resurrection.
6. Discuss the purpose of the Fourth Gospel.
7. Discuss the relationship of Jesus' miracles to faith and faith to love and love to obedience.

*List*

1. Ten prophecies fulfilled in connection with His crucifixion
2. Ten people mentioned in these three chapters
3. Five theories of the skeptics as to the empty tomb and resurrection and refute each one
4. Ten appearances of the risen Lord

**IN SUMMATION**

There is so much we would like to say in summation. It has been a glorious experience. We are deeply grateful for editor Don DeWelt's patience. We hope this work, insufficient as it is, may be some reward for his kindness. We have chosen to quote from Dr. Merrill C. Tenney's, "New Testament Survey," as a summation to this whole work.

**JOHN: THE GOSPEL OF BELIEF**

"The structure of John's Gospel is so plain that its reader can hardly miss it. From beginning to end the theme of belief is followed consistently. Moreover, the Gospel is not an attempt to super-impose an artificial organization upon existing facts. The inspired writer has selected certain episodes and teachings which represent the character and progress of the revelation of God in Christ (1:10), and has arranged them in such a way as to sweep his reader along in the tide of spiritual movement toward an active confessional faith in Christ.

"The Prologue (1:1-18) begins by using the term *word* (Greek *logos*) to introduce the person of Christ. This term differs from those used in the other Gospels, for it does not connote any particular religious background. *Christ* is Jewish; *Lord* is Gentile; *Jesus* is human; but *Word* or *Logos* is philosophical. John thus makes the subject of his Gospel a universal figure, the incarnation of the Eternal Reason who is God, who came from God, and who reveals God as a son reveals a father. He is to be apprehended by those who receive Him (1:12), and the conflict between those who receive Him and those who do not is likened to the conflict between light and darkness.

"The Period of Consideration (1:19—4:54) presents the person of the Word made flesh as He appeared to His contemporaries and as He was received by them. First He is proclaimed in the witness of His forerunner, John, and in His dealing with John's disciples. His essential mission, "the Lamb of God (1:29)," and His method of appealing

to the needs and desires of His would-be followers connects Him with preceding history and revelation. He utilized both the preaching of John and the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament to establish His position. In the works which He performed He demonstrated His inherent power over things, over men, and over institutions (2:1-22). The interviews that followed were fuller manifestations of His sufficiency for all men. The learned and gentlemanly Jewish teacher, Nicodemus, the sharp-tongued and cynical Samaritan woman, and the importunate nobleman of Galilee, probably a Gentile, were all directed to faith in Jesus by different arguments and by different methods.

"From Jesus' public presentation of Himself arose controversy, for when He appealed to men to believe in Him, many refused. He did not ask for a blind or unreasoning faith, but He took care always to appeal to facts and to define clearly the issues at stake in belief and in unbelief.

"The healing of the man at the pool precipitated the Period of Controversy (5:1—6:71), because the miracle was performed on the Sabbath. Jesus indicated that His action was a sample of what His Father was continually doing, and thus tacitly claimed deity as His prerogative. In the discussion that followed (5:19-47) He argued for belief in Himself on the basis of five witnesses: Himself, the forerunner, the Father, the works which He had performed, and the Scripture. The miracles and the discourses that followed are bound closely together, for the discourse is only the amplification of the truth enacted in the miracles. The appeal for belief is very strong in this section, as if Jesus were desirous of having the disciples commit themselves to Him before the heat of controversy might alienate them from Him.

"The Period of Conflict (7:1—11:53) carries the trends of the Period of Controversy to their logical crisis. The growing through hesitant faith of the disciples is contrasted with the stark cynicism of Jesus' brethren, with the wavering allegiance of the bewildered multitude, and with the venomous opposition of the Jewish hierarchy. Jesus' own evaluation of the conflict appears in the history of the blind man, where He expressed the necessity of doing the works of God while He still had opportunity, and also in the raising of Lazarus, which He regarded as a supreme test of faith and as the climactic proof of His power. The discourse material which is included between these two miracles in the tenth chapter is Jesus' last extended public statement of His mission. It declares the purpose of His death as clearly as did His utterance to the disciples at Caesarea Philippi which is recorded in the Synoptics. The outcome of the conflict is predicted in His words; "I lay down my life, that I may take it again" (10:17).

"In the Period of Crisis (11:54—12:36a) appear the various tensions which the conflict has created. Jesus retired from Jerusalem and its environs to Ephraim in order that He might be out of the storm center. The feeling of His friends was openly declared by the family of Bethany, who gave a dinner in His honor (12:1-2). The pilgrim multitude, who was present in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover, hailed Him enthusiastically (12:20-21). Jesus Himself realized that the die was cast, and removed Himself from public contacts (12:36). Divine destiny, not popular vote, was the deciding factor in His life.

"Up to this point Jesus' ministry was public; from here on it was private. The Period of Conference (12:36b—17:26) comprises the final instruction to the disciples after the Last Supper and also His prayer to the Father. The preparation of the disciples for the shock of the cross and the report to the Father that He had finished His work concluded the earthly ministry of Jesus.

"The Period of Consummation (18:1—20:31) brings the fulfillment of the two clashing principles of belief and of unbelief. In the betrayal and crucifixion unbelief was unmasked. The weakness of Peter, the treachery of Judas, the jealous malice of the priests, and the cowardice of Pilate show how unbelief reaches its ultimate end. On the other hand, the constancy of the beloved disciple and the women and the generous action of Joseph and of Nicodemus show how even an imperfect and uninstructed faith can maintain loyalty in spite of bewilderment and danger. The resurrection, of course, was the final justification of belief as well as the final vindication of the revelation through Jesus the Son of God."

Amen