

# The Gospel Of John 1:1 – 14:20

## Commentary by David Green

Copying and distributing this commentary is encouraged, unaltered and not for sale.

JOHN, the writer of this Gospel, was the son of a fisherman named Zebedee, and his mother's name was Salome, Matthew 27<sup>56</sup>, with Mark 15<sup>40</sup>, and Mark 16<sup>1</sup>. His father Zebedee was probably of Bethsaida and with his sons James and John followed his occupation on the Sea of Galilee. The call of these two brothers to the apostleship is recorded by, Matthew 4<sup>21, 22</sup>; Mark 1<sup>19, 20</sup>; Luke 5<sup>1-10</sup>. John is generally supposed to have been about 25 years of age when he began to follow our Lord.

John was with our Lord in His transfiguration on the mount, Matthew 17<sup>2</sup>; Mark 9<sup>2</sup>; Luke 9<sup>28</sup>; during His agony in the garden, Matthew 26<sup>37</sup>; Mark 14<sup>33</sup>; and when he was crucified, John 19<sup>26</sup>.

He saw our Lord Jesus expire upon the cross, and saw the soldier pierce His side with a spear, John 19<sup>34, 35</sup>.

He was one of the first of the disciples that visited the sepulchre after the resurrection of Christ; and was present with the other disciples, when Jesus showed himself to them on the evening of the same day on which He arose; and likewise eight days after, John 20<sup>19-29</sup>.

In conjunction with Peter, he cured a man who had been lame from his mother's womb, for which he was cast into prison, Acts 3<sup>1-10</sup>. He was afterwards sent to Samaria, to confer the Holy Spirit on those who had been converted there by Philip, Acts 8<sup>5-25</sup>. The Apostle Paul informs us, Galatians 2<sup>9</sup>, that John was present at the council of Jerusalem, of which an account is given, Acts 15<sup>4</sup> and following.

It is evident that John was present at most of the events and situations related by him in the Gospel account with his name; and that he was an eye and ear witness of our Lord's labours, journeys, discourses, miracles, passion; crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. After the ascension John returned with the other apostles from mount Olivet to Jerusalem, and took part in all transactions prior to the day of Pentecost; at which time, he shared with the others the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This blessing qualified the Apostle John for the place he subsequently held in the early Church, and to near the end of the first century.

Of all the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, Matthew and John only have left us any account. Matthew preached first to the Hebrews, and when he was about to go to the Gentiles, delivered to the Jews in their own language the Gospel with his name. When Mark and Luke had written the Gospels with their names attached, it is said that John, who all this while had preached by word of mouth, was induced to write. The first three written Gospels being now delivered to all, and to John, it is said that John approved them, and confirmed the truth contained therein by his own testimony. John's written account of the things done by Christ in the beginning of his preaching bears testimony to the works of the Lord Jesus Christ before the imprisonment of the Baptist.

It is easy to observe that the other three evangelists have recorded the actions of the Lord Jesus Christ for one year after the imprisonment of John, as they themselves declare at the beginning of their Gospels. For after mentioning the forty days' fast, and the succeeding temptation, Matthew shows the time of the commencement of his account in these words: When he had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed out of Judea into Galilee. In like manner, Mark: Now after that John was cast into prison, Jesus came into Galilee. And Luke, before he begins the account of the acts of Jesus, gives a similar hint by writing: that Herod added yet this, above all, that he shut up John in prison. For these reasons the Apostle John was motivated by the Holy Spirit to write of the time omitted by the other Gospel writers.

The things done by the Lord Jesus Christ in the time before the imprisonment of John the Baptist the Apostle John hints at saying: This beginning of miracles did Jesus, 2<sup>11</sup>. Also in the history of the acts of Jesus he makes mention of the Baptist as still baptizing. It is thought that he expressly declares this when he says; For John was not yet cast into prison. John, therefore, in the Gospel bearing his name, tells of the things done by the Lord Jesus Christ while the Baptist was still active in his ministry, before being cast into prison. The other three evangelists relate the things that followed the incarceration of John the Baptist.

The Gospel according to John contains the earlier deeds of the Lord Jesus Christ, while the others give the history subsequent to the imprisonment of John the Baptist.

John begins his Gospel declaring the divinity of Jesus, an account reserved by the Holy Spirit for him, as the most suitable writer for that purpose. John starts his account with the assertion that the Lord Jesus Christ is eternally the Son of God with six assertions:

1. The Word and the Only Begotten are not different, but the same person, John 1<sup>14</sup>. **We beheld his glory, as of the only begotten of the Father.** The evidence of this position are the testimony of John the Baptist, John 1<sup>18,34</sup>; 3<sup>35,36</sup>; the conversation of Christ with Nicodemus, John 3<sup>16,18</sup>, in which Christ calls himself the only begotten Son; the speech delivered by Christ to the Jews, John 5<sup>17-47</sup>; and other passages in which he calls God his Father.

2. The Word was never made, but existed from the beginning, John 1<sup>1</sup>. John asserts that the Word existed from all eternity. As a proof of this position we can look at what the Lord Jesus Christ says, John 8<sup>58</sup>.

3. The Word was in the beginning with God, John 1<sup>1, 2</sup>. Some heretics must have maintained a contrary doctrine, or the Apostle John, in confuting their false teachings would not have thought it necessary to declare this truth since God is omnipresent, and therefore all things are present with him.

4. The Word was God, John 1<sup>1</sup>. The word GOD, must be here taken in its highest, absolute sense. The Gnostics admitted that the Word was a deity in the lower sense of the word. The Apostle John proves beyond question the eternal nature and deity of the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, John 5<sup>1ff</sup>; John 10<sup>30</sup>; John 14<sup>7, 11</sup>.

5. The Word was the creator of all things, John 1<sup>3, 10</sup>. The assertion that the Word was the creator of the world is equivalent to the assertion that he was God. In whatever form or manner we may think of God, the notion of Creator is inseparable from the notion of Supreme Being. We argue from the creation to the CREATOR; and this very argument is one proof of the existence of God.

6. In the Word was life, John 1<sup>4</sup>. The proofs of this position are in John 3<sup>15, 21</sup>; the whole of chapter 6, and much of chapter 8, also John 14<sup>6, 9, 19</sup>. No part of John's Gospel is a more complete proof of this position than his account of the resurrection of Lazarus, which the other evangelists omit.

John *never* uses the absolute, specific, unrelated term **logos** outside of the prologue. Elsewhere it is always modified or clarified, and does not occur in the Gospel again in the sense of the **logos**. Probably because in the Prologue we are looking at the **pre-existent Christ**; 1<sup>14</sup> becomes the point of transition; the **Word** is now **Jesus of Nazareth**. Therefore, he is called Jesus from this point on, no longer the Logos, Jesus and the **logos** are an identity; the **logos** is the pre-existent Christ.

It is likely that John wrote for the express purpose of giving the Jews, his countrymen, a correct view and understanding of the Messiah and His kingdom; and to prove that Jesus, who had lately appeared among them, was the Christ. His own words inform us of his motive, object, and design in writing this Gospel. **These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through his name**, John 20<sup>31</sup>.

John is chosen by the Holy Spirit and is telling us what the Word was, and what were the peculiar doctrines that superseded the Old Testament. His aim is to show, that Jesus is the Messiah. And to show, from the words of Jesus himself, who and what the Messiah was. John records chiefly the Lord's discourses about himself.

If anyone wishes to learn the true doctrine respecting the Messiah, the Son of God, he cannot do better than by a prayerful study of the Gospel by John.

John was a fisherman, without honour and unlearned, Acts 4<sup>13</sup>. It is inconceivable that a man of that position in life and learning could conceive such sublime notions of God, or present a character as lovely and pure as that of Jesus Christ. This Gospel will stand as an unquestionable demonstration that the fisherman who wrote it was under divine guidance, John 16<sup>13</sup>, John 14<sup>26</sup>, that he was guided into all truth about the Saviour, his Redeemer, the Logos, the Word, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

## **The Gospel of John, an exposition**

### **Chapter 1.**

**Verse 1, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

**2, The same was in the beginning with God.**

**3, All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.**

**4, In him was life; and the life was the light of men.**

**5, And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.**

**6, There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.**

**7, The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.**

**8, He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.**

**9, That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.**

**10, He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.**

**11, He came unto his own, and his own received him not.**

**12, But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:**

13, Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14, And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

15, John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

16, And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17, For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

18, No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

19, And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

20, And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

21, And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

22, Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

23, He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

24, And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

25, And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

26, John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

27, He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

28, These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29, The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

30, This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

31, And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

32, And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

33, And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

34, And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

35, Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

36, And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

37, And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38, Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

39, He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

40, One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41, He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42, And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone.

43, The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

44, Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45, Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46, And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47, Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

**48, Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.**

**49, Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.**

**50, Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.**

**51, And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.**

1-5. The eternal nature of the Logos, the Word of God, the source and giver of spiritual light and spiritual life,

6-13. The mission of John the Baptist, as sent from God to point out the Son of God.

14. The incarnation of the Logos, Word of God,

15-18. John's testimony concerning the Word, the eternal Son

19-22. The priests and Levites question John, the Baptist concerning his mission and his reason for baptising all that believed his testimony

23-28. His answer,

29-34. John's particular testimony on seeing the Lord Jesus Christ,

35-37. John points Jesus out to two of his disciples, who then follow Jesus,

38, 39. Christ addresses these two,

40-42. Andrew invites his brother, Simon Peter; the Lord speaks to Peter,

43-46. Christ calls Philip, and Philip invites Nathanael,

47. Christ's character assessment of Nathanael,

48-51. A conversation between Jesus Christ and this disciple.

## **Exposition of Chapter 1**

**Verse 1, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** In the beginning before any thing was formed before the great work of creation was started. This is the meaning of the word in Genesis 1<sup>1</sup>, to which John evidently alludes. This phrase fully proves that Jesus Christ was not part of the creation, as He existed before anything was made; therefore He is not a created being. All created nature was formed by Him: **for without Him was nothing made that is made**, John 1<sup>3</sup>. It therefore follows that all that was before creation must be eternal, and He who brought all things into being could not have gained His being from any created thing, therefore The Word, who was before all things and who made all things, must of necessity be the ETERNAL God.

**In the beginning was the Word.** This refers to the existence of the Son of God, not only before His incarnation, but before all time. The beginning of time, in which all creatures were fashioned and brought into being, found the eternal Word existing. The world was from the beginning, but the Word was in the beginning. Eternity is usually expressed by being before the foundation of the world. The eternity of God is described in this way in Psalm 90<sup>2</sup>, **Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.** Proverbs 8<sup>23</sup>, **I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.** The Word existed before the world had a beginning. He that was in the beginning never began.

**Was the Word;** the Logos, a name best left without a translation for the same reason the names Jesus and Christ are left without translation into the national language of the people reading the Bible. Every name of the Saviour of the world is descriptive of some excellence in His person, nature, or work, so the **Logos**, signifies a word spoken, speech, eloquence, doctrine, reason, or the faculty of reasoning, a thought or concept and is appropriately applied to Him, **who is the true light which lighteth every man who cometh into the world**, John 1<sup>9</sup>; He who is the fountain of all wisdom; who gives being, life, light, knowledge, and reason, to all men; He who has declared God unto man. He, the Word, is the only way man can know God; is in fact the way God has designed for man to know the beauties and wonders of His person.

**And the Word was God** or God was the Logos; therefore no subordinate being, no second to the Most High, but the supreme eternal God; a sublime mystery.

**2, The same was in the beginning with God.** The same Word was there with God, this is a clear reference to the nature of God being plural. God and the Word coexisted before the creation was decided or formed. **Was in the beginning with God** seems to be a repetition of what was said in the first verse; but John restates the truth to safeguard the doctrine, and to prevent the possibility of a misunderstanding. John has said that the Word existed before the creation and that the Word was with God; but he did not say that the union with God existed

in the beginning. He now expresses that idea that the union was not one which was commenced in time, but was a unity which existed in eternity, and which is an essential union of nature and essence and being.

**3, All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. All things were made by him** by the Logos. In Genesis 1, GOD is said to have created all things; in this verse, Christ is said to have created all things. The same unerring Spirit spoke in Moses and in the Gospel writer therefore the Christ and the Father are ONE in every sense of the word. To say that Christ made all things by a delegated power from God is absurd; because the thing is impossible. Creation means causing that to exist that had no previous existence; creation is a work which can be affected only by omnipotence. God cannot delegate His omnipotence; were this possible He to whom omnipotence was delegated would become GOD; and he from whom it was delegated would cease to be God for it is impossible that there should be two omnipotent beings. Ergo the Word is God.

**All things were made by him** that is time and space and matter. The earth is the work of His hands; the stars were placed in space by Him and the time needed for all things to happen was created by the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith does not need the scientist to explain how things happen; by faith we believe the worlds were formed by God. Hebrews 11<sup>3</sup> **Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.** Creation is the bringing out of nothing a substance and fashioning that substance to the design of the creator.

The argument which the Apostle John uses to prove Christ to be God is taken from the work of creation. He that made all things is truly God; Christ made all things, and nothing was made without him; therefore Christ, the Word, is truly and really God. All things were made by Him; not some things or some beings, but all creation received their existence and being from the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Without him was not any thing made that was made;** not without Him as an instrument used by God, but without Him, Jesus Christ with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the work of creation. He was the Author of the creation, not one used by God as an instrument in creating. Christ, the Word, Logos, as God, being the Creator and Maker of all things Himself, is excluded from being a creature, or any thing that was made.

**4, In him was life; and the life was the light of men.** though every thing He made had a principle of life in it, whether animal, vegetable or intelligent, this life or animation principle in mankind was not the light of men; not that light which could guide them to eternal blessedness; for the world by wisdom knew not God, 1Corinthians 1<sup>21</sup>. Therefore, the expression, **in him was life**, is not to be understood of natural life, but of that life which the Lord revealed to the world, 2Timothy 1<sup>10</sup>, that life which He taught was the way, John 14<sup>6</sup>, which He promised to believers, John 10<sup>28</sup>, which He purchased for all who would believe, John 6<sup>51, 53, 54</sup>, which He alone is appointed to bestow on all who believe Jesus is the Christ, John 17<sup>2</sup>.

All this may be proved from similar verses by the Apostle in his letters, 1John 5<sup>11</sup>, **this is the promise that God hath given unto us, eternal life, and this life is in his Son.** The Word is epitomised as the true God and eternal life, 1John 5<sup>20</sup>; the resurrection and the life, John 11<sup>25</sup>; **the way, the truth, and the life**, John 14<sup>6.2</sup>. John the Baptist came to bear witness of this light, that all might believe through Him, possess eternal life, 1Timothy 1<sup>16</sup>; It therefore follows this life must be the light of men, by giving them the knowledge of eternal life, salvation and of the only way leading to peace with God.

Maybe there is an allusion here to Genesis 3<sup>20</sup>: And Adam called his wife's name Eve, LIFE, because she was the mother of all living? Is not Jesus that seed of the woman that was to bruise the serpent's head, and give new life to all who are dead in sin; they who believe the message **the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world?**

Knowing that the Lord Jesus Christ is the **light of the world** is not salvation, knowing is a short step away from believing.

**5, And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.** By darkness in this verse we may understand the heathen world, Ephesians 5<sup>8</sup>, the Hebrew nation to whom the Light of the world was come and they refused to see with that light, and sinful man, mankind in general, John 3<sup>19</sup> **And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

Darkness in Biblical literature commonly means ignorance, guilt, or misery, not knowing God. Matthew 4<sup>16</sup>; Acts 26<sup>18</sup>; Ephesians 5<sup>8</sup>; it refers here to a wicked and ignorant people. John writing **the light shineth in darkness** is teaching the Lord Jesus came to instruct an ignorant and wicked world through His chosen people. This has always been the case. It was so when He sent His prophets; during His own ministry; and in this age when all we who have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are called to be witnesses of the Light, He who is the Light of the World. The Lord's efforts to enlighten and save men today are as a torch in a large underground cavern, like the light of a cloudy day, it is still sunlight but not clearly so; this is so because we do not have a clear

testimony. The truth gets lost; the light is dimmed by all the additions we make to the simple faith of the finished work of Christ.

**Comprehended it not**, this word means admitted it not, or received it not. The word comprehends means to understand in today's language. This is not the meaning of the original word. The darkness did not receive or admit the rays of light; the light could not penetrate the evil hearts of men; men were so ignorant, guilty, immoral, perverted, that they did not appreciate the instructions the Lord was giving; they despised and rejected Him. The great majority of mankind, caught up in self and sin, will not receive the Truth of the Word, and be enlightened and saved. Sin blinds the mind to the beauty and excellence of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sin causes the mind to reject the Word of the Lord, instruction in righteousness, just as darkness has no affinity for light; light always triumphs over darkness.

Darkness cannot win in the fight against light; light penetrates darkness not the other way around. Even in the midst of the darkness of ignorance and idolatry in the world, the light of Divine wisdom was shining, albeit with a lot of interference of the rays; the Jewish nation was a lamp shining among the surrounding nations; and many among the gentiles had a little understanding of the Truth, which enabled them to shine in some degree, though as lights in a dark place, 2Peter 1<sup>19</sup>.

Darkness is and ever will be the absence of light.

**6, There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.** John the evangelist now points out that John the Baptist was not the Messiah, and tells us the true nature of the Baptist's office. Many thought John the Baptist was the Christ, but this he corrects; yet admits that he was sent from God, that he was commissioned by God in his unique ministry. Though the Baptist corrected the people that thought he was the Messiah, he did not deny being sent on an important errand to the Children of Israel.

The main design of this Gospel is to show that Jesus was the Christ, John 20<sup>31</sup>. To do this, it was important in the beginning to prove that John the Baptist was not the Messiah. John made many disciples, Matthew 3<sup>5</sup>. Many persons supposed that he might be the Messiah, Luke 3<sup>15</sup>; John 1<sup>19</sup>. Many of these disciples of John the Baptist remained at Ephesus, the place where John the Apostle resided and the place where he is supposed to have written this gospel, long after the ascension of Jesus, Acts 19<sup>1-3</sup>. It is not improbable that there were many others who followed the ministry of the Baptist and who supposed that he was the Messiah. This made it important for the evangelist to show that John the Baptist was not the Christ, and to show that he was accepted as a prophet, an important witness to prove that Jesus was the Christ.

The evangelist in the first four verses states that **the Word** was divine; now he proceeds to prove that the Word was a man, and was the Messiah. The first evidence offered is the testimony of John the Baptist.

**7, The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.** The same man who was sent from God was an eye-witness, a most important witness. He came for a testimony; to bear witness to the fact that God was planning to visit His people. The Law and the prophets had been a testimony for God in the Jewish economy; the religion was established and the Law became the tradition by which the Children of Israel were governed. For this reason we read of the *tabernacle of the testimony*, the *ark of the testimony*, the *law and the testimony*: Now John the Baptist reveals a new channel of blessing; now the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ is the testimony God would have His people witness to and John was the forerunner. There was silence concerning the Christ, till John Baptist came to witness that God was again dealing intimately with His people.

John the Baptist came to bear witness to the light. Light is a witness without the need for confirmation, light is its own evidence; to those who refuse to see the light, who have closed their eyes, it is necessary there should be a witness to the light. Christ is the Light of the world and needs not man's testimony, but the darkness of the people of the world does need someone with the truth to tell of the light of the glorious gospel of Christ that it may shine into the heart. The eyes of man are closed because of sin, even when they are encouraged to look in the right direction there is an impediment to sight; 2Corinthians 4<sup>4</sup> **In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them, and they should be saved.**

John the Baptist was sent of God to tell the world that the Messiah was now come, He who would be a light to enlighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel; and to proclaim that dispensation at hand which would bring life and immortality to light.

**Men through him**, through the testimony of John the Baptist to the Son of God the Messiah, the Christ, God planned the salvation of man. The Baptist pointed men to Christ and the work of the evangelist is the same in this 'enlightened' generation. The commission is not changed with the advanced education and technology of this day; salvation is still only by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The message of John the Baptist was "**behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world**" and it has not changed. **That all men through him**

**might believe** the truth, believe that God has visited His people in the person of His Son and that through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ salvation, freedom from the penalty of sin, a relationship with God, is available to all who will believe.

**8, He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.** John the evangelist is precise to present to the world of man and to the Jews, that John was not that Light. John was a light, powered by God, a burning and a shining light, but not a light as the Christ is. John could point to the Light but could not shine with an inherent light. John could reflect light but was never the source of light.

John's light was as the light of a candle in a private house, a light shining among the Jews only, but the light of the Lord Jesus Christ was to be greater than the light of the sun, spreading over the face of the whole earth, displacing night and darkness.

We are warned not to mistake the Baptist for the Light, he only came to bear witness to the Light; John the Baptist was not the light that was promised and expected, but was sent to bear witness of the imminence of the fulfilment of the promise of God.

There were those of whom it is recorded, who rested in John's baptism at Ephesus, and looked no further, Acts 19<sup>3</sup>. To correct this error, the evangelist shows that the Baptist must give place to Christ. He was great as a witness to the Light God was to reveal, but was not that light himself.

We must not give to the ministers of the Gospel a value above the value set in the Word of God; they are simply the ministers by whom we believed the testimony concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. They are not the light, they simply testify to the Light; and if they would shine brighter than the true light by put themselves forward as special ministers then the Gospel is hid.

Those who build large congregations, ornate buildings, extensive ministries exalting man and his achievements forfeit the honour of being the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. Self-seeking and building monuments, big or small to mark the endeavours of man serve only to hide the Lord behind His created beings; the creature taking what is rightfully the Lord's and His alone.

We will shine brightest and be most illuminating when the light we shine by is a reflection of the Light of the World.

**9, That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.** He, the Light of the World, enlightens all mankind in some measure, and is the Author of all spiritual light in them that receive the truth. Christ is called the Light in regard to His manifestation of God, also regarding salvation and the illuminating power of God to all who believe. He is called the true light as opposed to the types and shadows of the Mosaic dispensation.

Every man and woman that comes into the world has the light of life; the Lord Jesus Christ is the giver of life and that life is light. All are enlightened with the light of reason, natural conscience; Creation, conscience, and the Law testify to the existence of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ being the essential, original, and eternal Light, giving life to all of creation, is an evident and undeniable demonstration that He is truly God.

It is not long into the natural life of a child before the light is dimmed, in most cases so overshadowed it is barely discernable. The darkness surrounding all the unsaved is penetrated by the Gospel of the Grace of God, and the light can shine forth with new vigour, and light the way for some weary soul seeking release from the bondage of sin. The Holy Spirit removes darkness, error, ignorance, from the mind by shining in the Light.

**10, He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.** He who is God from eternity, made Himself visible to the world in the fulness of time. This refers to the fact that He became incarnate; that He dwelt among men. No greater example of humility is seen in the world of nature or man; He who created all things placed Himself under the laws He made and was a subject in the nation, a child in the family, a law-abiding citizen.

The evangelist repeats **the world was made by Him**, to show His omnipotence and divinity; a repetition of what is said in John 1<sup>3</sup>. Not only man created by Him, but all material things were made by Him. This fact mentioned again makes what is said immediately after more remarkable, that men did not receive Him. The people should have received Him because of what He said and what He did, irrefutable proofs of divinity, the miracles that He wrought and His instructions to the people. **The world knew Him not**; the fact that the world was made by Him, made it more remarkable that the world of man did not know or approve its own maker.

In this current age we are bombarded with suggestions that the world and mankind is an accident, a chance, a peculiarity of nature that has brought all things into being. The writer to the Hebrews expresses the truth very simply, Hebrews 11<sup>1</sup> **Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 11<sup>2</sup> For by it the elders obtained a good report. 11<sup>3</sup> Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by**

the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. This could be rewritten, now faith *gives* substance to things hoped for and *is the* evidence of things not seen.

**The world knew him not;** did not acknowledge Him; the Jewish rulers knew well enough that He was a teacher come from God; but they did not choose to acknowledge him as such, as the Messiah. Men love the world and the things of the world; this love hinders them from knowing Him who made the world and all things in it. He made it only to make Himself known. Christ, by whom all things were made, John 1<sup>3</sup>, and by whom all things are continually supported, Colossians 1<sup>16, 17</sup>; Hebrews 1<sup>3</sup>, is continually manifesting Himself by His grace, and the foolish heart of man regards it not.

**11, He came unto his own, and his own received him not.** His own land or country; called His land because it was the place of His birth, the place where the Word became flesh, also because it was the chosen land where God delighted to dwell and to show His favour.

All is His by right of creation, The Lord Jesus Christ made all things according to the pattern He chose and all things were made perfect and complete. He came onto His own things but sin had entered into all areas of creation and had marred His work so that the creation did not recognise Him. Satan has usurped the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, John 3<sup>19</sup> **men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil;** this temporary setback will be righted when the Lord returns.

**His own,** His own people; there is a distinction here in the original words which is not preserved in the translation. *He came to his own land and his own people received him not.* They were His people because God had chosen them to be His above all other nations; God had given to them His laws; and had protected and favoured them, and in the fullness of time sent His Son to be born of a woman in that nation.

**His own received him not;** to receive Christ is to acknowledge Him as the promised Messiah; to believe in Him as the sacrifice that bore the penalty of sin, to obey Him and to be a partaker of His holiness, without which holiness no man can see God. It is reasonable to expect that those who have been favoured as the nation of Israel was should welcome the message of God. Then as now sin has blinded the hearts of men and they will not believe. God has a right to expect all men to believe, especially His own people after all that had been done for them. God has a right to expect that all should believe Him and be saved for that is the reason He sent His Son into the world.

It is not the blessings men receive that cause them to seek God. The Jews had been favoured above all people, but they rejected Him. Many millions in nominally Christian countries live and die rejecting the Lord Jesus. The Welfare State, the situation nationally where the government is given the responsibility and the people choose to blame the ruling powers for all the problems shows without question that the people have rejected the Divine rule. The nature of man has not changed; all would reject the Saviour if left to themselves. All men are by nature sinful. There is no more sure and worldwide proof of this than the widespread rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. **He came that all men through Him might believe.**

It is the common thought and teaching of man that salvation is by works; that good works will be rewarded by God. The standard of good is related to the nation, teaching and upbringing of the children and differs with each cultural setting. God has concluded all are sinners and are condemned to eternal damnation; but in grace provided a way for the condemned to find forgiveness and acceptance with Him.

**12, But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:** Although multitudes reject the Christ of God, yet some received and owned Him as the true Messiah; and those that did so, He adopted into His family as sons, giving to them the power, the right or privilege, to become the sons of God by believing.

Justifying faith declares **as many as received him.** Receiving Christ implies the assent of the understanding to that testimony which the Scriptures give of the Lord Jesus Christ; willingly consenting to submit in obedience to Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Justifying faith is trust of the heart in Christ alone for salvation; for faith is not a creed to be recited or a way of life to follow, but a divine promise for each believer in Christ, and reliance upon Him as the one who alone is able to do all that is promised, even to eternal life and presence with the Lord.

It is the privilege of all who receive Christ by faith, to have become the sons of God by adoption into His family. This is a precious privilege, an honourable and permanent privilege, and calls for thankfulness, love, service, duty and obedience to the Lord and His word.

The children of Israel were the people of God as a nation, each one born into the nation by natural generation. The Church is made up of individual believers who are adopted into the family of God, a unique work the Eternal God undertakes on behalf of His Son; no longer confined to a special race. All who believe and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour are in the Family of God; are joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ.

He who is made a child of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ enjoys the greatest privilege which God can grant on this side eternity. Each person who accepts Jesus Christ, as He is offered to them in the Gospel



message, have through His sacrifice, a right to sonship; for by the sacrifice of the Son of God this blessing was purchased; and faith in the promise of God confirms it to all who believe. We who are brought into the family of God have the highest honour and dignity which it is possible for a man to achieve. The sinner, who was an heir to the curse, has through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ a claim on the mercy of God, and assurance of salvation. The justice of God, on the basis of its holy and eternal nature, cannot refuse salvation to the vilest sinner who takes refuge in the promise of God for salvation by faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Justice has nothing to grant, Heaven has nothing to give, which the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God has not merited, has not earned. In Christ alone is justification for the sinner in the presence of a holy God.

**13, Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.** The Jews boasted of their natural birth and descent from Abraham, as many do today of their heritage nationally and royally, or of their social position and wealth. Neither the children of Abraham, nor those who have a position in the country or community through hereditary or financial means, by power or prestige, wealth or force can enter the Kingdom of God. Spiritual regeneration, being 'Born Again' is the passport to eternal security in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Born of blood** refers to the Race; the immediate context is to the nation of Israel and is RACIAL. Salvation is not hereditary. A so called 'Christian Country' or nation, race of people or tribe does not produce from itself offspring that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Born again is by the Son of God.

**The will of the flesh** is directly related to natural generation and is FILIAL. Christian parents do not beget Christian children; there is a greater chance the children of believers will also believe but the responsibility lies with the individual. Our birth to natural parents does not guarantee us a place in the Kingdom of God. Their status in the Church or in the world could be the greatest hindrance to the child becoming a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Parents who have a vital faith in the Lord Jesus Christ have a grave responsibility to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The heartfelt desire of the parents for the salvation of their children, their prayers and instruction of the children in the ways of the Lord will be influential in the children, but the ultimate responsibility lies with the child.

**The will of man** is the Apostle's way of directing us to the SOCIAL implications. The laws of the land and local laws, even when based on the Word of God and taught as the Truth do not guarantee the response desired by the teacher. The desire of all men for their children is that they will succeed in whatever field they pursue and parents generally will guide their offspring into a field of 'expertise' to secure their livelihood. Whatever religious instruction is given, heathen or Christian cannot determine the eternal destiny of the child; it will be a strong influence but does not ensure the desired outcome. The society in which we raise our children is subject to local laws whether they are good or bad according to the society, heathen, and religious or otherwise teaches the child as the parent was taught and without the intervention of the Holy Spirit the child remains an unbeliever.

**But of God** is indicative of a SPIRITUAL birth, born again of the Spirit of God, new birth, becoming a Christian. This is a work of God totally apart from anything man teaches or does; completely separate from all religions. Spiritual birth is the special experience of each person who comes to God in faith with a repentant heart and a realised need of a Saviour. The Holy Spirit convicts of sin and shows the sinner the way to escape the penalty of sin; by faith the sinner believes the testimony of the Holy Spirit, and responds in the manner laid down in the Bible; **Acts 16<sup>31</sup> Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.**

Understanding is not a prerequisite to salvation; salvation is by faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ and His bearing the penalty for sin. Being **born again** is the work of the Holy Spirit, is beginning a new life, a spiritual life, and is the experience where old things have passed away and all things are become new. A babe in Christ desires food to sustain the new life, the milk of the Word, and will grow to health and strength as a Christian and desire the spiritual sustenance supplied by the Word of God that he may grow. 1Peter 2<sup>2</sup> instructs all believers; **as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.** Spiritual life needs spiritual food to maintain spiritual health; the Word of God, prayer, ministry and fellowship are sources of blessing for the Child of God.

**14, And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.** This verse is very short if we measure it by words. When we consider the content it is barely touched by all the commentaries and expositions written and spoken. The main truth which this verse teaches is *the fact of the incarnation of Lord Jesus Christ, His being made man.* John tells us that the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. The plain meaning of these words is that our Saviour really took upon Him human nature in order to be the sin bearer. He became a man like we in all things, apart from sin. Like us He was born of a woman, though a miraculous conception and birth. Like us He grew from

infancy to boyhood, from boyhood to maturity both in wisdom and in stature, Luke 2<sup>52</sup>. Like all of us He hungered, thirsted, ate, drank, slept, was wearied, felt pain, wept, rejoiced, marvelled, and was moved to anger and was compassionate. Having become flesh, and living among men, He prayed, read the Scriptures, was tempted, and submitted to human authority and to the will of God His Father. As a man, in the flesh, He really suffered, shed His blood, really died, was buried, rose again, and actually ascended up into heaven. In all this time and through all these experiences He was never less than God and never more than man.

This union of two natures, the son of Mary and the Son of God in one Person is doubtless one of the greatest mysteries of the Christian religion. The Church of England states in its dogma. *"The Son, who is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father; the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin of her substance--so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and the manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, truly God and truly man."*

We cannot explain the union of two natures in our Lord Jesus Christ's person nor forget that the two natures, divine and human remain perfect and distinct. The divinity of Christ was never laid aside, although His divine nature was hidden from man. The manhood of Christ, during His life on earth, was never for a moment unlike our own, but He remained without sin; and by union with the Godhead was greatly dignified, distinguished. Though God, Christ has been perfect man from the first moment of His incarnation. He who is gone into heaven, and is sitting at the Father's right hand to intercede for sinners, is the Man who died bearing the penalty of sin, and is God.

He that suffered for sin on the cross, and was made sin for us, was **God manifest in the flesh**. The blood, with which the Church was purchased, is called the **blood of God**, Acts 20<sup>28</sup>. Though He became flesh in the fullest sense when He was born of the Virgin Mary, He never ceased to be the Eternal Word. We cannot explain why His Deity was sometimes veiled and at other times evident while He was on earth, but to say that at any instant of His earthly ministry He was not fully and entirely God is in the least, heresy.

This constant undivided union of two perfect natures in Christ Jesus is precisely that which gives infinite value to His work of salvation and qualifies the Lord Jesus Christ to be the Saviour that sinners need.

The second Adam is far greater than the first Adam was. The first Adam was only man, and so he fell. The second Adam is the Lord from heaven as well as man, and He completely conquered, He has the victory over the flesh, over sin, death and hell. As the Word that took on flesh He can empathise with His people's infirmities, because He has suffered Himself being tempted He can sympathize with us, because He is truly man.

He is the perfect pattern and example for our daily life; having dwelt among us as a man, we know the true standard of the Christian life is to **walk even as He walked**, 1 John 2<sup>6</sup>.

The Word became flesh so let us experience in our mortal bodies the dignity of sonship and not defile them by sin. The Son of God was not ashamed to take upon Himself the true and physical nature of man and to take it up to glory. That simple fact is a promise impossible to revoke, that He will raise our bodies and glorify them together with His own.

**We beheld his glory**, What a unique privilege some of the disciples had while the Lord Jesus Christ was living among men. Peter in his second epistle records, 2Peter 1<sup>16, 17, 18</sup>, **For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.**

**We beheld his glory**, this is written as proof of what John was affirming that the Word of God became man. The first affirmation was that they had seen Him as a man. He now adds that they had seen Him in His glory as God and Man in one person, representing Him the unique Son of the Father. This is a reference to the transfiguration on the holy mount. Matthew 18<sup>1-9</sup>. John was one of the witnesses and he writes, **"We beheld his glory,"** Mark 9<sup>2</sup>. The word glory here is majesty, dignity, splendour.

**15, John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.** John the Baptist, whose background and ministry was well known to the people to whom this Gospel came in the first place, witnessed; crying out, convinced of the importance and truth of his testimony concerning the one who followed him in time; **This is he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me.** I am no other than the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Isaiah 40<sup>3</sup>, the forerunner of the Messiah. John prefers Christ before himself, as being above himself in all aspects; we have only what we have received but the Lord is the giver of all good and perfect gifts.

**He that cometh after me is preferred before me**, in the dignity of His person, and in the work committed to Him; and as being the eternal God now manifest in the flesh. Among them that were born of women, there was not a greater than John the Baptist; Christ was greater than John in regard to His being God. Jesus is therefore preferred before John the Baptist because Christ was before John, being God from all eternity.

The dignity, majesty and eternal nature of Christ's person as God, sets Him up above all creation, all beings no matter the positions the world of man places them in. The Baptist said He who follows me in time is preferred before me, for He was before me, even from all eternity. **He was before me**, speaking through the prophets, and warning your fathers to repent and return to God, as I now warn you; for **He was before me**; He is from eternity, and from Him I have both my life and my ministry.

It is a blessing in the local church when they who minister do so with the awareness that the Lord Jesus Christ is preeminent, that God will not give His glory to another.

**16, And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.** We have our failings, Christ His fulness, His fulness is as a fountain with a limitless source. We derive our blessings from His fulness. The fulness is such that He can give out continually without diminishing the original supply. The Lord gives to us; we receive grace for grace; grace in kind and quality as best suits the Lord and is advantageous to the testimony of His grace. All the members of the Body of Christ, the Church being made partakers of His special spiritual gifts; grace ministered to the saints for the building up of the body of Christ. This edification is spiritual and numerical; individual and corporate specifically for the Church.

All fulness of grace for believers is treasured up in Christ, and communicated by Him, as the necessities of the testimony require, grace for maintaining a right relationship with fellow believers; grace to withstand the attacks of the devil; grace to deal with difficult people and situations; grace to live at peace with all men; grace is freely and plentifully ministered to the saints. Of the abundance of His wisdom and truth, the revelation of the truth of the Gospel we have all received, that is all who are the children of God by faith.

John refers to the Gospel as succeeding the Law; the Law was a limited dispensation of grace and truth for the purpose only till the design of God in the Gospel was executed; God ever planned to save men by Christ Jesus. The Law was a shadow of good things to come; the people to whom it was given decided to keep it to themselves, so God revealed the Gospel of His grace and truth to the whole world; the Law was only a shadow, and to a limited number, the Hebrew people, and they thought to exclude the rest of the world.

Man may appear to hinder the plans of God, man does rebel against God; man has decided he can do things more efficiently than God; anyone with a modicum of common sense and decency can see that the ways of man are ever leading to degeneracy. What was true of the Jews is evident today these thousands of years later with many cults and sects exclusive in their teachings yet claiming to be Christian.

We have received grace and truth, John 1<sup>17</sup>. The Apostle said that Christ was full of grace and truth; now he says that by the incarnate Son grace and truth came to us; from Christ we receive grace. Grace is preferred above the Law of Moses; the law was given by Moses, and it was a revelation of God's will concerning man and His good pleasure toward man; but the gospel of Christ is a fuller revelation. The Law given to Moses was demanding, fraught with penalties, terrifying when given and in the consequences of disobedience; but that which is brought to us by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ has all the benefits of the Law with the terror removed.

**18, No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.** Moses and others heard God speak, and saw the cloud and the fire, which were the symbols of His presence; but the revelation of God in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ had never before been seen, not even to the chosen people. It is likely that the word seen, means known, as in John 3<sup>32</sup>; 1John 3<sup>2,6</sup>, and 3John 1<sup>11</sup>. No man, even one as highly favoured as Moses or Isaiah has fully known God at any time, in any nation, **the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father**, who is intimately acquainted with all Divine counsel, **He has declared him**. The Lord Jesus Christ is the complete and final revelation of God to man, in His person, His ministry and His word.

Regarding the references in the Old Testament where it is stated that man saw God, a clarification is needed. I suggest in all cases where the Old Testament states a man saw God, or spoke face to face with God; it refers to a pre-incarnate appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Son of God has no beginning, is pre-existent and God chose to reveal himself in the person of His Son. Jesus said, **if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father**. John 6<sup>46</sup> --- **he which is of God, he hath seen the Father**. John 14<sup>9</sup> **Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; The only-begotten Son, that is in the bosom of the Father**. This expression implies one nature; the Son cannot have a closer relationship than is enjoyed by being in the bosom of the Father. None could be closer to the Father than the Son yet in the Son we are as close to the Father as He. In Christ we share the unity the Father has with His Son. Not because of anything we have done, simply and only because of His grace.

Christ's lying in His Father's bosom suggests He is conscious of all His Father's secrets and plans, knows all His counsels, is in agreement to all the plans and purposes of salvation, the Church, His reign and final outcome of all things.

As Christ's lying in his Father's bosom implies they are one in character, personality, temperament, disposition and spirit, it teaches us to worship the Lord Jesus Christ as we worship God the Father.

Christ's lying in the Father's bosom implies His knowing His Father's mind and will, in seeking to know Christ, to reverence His word and to take heed to His Spirit, for enlightenment we grow in likeness to our Lord and Saviour.

The Lord Jesus Christ is a clear declaration, manifestation, revelation of God.

**19, And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?** The Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, saying, **who art thou?** The Sanhedrin, the council at Jerusalem, whose duty it was to judge who were true prophets, sent messengers to John the Baptist to discover whether he was the Messiah or not. John refuses to take this honour to him, but tells them plainly, he was the forerunner of the Christ, that the revelation of the Messiah himself was imminent. He persisted in this assertion, testifying to the Jews that this Jesus was the Christ.

When the Jews sent messengers the fame of John was widespread, Matthew 3<sup>5</sup>. It spread from the region of Galilee to Jerusalem, and the nation seemed to suppose, from the character of his preaching, that John was the Messiah, Luke 3:15. The great council of the nation, or the Sanhedrim had the religion of the nation to consider. They felt it their duty to inquire into the character and claims of John, and to learn whether he was the Messiah. The testimony of Zechariah and Elizabeth, of Simeon and Anna was not completely forgotten. It is probable that they thought him to be the long-expected Christ, and were prepared to consider him as the Christ.

It is a sad state of affairs when the religious leaders of the people do not know when the Lord is in the midst. What is the difference in this day when so many bear a false message and multitudes flock to the spectacular? The **still small voice** is lost in the cacophony of sounds emanating from Christian groups and the variety of dogma contrary to the plain Word of God.

**20, And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.** This confession proves that John was not an impostor; it shows he did not want praise or honours for personal prestige. He had a wide reputation; the nation was expecting that the Messiah was due, and many were ready to believe that John was the expected Messiah, Luke 3:15. If John had been an impostor he would have taken advantage of this popular belief, and formed a sect among the people to honour him in this capacity. That he did not do it is proof that he did not intend to impose anything false on men but came only as the forerunner of the Christ.

The example of John shows that all Christians, especially those Christians with a public ministry, however well thought of in the Christian community, should be willing to lay all their honours at the feet of the Lord Jesus. To do this is an evidence of the true spirit of who would make the Lord Jesus Christ known as the Saviour. John renounces himself that Jesus may be all in all.

God had highly honoured John, and favoured him with in his work as the forerunner, yet John considered he had nothing but what he had received. He who makes use of God's gifts to feed and strengthen his pride, to cater to the flesh, will fall into the condemnation of the devil.

We have nothing but what we have received; we deserve nothing of what we possess; and it is only by the grace of God we continue.

**I am not** is the phrase used by John the Baptist showing his humble position in the congregation of the Lord's people.

**21, And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.** The Lord Jesus Himself declared of John the Baptist there was none greater among those who are born of woman; He said **there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist**, Matthew 11<sup>11</sup>. The Lord Jesus said of John that **he was a burning and a shining light** John 5<sup>35</sup>. Yet in this passage we see John the Baptist lowly, self-abasing, and humble. He refuses the honour which the Jews from Jerusalem were ready to accord him. John the Baptist refuses all titles knowing there was one greater than he in the offing.

**Art thou Elias?** The Jews expected that Elijah would precede the Messiah. They supposed that it would be the real Elijah returned from heaven; he had not died but was carried by a whirlwind into heaven. John denied that he was Elijah; but he did not deny that he was the Elijah who the prophet intended Matthew 3<sup>3</sup>, for he immediately proceeds to state that he was sent John 1<sup>23</sup>, as it was predicted of Elijah, to prepare the way of the Lord. While he corrected their false notions about Elijah, he clearly stated to them his true character that they might understand that he was the one predicted as Elijah. John came, though not in the person, yet in the power and spirit of Elijah.

**Art thou that prophet?** I am not the Messiah, whom you look for, nor Elijah, nor that prophet you expect. John the Baptist denies that he was that prophet which Moses spake of in Deuteronomy 18<sup>15</sup>, nor any of the old prophets risen from the dead. Strictly speaking, he was more than a prophet. The Old Testament prophets prophesied of Christ to come; but John pointed out a Christ already present; and in this sense he was more than a prophet.

The ministry of all Christians is to point to a Christ who is present and able to save. To have an answer to all who would ask them of the hope they have in the return of the Lord and the confidence they have in the Word of God and experience of the ever present and living Saviour.

**22, Then said they unto him, Who art thou? That we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?** He speaks of himself as nothing more than the **voice of one crying in the wilderness**, and as one who **baptized with water**. The Baptist proclaims loudly that there is One standing in their midst far greater than himself, One whose shoe-latchet he is not worthy to unloose. He claims honour not for himself but for Christ. To exalt Christ was his mission, to have men believe God was visiting His people, and to that mission he is committed. The most renowned saints of God in every age of the Church have always been those with the John the Baptist's spirit. They always have plans for the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ and for self abasement.

In gifts, and knowledge, and general character the saints have marked differences, but in one respect they have always been alike, they have been **clothed with humility**, 1 Peter 5<sup>5</sup>. The Child of God who is used of God has not sought his own honour. This is the enigma of the honour God places upon them; **He that humbles himself shall be exalted**. Luke 14<sup>11</sup>.

**What sayest thou of thyself? 23, He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.** A voice of a crier in the wilderness, quoted from Isaiah 40<sup>3</sup>, which clearly proves that John the Baptist was the person of whom the prophet spoke.

**24, And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.** Why they are particularly mentioned is not clear, many of the Sadducees came to the baptism of the Lord, Matthew 3<sup>7</sup>, but it seems the Pharisees were more expectant of God's imminent dealings with His people. The Pharisees composed a great part of the Sanhedrim, Acts 23<sup>6</sup>. It is likely that a deputation from the Sanhedrim would include many Pharisees.

The Pharisees were sticklers for the rites and customs, traditions and ceremonies developed over many years. They believed they were keeping the law as delivered by Moses, Mark 7<sup>3,4</sup>. When John came baptizing, adding a rite to be observed by his followers, baptizing all who came to him, the Pharisees questioned his authority to institute a new rite.

**25, And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?** On receiving a proselyte from among the gentiles baptism was common before John's time, but it was not customary to baptize a Jew. John introduced the custom of baptizing all who believed the message he was preaching. The religious leaders wanted to know by what authority he made such a change in the customs of the nation. They presumed, from the fact that he introduced that change that he claimed to be a prophet or the Christ. They supposed no one would try to introduce a change to the established practices without authority from a higher than earthly source. John the Baptist rejected the suggestion he was the Christ or the prophet Elijah, when they asked about his authority for change in the established order.

He applied to himself a prediction that they all considered as belonging to the forerunner of Christ, they were blind as to why he did it but as all who are dead in sin they showed a remarkable lack in understanding the plainest truth.

Today, with so much proof of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection, the establishment and continuation of the Church, the testimonies of martyrs and saints over the last 2,000 years and in a more personal way the changed lives of family members, friends and 'reformed criminals' the Lord is still rejected by the majority.

**That prophet** is possibly a reference to Deuteronomy 8<sup>15</sup>, not understood by the religious leaders of the day, though recognised by some of the more scripturally informed, John 6<sup>14</sup> and 7<sup>40</sup>.

**26, John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;** He did not deny baptizing; nor did he deign to state his authority. He admitted that he had introduced an important change and he goes on to tell them that this was not the final change. Greater and more important changes are shortly to take place without the authority of the leaders in the religious community.

**There standeth one**, there is one, **among you**, in the midst of you, and He is not seen as special among the multitude. The Messiah was about to be manifested to the people. It was not until the next day John 1:<sup>29</sup> that Jesus was manifested and proclaimed as the Messiah. It is most probable He was then among the people that were assembled near the Jordan, and mingled with them, though He was unremarkable. He had gone there

without attracting attention, though His real object was to be baptised in this public manner, and be identified with the people openly.

**Whom ye know not**, Jesus was not yet declared publicly to be the Christ. Though He was then among the multitude, He was not yet known as the Messiah.

There is much that is praiseworthy but not publicised and many noble people that are obscure, undistinguished, and unknown quietly working in the background. Jesus was with the crowds but they were not conscious of His presence, for he was not yet manifest. Though He was the greatest person ever in the world, yet He was not in a physical way distinguishable from the general populace. About 30 years after His birth, living an exemplary life, obeying in all things true to His purpose and the Law His role was still hidden.

The risen Jesus, the Lord of life and glory may be near to men in the world, and yet they know Him not. He is everywhere by his Spirit, yet few know it, and few are desirous of knowing Him.

All Christians have a duty to display the characteristics of the Lord in some measure. The Lord said; **by this shall all men know ye are my disciples if you have love one toward another**. This must be the best form of evangelism.

John said I indeed have baptized you with water; this baptism is not to be trusted in for salvation; it is only typical of what you must receive from Him who is mightier than I. It is He only who can communicate the Holy Spirit; and water baptism is nothing other than pointing out and directing to the baptism of with the Holy Spirit.

**Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus, Acts 19:<sup>4</sup>**. Baptism for believers was never the way of salvation it is the answer of a clear conscience before God. For the Jews the Baptist preached to and that responded to the message spoken, baptism was a sign telling the Baptist they knew they were sinners a

**27, He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.**

These words of John bring out the Divine glory of the One he was forerunner to. John the Baptist was no ordinary man. He was the subject of Old Testament prophecy, the son of a priest, born as the result of the direct intervention of God's power, filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb, exercising a ministry which attracted great multitudes unto him, and yet he looked forward to and up to Christ as infinitely higher and more esteemed than he was. John spoke of the Lord Jesus Christ as One before whom he was not worthy to stoop down and unloose His shoes.

Let us all, especially those of us who have a place of honour in the local church, be humble enough to give the honour and glory to the Lord who has saved us and gifted us for a public ministry in His service.

**28, These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.** Almost all the ancient manuscripts and versions have Bethany instead of Bethabara here, and this is likely the true reading. There was a Bethany about 4k east of Jerusalem, but there was another in the tribe of Reuben, on the east side of the river Jordan, and there John was baptizing. It is about 19k above Jericho. The word Bethabara means house or place of a ford.

Beyond Jordan or on the east side of the river Jordan is the place referred to.

**29, The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. The next day,** the day after the Jews asked whether John the Baptist was the Christ.

John's testimony is directly to the Lord Jesus Christ; **Behold the Lamb of God**. This was said alluding to what was written in the prophets, Isaiah 53<sup>7</sup>. Jesus was the true Lamb or Sacrifice required and appointed by God, of which those offered daily in the tabernacle and temple, Exodus 29<sup>38, 39</sup>, and especially the paschal lamb, were only the types, Exodus 12<sup>4, 5</sup>; 1Corinthians 5<sup>7</sup>. The continual morning and evening sacrifice of a lamb, under the Law, was intended to point out the continuing efficacy of the blood shed for the remission of sin, by the Lord on the Cross; for even at the throne of God, Jesus Christ is represented as a Lamb newly slain, Revelation 5<sup>6</sup>.

John, pointing to Jesus Christ, calls him the Lamb of God; all the lambs which had been offered under the Law were provided by men. This Lamb was provided by God, as the only sufficient and available sacrifice for the sin of the world.

In three essential respects this Lamb is different;

1. It was the Lamb of God; the only perfect and available sacrifice supplied by God.
2. It made propitiation for sin, not merely covering sin as the blood of the Old Testament sacrifices did. This sacrifice carried sin away in reality; this Lamb put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.
3. It carried away the sin of the whole World, whereas earlier sacrifices were offered only on behalf of the Jewish people. Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God was not a sacrifice limited to the Jew, but was also to benefit

the Gentile world; it was not confined to any one part of the world, but was designed to open the way of salvation to all men. The Lord Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, 1John 2<sup>2</sup>.

The death of the Lord Jesus Christ for the sins of the whole world does not preclude any sinner from the need for saving, personal faith in the Lamb of God.

**Behold the Lamb of God**, before John stood the One whom all the sacrifices of Old Testament times had foreshadowed. There is a progressive revelation in the teaching of Scripture concerning **the Lamb**.

First, in Genesis 4, we have the Lamb of God **typified**, the firstling of the flock, slain by Abel in sacrifice.

Second, we have the Lamb **prophesied** in Genesis 22<sup>8</sup> where Abraham said to Isaac, **God will provide himself a lamb**.

Third, in Exodus 12, we have the Lamb slain and its blood **applied**, the nation sheltering under the blood of the sacrifice.

Fourth, in Isaiah 53<sup>7</sup>, we have the Lamb **personified**; here for the first time we learn that the Lamb of God's choice would be a Man.

Fifth, in John 1<sup>29</sup>, we have the Lamb **identified** and pointed out for all to see.

Sixth, in Revelation 5, we have the Lamb **recognised** and **magnified** by the hosts of heaven.

Seventh, in Revelation 22<sup>1</sup> we see the Lamb **glorified**, seated upon the eternal throne of God.

In Genesis 4 the sacrifice is offered for one man, Abel.

In Exodus 12 the sacrifice is for the whole household.

In Leviticus 16, on the Day of Atonement, the sacrifice was for the entire nation.

In John 1<sup>29</sup> it is **Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world**, Gentiles and Jews with no exceptions. This title points to the moral perfections of the Saviour of mankind, His **sinlessness**, for He was **the lamb without blemish and without spot**, 1 Peter 1<sup>19</sup>. It tells of His gentleness, His voluntary offering Himself to God on our behalf, He was **led**, not driven as **a lamb (sheep) to the slaughter** Acts 8<sup>32</sup>, only a perfect sacrifice could do all God demanded, to put away sin Only the Son of God could fulfil all the criteria.

**30, This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.**

Here for the third time John declares that Christ was **preferred before** him, verses 15, 27, 30. It confirmed the eternal nature of the Son of God, His pre-existence. That this was He of whom he had spoken before, John 1<sup>30-31</sup>: This is He, this person whom I now point at, this is He of whom I said, **after me cometh a man**. This honour John had above all the prophets, they spoke of Him as one that should come, and John saw the Lord already present. Then John tells the purpose of his baptizing.

**31, And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.**

It was to make Christ **manifest to Israel** that John the Baptist came to prepare a people for Him. The people were prepared by personally accepting the place of sinners before God Mark 1<sup>5</sup> and that is why John baptized in Jordan, the river of death. Being baptized in Jordan, the repentant Israelites acknowledged that *death was their due*. In this John's baptism differs essentially from Christian baptism. In Christian baptism the believer confesses that the death he should die, the penalty for sin, has been paid. The believer testifies to the fact that he has already died to sin, died with Christ, Rom. 6<sup>3,4</sup>.

Water baptism can never take away sin nor give satisfaction to God on behalf of the sinner. Water baptism is the answer of a clear conscience before God, a public testimony to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life and desires of the individual baptised.

**32, And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.**

The Spirit of God, a singular person of the Triune God, descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove, Luke 3<sup>22</sup>. The dove was the symbol of purity or harmlessness, Matthew 10<sup>16</sup> and of softness, Psalm 55<sup>7</sup>. In this instant the descent of the Holy Spirit was an emblem of the innocence, and meekness of the Saviour. The gift of the Holy Spirit was the public approval of Jesus by God, John 1:33, and a sign of His being set apart to the work of redemption. There was no change wrought in the moral character of Jesus was ever perfect in all His ways; He was publicly set apart to His work, and approved by God in the work He had to do.

The heavens were opened unto him, to John the Baptist, and John saw the Spirit of God lighting upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

This passage is further proof of the doctrine of the Triune God. Three distinct persons are here represented; the *person of Jesus Christ* baptized by John in Jordan. The *person of the Holy Spirit* in a bodily shape, Luke 3<sup>22</sup> like a dove. The *person of the Father*; a voice came out of heaven, saying, **this is my beloved Son**.

**33, And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.**

**And I knew him not**; there was a family relationship between Jesus and John, John's mother Elisabeth was cousin to Mary the mother of Jesus, yet had no personal knowledge of Jesus as the Messiah till he saw Him

come to be baptised. John had spent his time in the wilderness, in solitude; Jesus mostly at Nazareth with family commitments. John renounces all collusion or previous agreement; there was no planning of this revelation by any other man.

**He that sent me---said unto me** teaches us that John had a close and intimate acquaintance with the Father of the Lord. The Father does not leave us to our own understanding but also teaches us in His Word what to say and how to live. We who are redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ are also equipped and made fit to proclaim Jesus as Lord. We can continue in intimate fellowship with God and sweet communion with Him and His redeemed people.

**The same said unto me;** this was the sign by which John the Baptist was to know the Messiah. He was to see the Spirit descending like a dove and abiding on Him. It does not follow that John had no indication before this that Jesus was the Christ; it means that by the visible descent of the Holy Spirit he should know it without doubts. From Matthew 3<sup>13,14</sup>, it seems that John supposed that He claimed to be the Messiah, and that he believed it; but the infallible, certain, testimony was the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus at His baptism.

**This is the Son of God;** declared by a voice from heaven at the baptism of Jesus, Matthew 3<sup>17</sup>. This John heard, and he testified that he had heard it.

**34, And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.** What John the Baptist saw he solemnly and openly testified to. If John was in a court and speaking under oath in this age then the witness would be accepted as the truth. He made official declaration of it; **I saw the Spirit descending from heaven.** John could not see the Holy Spirit, but he saw the 'dove' which was a sign and representation of the Holy Spirit. John was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb so had no difficulty in recognising the Holy Spirit when He came upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is interesting to note that the Lord began His ministry when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him and the Church was formed and its ministry began with the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It is of particular note that there can be no Christian ministry without the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit is given only to those who have a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore the Holy Spirit witnesses between believers to the common faith, to the unique and individual salvation of all who have His faith.

**35, Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;** The day after his remarkable testimony that Jesus was the Son of God. The Apostle John reports this testimony of John the Baptist because it was the main design of this evangelist to show that Jesus was the Messiah. To do this he repeats the testimony of John the Baptist as this is another testimony to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; it was impartial evidence from a third party.

**John stood** or was standing away from the main crowd and **two of his disciples** with him. One of these was Andrew John 1<sup>40</sup> and it is likely the other was the writer of this gospel. It is not in 'doing' that we know the Lord, not in activity of the gospel or of ministry of the Word; it is in standing still. Away from the noise and activity of the world of commerce, socialising, friendships, sports we can be in the 'quiet place' where we commune with our Saviour undistractedly.

**36, And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!** John the Baptist was attentively beholding, looking steadfastly at the one revealed to him as the Son of God. If we desire to know the Lamb of God and comprehend the significance of God sending His Son into the world we must look on Him with our eyes open to the Word of God and our minds free from the bias of the world, flesh, society, and all other distractions. At first sight Jesus appears only as a man among men, and as one who died bearing testimony to the truth, as many others have died. On closer consideration He is seen as no less than God manifest in the flesh, and by His death, making propitiation for the sin of the world.

Fixing his eyes intently upon him, **looking upon Jesus as He walked** singling Him out and regarding him with special attention; something different from the norm is attracting the attention of the Baptist, John is seeing Him as the long-expected Messiah and Saviour of the world.

**As he walked,** while Jesus was walking there was an evident difference, which the Baptist recognised and testified to; **Behold the Lamb of God.** John the Baptist directed the attention of his own disciples to Jesus, not only as the sacrifice for the sin of the nation but as the Saviour of the world.

Every Christian testimony should direct the observer and hearer to the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The same testimony will never be contrary to the Word of God.

**37, And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.** These two, Andrew and most probably the writer of the Gospel, John, had been the disciples of John the Baptist. His office was to point out the Messiah, he was the forerunner. When John had pointed his disciples to the Lord they left their master and teacher, John, and followed the long-expected Messiah. This shows that John was sincere and self-effacing; that he was not desirous of forming a party, having a large following or of building up a sect within the Jewish



community. We learn from this a principle that all those whom we attract by our ministry are best served as we encourage them to become followers of Christ.

The objective of ministers, pastors, preachers should not be to build up their own interests, increase their following, and instigate public works or to extend their own fame. The duty of each Child of God is to point men and women, old and young to the Saviour. Ministers of the Gospel, however popular or successful, should be willing, even insist that their disciples should look to the Lord Jesus Christ rather than to them.

The two disciples heard John speak of Jesus as the Lamb of God, and they followed Him. They probably had heard John say the same thing the days before, now Jesus is among them as the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world, and this made the disciples follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

The finest, strongest and most effectual argument to a sinner with an awakened conscience, a soul troubled by the burden of sin is to show them that to follow Christ; that He and He only can remove the burden of sin and give the guilty conscience peace.

**38, Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? Jesus turned** from whatever He was doing to give His undivided attention to those who sought Him. Never has anyone seeking the Lord been neglected; Jesus always responds to the seeking soul. Jesus regards the first inclinations of the soul to follow Him. He turned toward these disciples of John, as He does listen to all who approach Him for salvation. Jesus was ready to hear their requests and to answer them, as He is ready to hear and answer us.

**What seek ye?** This was not asked to obtain information; it was not a reproof discouraging them from following Him. It was an inquiry; hide nothing from me, how can I assist you, what information will satisfy your desires at this time.

All Christians should be accessible, genuinely sympathetic toward all who are inquiring about the Lord, the Faith, and the way of salvation.

**Rabbi** was a Jewish title given to one learned in the scriptures, the Word of God and meaning literally a great one, and was applied to a teacher or master in the Jewish schools. The Lord Jesus Christ solemnly forbade his disciples from assuming that title. The reason He gave was, that He was Master and Teacher. All the believers were on one level; they were equal in authority; they were brethren in the one family. The Lord taught His disciples should neither covet nor receive a title which assumed one was greater than or above another in the Kingdom of God. No individual in an Assembly of the saints has the authority or right which belongs exclusively to the Lord Jesus Christ, their Teacher and Master. The Lord taught everything which would tend to make a distinction among them, or destroy their parity; everything which would lead others to suppose that there were grades among the saints as ministers bishops, canons, priests, popes etc., they were to avoid.

**Where dwellest thou?** This question they probably asked Him desiring to be with Him and to learn of Him. The Lord had stirred their interest they wanted to know more. They wanted to travel with the Lord, unwilling to interrupt His journey and also to spend more time with Him. A journey with the Lord Jesus Christ, however long or short is a pleasant, informative and worthwhile journey.

Christianity teaches men politeness, not to interrupt conversations or be disruptive, or break up groups for selfish reasons. The Holy Spirit teaches us to desire to be with Christ; to seek every opportunity to be with Him and His people.

**39, He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.** Jesus invites all to come and see where He dwells; now at the right hand of His Father in Heaven. This place is accessible to all who travel the pathway of faith.

Jesus invites these first disciples to come to His lodgings; the nearer we approach to Christ, the more we see of His beauty, and humility. All Christians should be approachable, have no fear of others seeing how we live.

If we send out a clear message and present a true picture of our Saviour those who do not know the salvation of God would come to see what so attracts us. They would see that with the Lord is life, and the chances are that the Light would shine into their hearts and give them life.

The Lord does not dwell in the worldly affairs of men, or in gatherings catering to the flesh in any degree, He is found in the humble and contrite heart, wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, in the private place of prayer. He may be found in the humble, contrite spirit, in the faithful life of His followers, in demonstrated love for the unlovable.

Jesus invites all to come immediately and without delay to see where He dwells. He dwells in heaven at the right hand of His Father so we see where He dwells by faith.

They were so well pleased with what they found that they **abode with him that day** and the Lord made them welcome. It was about the tenth hour, some think that it was about ten o'clock in the morning, and they stayed

with him till night; others think that John reckons as the other evangelists according to the Jewish time keeping and that it was four o'clock in the afternoon, and they abode with him that night and the next day.

To stay with the Lord is most important, He has promised never to leave or forsake us. Deliberately remaining steadfast with the Lord and in fellowship with His people is the way of greatest blessing, of true communion with the Lord and benefit to the local church.

**40, One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.** Andrew was so encourage by the Lord, both in the person and speech that he had no qualms in following the one pointed out to him. Among the multitude that heard the Baptist speak and saw the one indicated as the Lamb of God was the brother of Peter.

**41, He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.** He found him and told him about Jesus before he brought him to Jesus. His finding implies his seeking for his brother; they were not of necessity working together at that time or attending to the business. Simon came with Andrew; and together they met with Jesus. There was an expectation of something special awakened in those who heard the Baptist speak of the One following him, anticipation beyond the normal.

They learned from the testimony of John, and were fully convinced by talking with the Jesus that He was the Messiah. The word Messiah is Hebrew, and means the same as the Greek word Christ, anointed.

From the conduct of Andrew we learn that the Christian Faith causes believers to desire others may possess it and share the blessings and communion with the Saviour. It does not lead to selfishness or secrecy, or to exclusiveness; but the Holy Spirit working in the believer, insists we share the joy we possess as we commune with our Creator and our Saviour. This is a vital aspect of the Christian testimony and draws others to the Saviour. They who love the Lord in sincerity and truth seek to tell others that the Saviour is real, relevant and personal. Young converts should seek their friends and neighbours, and tell them of the Saviour; not only their relatives, but all others as far as possible, that all may come to Jesus and be saved.

**42, And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone.** Much argument has centred on the words of the Lord and the name given to Peter. **Thou art Peter; and upon this Rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.** Matthew 16<sup>18</sup>. The Greek word Petrov, Petros or Peter does not mean a rock, though it has a relative meaning to the word; it signifies only a little piece of a rock, or a stone. The real foundation intended by the Lord Jesus Christ, which he expressed by the prophetic figure of Petra, a rock, must be understood to bear a dignity and importance above the word, Petros. Petra, a real rock is comparatively superior to a mere stone or particle from a rock. A rock is the regular figurative expression in the Scripture for a Divine Guardian, Defender; **Jehovah is my rock, also my God is my rock;** 2Samuel 22<sup>2</sup>, and Psalm 18:<sup>2</sup>; and **who is a rock except our God?** 2Samuel 22<sup>32</sup>.

Notice from the previous verse that Andrew said **WE have found;** Andrew had been with Jesus, he was so full of Him, the impression the Lord made on Andrew was so great that he could not keep it to himself. He knew Christ was more than mere man, he knew the Lord was the one sent from God the Messiah.

Jesus Christ accepted and welcomed Peter; He called him by his name. When Jesus beheld him, he said, **Thou art Simon, the son of Jona.** Peter was a stranger to Christ, so to name him and his father was significant. The Lord knows them that are His and all those that will be His and everything concerning them. The names are significant; Simon, obedient, and Jona, a dove. An obedient, meek spirit is a testimony to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian.

Jesus gave him a new name, Cephas, and invited Peter to a life of devotion to Him as a disciple. The name which Jesus gave him indicated the future place Peter would hold as an Apostle. **Thou shalt be called Cephas,** which is Hebrew for a stone, firm and unyielding and able to weather storms.

**43, The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.** Into Galilee, Jesus was now in Judea, where he went to be baptized by John. He was now about to return to His home state where he finds Philip. This does not refer to the Lord calling these first disciples to be apostles, for that took place at the Sea of Tiberias, Matthew 4<sup>18</sup>, it refers to their being convinced that He was the Christ. The object of John in writing this Gospel is to show how and when the first disciples were convinced of this. Matthew states the time and occasion in which they were called to be apostles; John, the time when they first met with Jesus, and were persuaded that He was the Messiah.

There is no contradiction in the four Gospel writers.

Philip was called by Christ himself, not as Andrew who was directed to Christ by John, or Peter who was invited by his brother. God has various methods of bringing his chosen ones home to himself. But whatever means He uses He is not tied to any; the ways His followers make the Lord Jesus Christ known are also various.

Jesus findeth Philip; Christ sought us, and found us, before we made any enquiries after Him; when we seek Him He will find us. Philip was called the next day; when Christian work is to be done every day is important; the work of the Lord is not limited to Sundays. Whoever was used of the Lord to reach you was His gracious way of using someone who was obedient to Him to continue the work of building the Church.

**Jesus would go forth into Galilee** to call Philip; all those that are given to Him by the Father, wherever they are, and whoever they are, none of them shall be lost, this is an example for us.

The nature of true Christianity is following Christ, devotion in service and conduct, attending to His Word, and following in His steps.

**44, Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.** Philip was of Bethsaida, as were Andrew and Peter, John 1<sup>44</sup>. Bethsaida is the House of nets, or Place of nets; these disciples were not renowned because they were from Bethsaida, they brought honour to the place through their association with the Lord Jesus Christ. Bethsaida was inhabited mostly by fishermen; Christ chose disciples who were to be fishermen in a totally different way, not needing a formal education or special degrees, they would be equipped by the Lord Himself with the Holy Spirit. Bethsaida was a wicked place Matthew 11<sup>21</sup>, yet even in that wicked place there those the Lord wanted to save. Who knows whether there are those near us that the Lord would have in His kingdom.

**Follow me** is the same call sounding out in this wicked nation; me is not John the Baptist, or John the Evangelist, they directed all to the Lord Jesus Christ and He said **Follow Me**.

**45, Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.** Nathanael is thought to be Bartholomew for these reasons

Matthew, Mark and Luke mention Bartholomew but say nothing of Nathanael; and John, who writes of Nathanael, does not mention Bartholomew.

No mention is made of Bartholomew's calling, unless his and Nathanael's are the same.

The name Bartholomew is not a proper name; it signifies the son of Ptolemy; and Nathanael is therefore his given name.

The Apostle John includes Nathanael with the apostles, when he says that Peter and Thomas, the two sons of Zebedee, Nathanael, and two other disciples, being gone a fishing, Jesus showed himself to them, John 21<sup>2-4</sup>.

Our family name and status and the name we go by in society or business is not relevant in the sight of the Lord.

All true Christians are led by one Spirit, cleansed by the same Blood, serve the one Lord, rely on one Saviour, believe the truth as declared in the Bible, and walk by one general rule. We are not all converted in the same manner, we do not all share the same experiences. In the conversion of a sinner the Holy Spirit is sovereign; He calls every one severally as He will.

Christ is the single and total substance of the Old Testament; not always clear but the truth is revealed by the Holy Spirit to all who sincerely desire to know Him. The earliest promises in the Law and the Prophets pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ. The days of Adam, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob recorded by Moses direct our attention to the Lord Jesus Christ. To the incarnate Son every sacrifice determined at Mount Sinai pointed. Of Christ every high priest was a type, barring their failings, and every part of the tabernacle was typical. The Lord Jesus Christ was the prophet like unto Moses, whom the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob promised to send, and the King of the house of David, great David's greater Son. Jesus was the Son of the virgin, and the Lamb of God foretold by Isaiah; the righteous Branch mentioned by Jeremiah; the true Shepherd foreseen by Ezekiel; the Messenger of the Covenant promised by Malachi; and the Messiah, who according to Daniel, was to be *cut off, though not for Himself*. The further we read in the Old Testament, the clearer we find the testimony about Christ. The light which the inspired writers enjoyed before the Incarnation was at best a glimmer compared to that of the Gospel. But the coming Person they all saw afar off, and on whom they all fixed their eyes, was one and the same, the Christ of God. The Holy Spirit in the writers of the Old Testament testified of Christ. 1 Peter 1<sup>11</sup>.

**Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph** was an easy mistake for Philip to make; it was generally supposed that Jesus was the brother to all the other children in the family. Jesus was not the child of natural generation; Joseph was not His natural father. It is important for all new believers to search the scriptures, seeking to understand the wonderful works of God, so as to present a true record of the Saviour when testifying to His saving and keeping power. Jesus was a Man born of God without a natural father; we who testify to Jesus as Lord are born into the same family and know God as our Father.

**46, And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.** Nathanael's question seems to imply, that Bethlehem was to be the birth-place of the Messiah.

Nathanael was more conversant with the Law and understood what the chief priests and scribes had determined concerning the Messiah, Matthew 2<sup>4-6</sup>, hence the question. If this speculation is not correct know that Nazareth, at this time, was so corrupt that no good could be expected from any of those who dwelt there, and the wickedness of the town had become proverbial.

Many of the largest cities have their suburbs or centres of wickedness, places where it is derogatory to suggest someone came from there. It may be the most evil place that you know yet even there the Lord can speak His word of salvation, comfort and love.

**Come and see.** The character of Nazareth was proverbially bad. To be a Galilean or a Nazarene was an expression of contempt, John 7<sup>52</sup>. Nazareth was a small town, situated in Galilee, west of Capernaum, and not far from Cana. Nathanael asked whether it was possible that the Messiah should come from a place proverbially wicked. This was a judgement by prejudice not by examining evidence.

Many allow prejudice against religion, accepted from parents or peers to fill their minds and then announce the views without examining the evidence.

Every child of God is authorized of God and qualified by God for His work; making the Lord Jesus Christ known.

**Come and see** was the best way to answer Nathanael. Philip did not sit down to reason with him, to argue or speculate about the possibility that a good thing could come from Nazareth; Philip asked Nathanael to go see the Lord Jesus, to hear Him converse, to lay aside his prejudice, and to judge from a personal inquiry.

We should beseech sinners to lay aside their prejudices against Christianity, and to see for themselves, from the Word of God and the personal experience of other Christians the reality and blessings of a life of faith, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**47, Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!** Jesus saw into the heart and mind of the man coming to Him, He saw the character and desires of Nathanael. Jesus saw one who was true to the teachings of the Law, an Israelite, not only by birth, but one worthy of the name, living according to the faith he possessed and professed. **Nathanael** was one who possessed the spirit, the devotion and the integrity of a man who is really a Jew, one who feared God and obeyed the Law not deviating from the truth at the whims or varying doctrines of man. **For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.** Romans 2<sup>28, 29</sup>.

In this current age and among people who are concerned for various reasons, Jews and Israelites are confused. A correct understanding is that Israelite is nationality and Jew is religion.

The Lord Jesus Christ saw into the heart of Nathanael; he saw an Israelite who followed the Law sincerely, not a Pharisee, or religious person doing the right thing and attending the synagogue.

When the Lord looks into my heart what kind of person does He see?

**48, Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.** Christ saw Nathanael, and read his heart, before he came to Him. The Lord Jesus Christ sees and reads each of our hearts and speaks directly to our hearts. He sees the religious person and the seeker; He knows the genuine and the false discerning between the self-seeker and the one desirous of portraying His supremacy. Nothing is hid from His all-seeing eye; no hypocrisy can deceive Him; the Lord is Omnipotent.

Nathanael was not at his point of time acquainted with the Christ as being the Son of God, he could not conceive that Jesus could know what was in his heart, therefore asks how Jesus could acquire this knowledge of him, or who had given to Jesus that character of him. God knows all hearts, the good and the bad; it should be fearsome for the deceitful, the hypocrite, and the unsaved that their present state and their eternal destiny are known to God.

**Before Philip called thee, I saw thee.** Jesus tells Nathanael that he knew him, and reveals to Nathanael His Omniscience. God knows all persons and all things; Christ proved He was God in this way on many occasions. The Lord Jesus Christ has knowledge of us before we have any knowledge of Him. The Lord saw Nathanael while he was in a quiet place, under the fig tree; Nathanael understood this as a private revelation to him of divinity.

When you were quiet and alone under the fig tree in your private place and thought that no eye could see you, I had my eye on you, and saw through the external situation into your heart. It is probable that Nathanael under the fig tree was having a time in prayer and devotion. Sitting under the fig tree suggests a quiet spirit, away from the turmoil, hustle and bustle of life. In this Nathanael was an Israelite indeed, like Jacob he had a personal time with the Lord.

**49, Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.** Nathanael came to a full assurance of faith in Jesus Christ; this was sure evidence that a Divine work had been wrought in Nathanael's soul. The eyes of his understanding were opened to behold the Divine glory of the Saviour. Immediately he confessed Him as **the Son of God**.

There are just seven who bear witness to Christ's Deity.

- 1, John the Baptist 1<sup>34</sup>;
- 2, Nathanael 1<sup>49</sup>;
- 3, Peter 6<sup>69</sup>;
- 4, the Lord Himself 10<sup>36</sup>;
- 5, Martha 11<sup>27</sup>;
- 6, Thomas 20<sup>28</sup>;
- 7, the writer of this Gospel 20<sup>31</sup>.

**Thou art the King of Israel**, the real descendant of David, who was to sit on that spiritual throne of which the throne of David was typical. Nathanael knew without any doubts what the priesthood, the Sanhedrin and the people had missed. This teaches us we can know the Christ of God without the intervention of man. Religions often obfuscate the truth, confusing religious practises with worship, using liturgies as required forms of service. Nathanael had come to knowledge of the truth without the intervention of man, the Rabbin had not taught him to believe what he learned 'under the fig tree' in his quiet times.

**50, Jesus answered and said unto him, because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these.** Nathanael had been deeply impressed by what he had just witnessed, this manifestation of Christ's omniscience. The Lord promises Nathanael should see greater things; He said as you have realised that I am the Christ of God on this simple proof that I saw you when you were out of my physical sight, your faith will rest on much more than this, for you shall see greater things, proofs of my eternal power and Godhead.

**51, And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.** The time should come when Nathanael should behold an open heaven, and the earth directly connected with it. He was see the dream and vision Jacob had pointed to; the ladder which linked earth to heaven was Christ Himself, and Nathanael with all believers, will see the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

### **John 2:1-11**

- 1. And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:**
- 2. And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.**
- 3. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.**
- 4. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.**
- 5. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.**
- 6. And there were set there six water pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.**
- 7. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.**
- 8. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.**
- 9. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew ;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,**
- 10. And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.**
- 11. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.**

**1. And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:** We have here the story of Christ's miraculous conversion of water into wine at a marriage in Cana of Galilee. There were some, the early disciples who were prepared to follow the Lord, before He performed any miracles. The Lord could have wrought miracles before, could have used His miraculous powers to attract many more followers; but miracles were the choice of the Saviour as seals of His doctrine, as proof of His deity.

**The third day**, maybe the third day after the Baptism of the Lord, the Lord Jesus came into Galilee. The keeps a record of events, each day of the Lord's public ministry something extraordinary was done or said. It was at Cana in Galilee, in the tribe of Asher Joshua 19<sup>28</sup> Christ began to work miracles. Word would soon come to the ears of the rabbis and politicians at Jerusalem of His doctrine and miracles.

**There was a marriage**, probably one or more of the wedding group were family members of Mary the mother of Jesus. Jesus and his disciples invited, which suggests she was there as one related or of the home. The Lord Jesus Christ and his mother and disciples were principal guests at this wedding feast. The mother of Jesus was there; no mention is made of Joseph, so it is suggested he had died before this. **Jesus was called**, and He came accepted the invitation, and feasted with the other guests.

Christ came in a different way from that of John Baptist, John came neither eating nor drinking, Matthew 11<sup>18-19</sup>. They that marry in the Lord 1Corinthians 7<sup>39</sup> may take His presence through all the years of the married life. The Lord Jesus Christ will only come when invited. He will not fail to respond to prayer.

Christ here sanctifies the marriage relationship, not the ceremonies adopted by the various Christian churches. Marriage was ordained by God in Eden and the Lord Jesus Christ set His seal of approval upon it.

This marriage feast was close to Christ's first public appearance after His baptism. By attending the Lord made it clear that marriage was a desirable state. Christ was invited to be there; the presence of the Lord is essential to a happy Christian marriage. Marriage is a public testimony to the agreement the couple have made and should be a promise of continuance in that state till death. The promises made in the wedding ceremonies today allow for all sorts of unscriptural situations between men and women.

**3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.** Mary's words seem to indicate she was unaware of His deity. From the conception Mary should have known that He was God manifest in the flesh, omniscient. The Lord knew that they had no wine. It may be Mary was seeking a favour by suggesting to Him what He ought to do under the circumstances.

**4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee?** The Lord Jesus Christ did not resent Mary suggesting He do something, but that she must allow Him to act in His own way and in His own time. Christ here showed that His time of parental obligation to Mary and Joseph was over, His public ministry had now commenced and she must not presume to dictate to Him.

Many have wondered why Christ addressed His mother as **Woman**. Scholars tell us that at the time our Lord used this word it would not sound harsh or rough. It was a designation commonly used for addressing females of all classes and relationships, and was sometimes employed with great reverence and affection. Proof of this is seen in the fact that while on the Cross Christ addressed Mary as **Woman**, saying, **Behold thy son** John 19<sup>26</sup> and also John 20<sup>13, 15</sup>. To have addressed Mary as *mother* would have called attention to *human* relationships; but calling her *woman* showed that Son of God was speaking to her. We may add it is significant that the two times Christ addressed His mother as woman are recorded in the Gospel of John which sets forth the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ would here teach us that Mary was only a *woman*. He said **Blessed among women** Luke 1<sup>28</sup> not **blessed above women**.

**4 Mine hour is not yet come** became the most solemn maxim of His life, marking the stages as He drew closer to His death. Seven references are made in this Gospel to that awful *hour*. This first John 2<sup>4</sup>.

2<sup>nd</sup> John 7<sup>30</sup> **Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.**

3<sup>rd</sup> John 8<sup>20</sup> **And no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.**

4<sup>th</sup> John 12<sup>23</sup> **And Jesus answered them, saying, the hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.**

5<sup>th</sup> John 12<sup>27</sup> **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.**

6<sup>th</sup> John 16<sup>32</sup> **Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now 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.**

7<sup>th</sup> John 17<sup>1</sup> **These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee.**

This **hour** was the hour of His *humiliation*. It was the **hour** of His *suffering*. That awful **hour** which He saw in the near future was the time when He would *be subject to man's will*. Until then, He was to be about His Father's business, seeking only to do as His Father willed.

The HOUR was not a limited time of sixty minutes; the word is used in the sense of a long period of time. Not just a moment, or a minute; a prolonged period of anguish and torment.

**5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do.** Mary meekly accepted the Lord's gentle rebuke, recognizing His right to act as and when He pleased; Mary left the matter entirely in His hands yet understood far more than we the import of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Her word to the servants showed an understanding of the Lord, and her place in the work of the Lord.

We are prone to dictate to God; we are guilty of telling God what He should do and when He should do it. This is another evidence self-will which still works in the believer and will work until recognised and help sought from the Lord to subdue it. Our duty is to commit our way unto the Lord and be subject to Him in what we say

what we do and where we go; waiting patiently on Him to supply our need in His own good time and His own way.

The Lord Jesus recognized in this request of Mary a call from His Father; we may be called in a way totally unexpected. It is our solemn duty to check all impressions, instructions and where possible motives to see what the Lord is asking of us. The Lord saw that providing the wedding-guests with wine would set Him apart in a way previously unknown. His turning the water into wine would alter the whole course of His life. He saw that when He performed this miracle, **and manifested forth His glory**, He would be the focus of every eye, and spoken about throughout all the land.

As the Lord Jesus Christ was omniscient He knew He would be followed about from place to place, thronged crowds seeking to witness a miracle or be blessed in some personal way. Religious leaders would be stirred up, be antagonistic, and He would be regarded as a public menace, as one trying to overthrow the established authorities. This stood out before Him as He was requested to supply the needed wine; He did not turn away from the challenge. He had come to do the will of His Father, no matter what the cost or consequences.

**6 - 8. And there were set there six water pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them; Fill the water pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare.** Christ was the One to work the miracle, yet the servants were the ones who seemed to do everything. *They* filled the water pots, *they* drew off the wine, and *they* bore it to the governor of the feast. There was no visible exhibition of Divine power in this miracle. Christ did not even command the water to become wine. What the guests saw was men at work, not God working a miracle through His Son. The means used were human; the result was seen to be Divine.

Bring this into your personal experience as I also do. We do not have a visible, tangible, substantial and corporeal understanding of God at work in our lives until we exercise faith. Faith is confirmed by the signs following, by the confirmation of one's spirit in communion with God.

This was Christ's first recorded miracle, in it He shows us that God is pleased to use us in performing the wonders of His grace. We learn from this that the Lord is pleased to use his redeemed people in bringing His joy to the lives of others. The Lord Jesus Christ used water; one of the symbols representing the written Word, Ephesians 5<sup>26</sup>. Christ's command to fill those six empty water pots of stone with water might have seemed meaningless for that was their normal use. The obedience of the servants made them workers together with God. It may appear to the worldly wise and to the intelligentsia of this world stupid to believe and quote a Book written about two thousand years ago. But it has pleased God **by the foolishness of preaching** to save them that believe. We have a duty to go forth with the Water of life, that the Lord may bring light and life to many around us.

Consider the teaching of this miracle. We see the condition of the natural man before he is born again: he is like an empty stone water pot, cold, lifeless, and useless. Those water pots were set apart **after the manner of the purifying of the Jews** they were designated for ceremonial cleansing; but they were empty. At the command of the Lord they were filled with water; water is one of the emblems of the written Word. It is the Word which God uses to bring life to dead souls. These water pots were **filled up to the brim**.

The water became wine, good wine, as will happen in the most mundane man when the Holy Spirit comes to dwell; he will be full of a new life.

**9. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew ;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom.** This statement illustrates an important principle. The Lord Jesus Christ was not in the forefront of this miracle; the servants took the pots to the place where they could be filled, the servants filled the water pots, the servants drew water out, the servants distributed to the thirsty. Learn from this that the Lord Jesus Christ wants to show forth His power through those who are His.

It was the servants, not the disciples, or Mary who were hearing and obeying the Lord on this occasion. What puzzled **the ruler of the feast** was no enigma to the **servants**. The Lord reveals Himself to those who are obedient to Him. The Lord of glory was here as one who serves; **He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister**".

**10. And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.** This illustrates the ways of men and the ways of God. The world gives its best first, and keeps the worst for the last; that is the way of the flesh and of Satan; first the pleasures of sin for a season and then the *wages* of sin. With God it is the very opposite; He brings us down to the depths of despair before He brings us into the promised inheritance. First it

is the Cross with all the shame and suffering, then the crown. For us who have faith, centred in the work of the Lord, the best wine is yet to be enjoyed.

**11. This beginning of miracles did Jesus.** The new birth is a miracle, and the beginning of miracles for the child of God. Regeneration is the initial work of grace, and the continuing work of grace. Jesus, in Cana of Galilee, **manifested forth His glory.** In bringing to life one that was dead in trespasses and sin the glory of our Lord and Saviour is manifested. **And His disciples believed on him.** A dead man cannot believe; the enlivening initial movement of the newly born soul is to turn to Christ. 2Thessalonians 2<sup>13</sup>: first, **sanctification of the Spirit**, which is the new birth, then **belief of the truth.**

It is significant that in this first recorded miracle which the Lord Jesus Christ performed in Cana of Galilee, the *wine*, which is the symbol of *His blood shed for the remission of sin*, should be prominent. The marriage-feast was the occasion of joy. The reminder which the Lord gave to the saints, the 'Remembrance meeting', the 'Lord's Supper', 'Holy Communion' is a joyous time; looking forward to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ had to be shed so that generations of believers could enjoy being in the presence of their risen Lord. The foundation of every blessing we enjoy is in the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He began His ministry by demonstrating new life was available even for that which has no life.

Those who humble themselves to take the servant position, which place themselves at Christ's disposal, are the ones who are in communion with Him and will show forth His glory.

**12. After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.** Capernaum was a large city for that time, well populated, about a day's journey from Cana. It is the city He often frequented and what little rest the Lord had was there. Matthew 9<sup>1</sup>. It was a place of gatherings and from there His fame and the talk of the first miracle spread.

**His mother, his brethren, and his disciples** went with Him the Lord Jesus Christ did not travel alone. All who travel with the Lord Jesus Christ will find rest at the journey's end; on the journey they will be blessed with good company and interesting discussions and teaching. The miles travelled will be over mountains and via deep valleys; the end of the journey promising delights incomprehensible to those who do not walk the same pathway. The Lord wants many to travel with Him to the same place; those who do so will know blessings unimaginable.

The Lord was not many days at Capernaum; it was a practical demonstration for the disciples of the Lord to see themselves as sojourners with a ministry not of necessity confined to one place.

It is good for those young in the faith to seek a quiet place to be with the Lord and to learn of Him; before going forth, even with great enthusiasm, into a public work.

**John 2:13. And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,**

**14. And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:**

**15. And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;**

**16. And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.**

**17. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.**

**18. Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?**

**19. Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**

**20. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?**

**21. But he spake of the temple of his body.**

**22. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.**

**23. ¶ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.**

**24. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,**

**25. And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.**

Notice that in each of the other Gospels the cleansing of the temple is placed at the close of our Lord's public ministry. Here, the Holy Spirit has placed Christ's cleansing of the temple close to the beginning of His public ministry. I believe what is recorded in Matthew 21<sup>12, 13</sup> is the same incident as here; that the Holy Spirit ignores the chronological order as not relevant to the point He desires to emphasise. Notice 4<sup>54</sup> of this Gospel, which tells us the second miracle Jesus performed when He came out of Judea into Galilee. There is no mention of



intervening times or places for that is not relevant to the truth being conveyed. The Apostle John sets forth the various miracles in the order best suited to the truth he conveys; **that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.** Philippians 2<sup>11</sup>.

The similarities between the two passages are so clear it seems most natural to regard them as one:

1, Matthew 21<sup>12</sup> places the cleansing of the temple at the beginning of the Passover week, and John tells us that **the Jews Passover** was at hand.

2, Matthew 21<sup>12</sup> mentions those that **sold and bought** being in the temple; John says the Lord found in the temple **those that sold oxen.**

3, Matthew 21<sup>12</sup> refers to the presence of those that **sold doves**; John 2<sup>16</sup> also mentions doves.

4, Matthew 21<sup>12</sup> informs us that Christ **overthrew the tables of the money-changers**; John 2<sup>15</sup> also tells us that Christ **overthrew the tables.**

5, Matthew 21<sup>12</sup> mentions that Christ **cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple**; John 2<sup>15</sup> tell us **He drove them all out of the temple.**

6, Matthew 21<sup>13</sup> records Christ saying, **My house shall be called a house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.** John 2<sup>16</sup> records the Lord as saying, **Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.**

7, Matthew 21<sup>23</sup> records how Christ spent the night in Bethany, and next morning He returned to Jerusalem, and was in the temple teaching, when the chief priests and elders of the people came to Him and said, **By what authority doest thou these things?** John 2<sup>18</sup> also records that after Christ had cleansed the temple, the Jews said to Him, **What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?**

**13. And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,** This was the reason why Jesus stayed a few days at Capernaum, He wished to be present at the celebration of the Passover feast at Jerusalem.

This was the first Passover after Christ's baptism. The second is mentioned, Luke 6<sup>1</sup>. The third, John 6<sup>4</sup> the fourth, which was when He was crucified, John 11<sup>55</sup> from which it appears the Lord Jesus continued His public ministry about three and a half years, this is in accord with the prophecy of Daniel 9<sup>27</sup>. Being baptized about the beginning of His thirtieth year, He was crucified near the middle of His thirty-third.

It is called the Jews' Passover, it was peculiar to them; since the establishment of the Church Christ is our Passover. In the early books of the Bible this feast is called the LORD's Passover; now the Nation of Israel have appropriated this feast and it is called the Jew's Passover. Christ kept the Passover at Jerusalem yearly, from twelve years old, in obedience to the Law; now He has started His public ministry. The feast of the Passover was imminent; all leaven must be removed from Israel's dwellings.

There in the temple, were cattle, cattle dealers and moneychangers, motivated by covetousness and practicing extortion. In Colossians 3<sup>5</sup> we read **covetousness which is idolatry.** The nation prided itself upon knowing and obeying one God. The Jews boasted that they were free from idolatry. Yet *idolatry*, covetousness, was the very thing the Son of God found in the House of God. In 1Corinthians 5<sup>10</sup>, covetousness, extortion, and idolatry are the three things mentioned under the symbol of *leaven*. This is the reason why the Holy Spirit has recorded this incident in this Gospel. These three things present a vivid picture of Judaism; a *blinded priesthood* John 1<sup>19-26</sup>; a *joyless nation*, no wine, John 2<sup>3</sup>; a *desecrated temple*, John 2<sup>16</sup>.

*Leaven in the temple of God*; sin in the Camp, evidently condoned and practiced by the priests and people of God. Leaven is consistently used to represent sin in the New Testament.

We must continually look out for the corrupting influences, **Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:** 1Corinthians 5<sup>7</sup>.

First purge out the old leaven, and then keep the feast. Christ's design in coming into the world was to set an example and to be the sacrifice that would deal with the curse of sin, leaven, for all who believe for all time and eternity. This He has taught us by purging the temple for the Church is the Temple of the living God. **Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.** 1Corinthians 5<sup>8</sup>.

In the parable of the wheat and the tares the Lord said to let them grow together till the harvest. The difference is in the evident disregard of the truth of God in the assembly of the saints by making money from the saints; using worldly things for self advancement; those who buy and sell for their own gain irrespective of the persons exploited by such ambitions. In the parable the tares, the tares represent persons, male or female, who appear to be Christians by their attendance at the gatherings of the saints, friendliness with the believers, joining in the activities yet have never bowed the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ. Only the Lord can see into the heart and He says to leave the judgement of these to Him. The Lord Jesus Christ also says in Matthew 7<sup>20</sup>. **Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.**

**Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.** Merchandise is a major part of the economy of any, every community. The Church is not a community nor was the Temple; the Church is the Body of Christ,

Ephesians 1<sup>23</sup> as the Temple was the dwelling place of God. The priests were motivated by covetousness to a marked degree, having lost sight of their holy calling. Many of the saints are deceived into thinking material blessings are the approval of God; also many prominent preachers and evangelists solicit financial support from their congregations; thereby making the House of God, the Church, a financial institution.

This incident shows us an aspect of the Lord's character which is virtually ignored today. We are continually told how the Lord Jesus is gentle and compassionate; He was, and still is. But He is much more. God is Light and holy as well as Love. God is intransigently, perfectly righteous and merciful as well as gracious. The Bible declares **it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God**, as all that deny Him will discover. Scripture speaks of the **wrath of the Lamb**, and here we have an illustration of this. The ungodly will flee from the Lord in the day of His wrath.

This incident is a rebuke relevant to the present-day desecration of the place where the saints are expected to gather together. Church buildings are no more than convenient meeting places. The anger of the Lord Jesus was stirred when He saw that His Father's House, the Temple, which was to be a **house of prayer**, was a place used for profit, commercial enterprises without any regard to the Holiness of the place. Does the Lord regard many of the buildings which have been erected and dedicated to Him as a place where He is honoured or welcomed? The activities which are now done in so many church buildings to raise funds are simply commercial activities of unbelievers making money, not having the faith to trust God. Such places are devoid of spirituality and strangers to the power of God.

**18. Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?** It was natural to ask by what authority the cleansing of the temple was done; the Jews had seen miracles in the life of Moses, and Elijah, and other prophets, so they demanded evidence that the Lord had the authority to cleanse the house of God.

**Seeing that thou doest**, rather by what authority do you do these things. Those questioning the Lord at this time had probably heard of the miracle of the water turned into wine and they wanted to see more personal evidence to show the Lord had the authority of a prophet. The miracles of the Lord were not done in secret places; those that heard wanted to see for themselves the signs of a prophet in their midst, demanding proof. We meet the same objections to faith in these days even though the changed lives of alcoholics, druggies, religious 'freaks', and even the worst of sinners, testify to the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ, telling of their personal deliverance from the bonds of sin.

This demand for a sign was evidence of their blindness, caused by the religious system they had developed, and gave proof of what the John the Baptist had said; **there standeth one among you whom ye know not** John 1<sup>26</sup>. The nation was judicially blinded, and Christ addresses them accordingly:

**19. Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,** John 2<sup>19</sup>. He spoke in language which was quite unintelligible to them; each word was known to them but the total meaning was hidden.

**20, 21. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But He spake of the temple of his body.** But why should the Lord express Himself in such an ambiguous way? Because **seeing they see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand"** Matthew 13<sup>13</sup>. In reality, the reply of the Lord to was to the point; His resurrection from among the dead would furnish the final proof that He was God manifest in flesh, and if God, then the One Who possessed the unequivocal right to cleanse the Temple which bore His name. When challenged as to His authority, Matthew tells us Jesus appealed to the witness of His forerunner, John the Baptist, a witness which was primarily for the Jews after the flesh. John mentions the appeal of the Lord Jesus Christ to His own resurrection, because this clearly demonstrated His Deity, and is of value for the whole household of faith for all future times.

The words of the Lord Jesus Christ on this occasion were not understood by any; nor indeed could they be comprehended except by the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart and mind.

We should take special notice of the time spent in the now unnecessary physical temples, tabernacles, church buildings, chapels and other edifices supposedly the dwelling place of God. Giving our time, energy and resources to understanding and knowing God is the expressed will of God for the redeemed. The Apostle Paul teaches, Colossians 1<sup>9</sup> **For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;**

The Jews were building the Temple for 46 years; the Lord has been building His 'temple', the Church, for over two thousand years. It must be nearing completion. The materials for the Temple were wood and stone and precious metals, the building blocks for the Church, the dwelling place of God since the Resurrection, are the redeemed. The Lord Jesus Christ promised to dwell in the believer and in so doing is in the midst of each congregation where He is known as the Singular Saviour of mankind.

**23. Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.**

**24. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,**

**25. And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.**

The Lord Jesus Christ at Jerusalem for the Passover preached and worked miracles. People believing on Him implied that He spoke the Word of God; and they saw the miracles He did. He was in Jerusalem; though His earthly family home was mostly in Galilee. He was in Jerusalem actively doing the will of His Father. At the feast days, the Passover, the Levites taught the people who gathered to know the Lord, 2Chronicles 30<sup>22</sup>; Christ took the opportunity of 'preaching' where the people were gathered; and the Lord Jesus Christ, though of the tribe of Judah continued faithfully in the ministry appointed to Him of His Father.

**Many believed in His name**, acknowledging Him a teacher sent by God, as Nicodemus did John 3<sup>2</sup>; some of those who looked for redemption believed Him to be the promised Messiah. **Jesus did not commit himself unto them** John 2:<sup>24</sup>. He did not trust himself to them. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is to commit ourselves to Him, to His guidance, His word. The Lord Jesus Christ will not fail to keep those who are redeemed by His Blood.

**He knew all men;** He alone searches the heart, and tries the reins. He knows who are sincere, and who are not, He knows those He can confide in and those He can trust. He knows those who are seeking financial gain and those who seek the praise of man. The Lord Jesus Christ knows our hearts, our cares, fears, worries, temptations, and desires.

Some of them who heard the Lord were false and would betray him if they had an opportunity; some were weak, and others had a fear of man; we would find this in most large congregations. The Lord Jesus Christ knows each person and the motives controlling the activities of each. The reason why He did not commit himself to them was because He knew them John 2:<sup>25</sup>; knew the evils and the weaknesses of all, knew the motives hidden from sight. This is a testimony to the omniscience of the Lord Jesus Christ. **He knew all men**, He knows us as He is the creator of all and He knows them who are His by faith in the provision He has made for the redemption of sinners.

**He needed not that any should testify of man.** His knowledge was not from information gathered or taught, but by His own divine nature. We know and make our judgement by what a person does and says; Christ knows what is in the heart, He knows our thoughts afar off. Hebrews 4<sup>12</sup>, **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. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.** John 1<sup>14</sup>.

**Should testify of man** should give to Him the character of any man however good or notable.

**He knew what was in man.** He had made all and given life to each man, John 1<sup>3</sup>; He was God, John 1<sup>1</sup>. There can be no more compelling evidence than this that Jesus was omniscient, and therefore divine. To search the heart is the prerogative, the right of God alone, Jeremiah 17<sup>10</sup>; and as Jesus knew what was in the hearts of these disciples; it is expressly stated that He knew what was in man, in all men; it follows that He must be equal with God. As He knows all, He is acquainted with the fickleness of man, the false professions of some, and the insincerity of others and the mind of hypocrites. He knows the desires of all His brethren.

The Lord Jesus Christ hears our cries, He shares our grief, sees our needs. He comforts us in our sorrows, is the basis of our eternal joy, and our present contentment; none can deceive Him.

### **John 3**

**1. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:**

**2. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.**

**3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**

**4. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?**

**5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**

**6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.**

**7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.**

**8. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.**

9. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?
10. Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?
11. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.
12. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?
13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.
14. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:
15. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.
16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.
18. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
19. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
20. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.
21. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.
22. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.
23. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.
24. For John was not yet cast into prison.
25. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.
26. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.
27. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.
28. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.
29. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.
30. He must increase, but I must decrease.
31. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.
32. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.
33. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.
34. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.
35. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.
36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Nicodemus was a **ruler of the Jews**, which most probably means that he was a member of the Sanhedrin. In this capacity he is a representative character and displays the spiritual condition of Judaism. He **came to Jesus by night**; he lacked spiritual discernment; he was dead in trespasses and sin, needing to be **born again**. The three mentions of Nicodemus in John's Gospel tell us of His night-time visit to the Lord; He represented the Sanhedrin, Israel's highest religious court. It was **night**; they were in the dark literally and spiritually. The people, like Nicodemus their representative in the Sanhedrin, were lacking in spiritual discernment, the meaning of the Word of God was foreign to them, and they had no understanding of the truth of the Word given to them by God. Like Nicodemus all the members of the Sanhedrin were destitute of spiritual understanding. Knowing the bible is not salvation, a 'Christian' religious leader is not saved by virtue of his occupation, teaching the narratives and tenets of the bible is not the way of salvation; we notice from this passage of the Word of God that even those high in the hierarchy of Judaism were not by their position redeemed.

Can we see in this a picture of the religious community we live in today? In Judaism we see a *blind* priesthood, not able to see God in their midst, John 1<sup>21, 26</sup>. In Judaism we have congregations without the *joy of the Lord*, simply religious repetition, John 2<sup>3</sup>; In Judaism we have a *desecrated* Temple, as today we see buildings set aside for the gatherings of the Lord's people now devoted to anything but the work of the Lord, John 2<sup>16</sup>. In this passage we have a *spiritually* dead Sanhedrim, and see the parallel to the Church of the present which has moved away from the divine to the secular in teaching and practice with a hierarchical structure leaving the Lord in the background.

As bad as things were in the nation of Israel there were some who looked for the Messiah, who expected and waited for Him. Such was Nicodemus. Nicodemus is twice mentioned after this as being kindly disposed to the Lord Jesus Christ; in the first instance in favour of the truth and defending the Lord against the misgivings of the Jews, 7<sup>50</sup>, and as one who assisted in preparing His body for burial, 19<sup>39</sup>. The design of John in writing this gospel was to show that Jesus was the Messiah. To do this he offers as evidence the testimony of one of the rulers of the Jews, who became convinced Jesus was more than mere man, and who continued believing until the death of Jesus.

**Rabbi**, Master, or Teacher, was a title of respect given to the religious leaders. **We know that thou art a teacher come from God**; all the members of the Sanhedrin, and all the rulers of the people, who have attended to the doctrine and miracles that we have seen and heard about know. **We** are all convinced of this, though **we** do not all agree to admit it openly.

It is possible, **we know** means it is generally acknowledged that you are a teacher come from God. **No man can do these miracles** if he is not sent by God with a special message. Nicodemus bases his conclusions as to where the Lord Jesus gets His power and authority on the evidence of the miracles. **No man can do what thou dost, unless 'the omnipotence of God is with him.**

The evidence we present to the men and women around us, those we see daily, is seen in our changed lives and attitudes, our speech and pursuits, our expressed desires and unselfish behaviour. By this they know there has been a fundamental change in our natures; not just a personal reformation but something much deeper; they see something they need to inquire into and will ask what the reason for the change is. 1Peter 3<sup>15</sup> **but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.**

Night-time it was, but Jesus readily received Nicodemus. One of the things which impress the writer as he reads the Gospels is the readiness of the Lord Jesus to receive all who come to Him, at any time of the day or night. He did not surround Himself with a bodyguard or personal attendants to insure His privacy and protect Him. He was easily reached; He was approachable and not as some notable preachers of this modern evangelistic age; many of whom are only approached through a third party and with an appointment.

**3. Verily, verily** is a positive emphasis on the certainty and the importance of what He was about to say. A fundamental and indispensable doctrine of the Christian faith is to be expressed by the Lord. Nicodemus acknowledged that He was a teacher come from God; so it is not surprising that Jesus should commence His reply with one of the fundamental truths of the Christian faith. Jesus declares to every man, woman and child, high or low, rich or poor, intellectual or ignorant the most humbling truth of the gospel. The first and most important truth of Christianity is there must be a change of heart and of life.

**Except a man be born again**; this phrase is designed to include all mankind. Of each and every man it is certain that unless he is **born again he cannot see the kingdom of God**. It includes men of every character and nation, moral and immoral, rich and poor, old and young, servants, masters and slaves, Jews and Gentiles. The Lord Jesus Christ tells Nicodemus that he must be born again. It was not sufficient to be born into the Hebrew nation, a Jew, or to acknowledge Him to be a teacher sent by God, the Messiah; it was necessary to experience in his own heart and soul that great change called being **born again**, regeneration.

The word translated here means also *born from above*; it is evident that Nicodemus thought the Lord was referring to natural birth else he would not have asked the question in verse 4. Our natural birth brings us into light, is the entrance into family life, is the introduction of a person into the realm of the senses, and what is also important, birth introduces us to a world of sin. To escape from the penalty of sin, a fundamental change is needful. This change, the beginning of this new life, is called the new birth, or regeneration; **born again**. It is in many respects like natural birth. It is the beginning of spiritual life. It introduces us to the light of the gospel. It is the moment when we begin to have a relationship with our spiritual parent, the moment when God reveals himself as our Father, and we are adopted into His family.

This doctrine was not unknown to the Jews, and was particularly predicted as a doctrine that would be taught in the times of the Messiah. Jeremiah 4<sup>4</sup>; 31<sup>33</sup>; Ezekiel 11<sup>19</sup>; 36<sup>25</sup> Psalm 51:12.

Jesus pointed out to Nicodemus that salvation was more than knowing a man was sent from God, even if that Man was the Son of God. Knowledge is not salvation but will, or can lead to salvation. The Son of God pointed out to this religious man that faith was important and that faith had to be in the Lord Jesus Christ. A man died to the physical world and was born into the Spiritual world when he believed that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of God, the Saviour sent from God.

**He cannot see the kingdom of God.** To see here means enjoy, or be a partaker of, or share in it; either in this world or in that which is to come, heaven. The kingdom which Jesus was about to set up was so pure and holy that every man who would experience this change could not partake of its blessings without a total change in nature; much more than a reformation of the life.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> verse the declaration by the Lord Jesus Christ is that without the New Birth no one can **enter** the Kingdom of God. This is declared by the Lord, there can be no possibility of entering heaven without experiencing the change which the Saviour referred to as being **born again**. The eye of faith enables each believer to see clearly heavenly things and keep us in touch with the Saviour, His precepts and His will. The supreme importance of the new birth is exhibited in a number of ways. It is significant that the new birth is the first subject of the Saviour's teaching in this Gospel narrative.

Without faith we cannot see the Kingdom of God; without faith in Lord Jesus Christ we cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

John 3 is the first discourse of Christ recorded by this apostle. It is how men are brought to life spiritually. A man cannot live before he is born; no man can live as God wills until he has been born again. The importance of the new birth is shown in the Lord's instruction placed at the beginning of His teachings in this Gospel. The Lord began by saying, **Verily, verily**, which means **truly, truly**. This expression is used by Christ only when He was about to mention something very important. Christ plainly implied the utmost importance of the **new birth** by insisting, announcing that **except a man is born again, he cannot 'see' the kingdom of God**, verse 3. Since the kingdom of God cannot be seen until a man is born again, the new birth is a matter of vital importance for every descendant of Adam.

There is some doubt as to exactly what is referred to here by **the kingdom of God**. This expression occurs nowhere else in John's Gospel, only here in verses 3 and 5. This Gospel teaches us of spiritual matters. Romans 14<sup>17</sup> sheds some light on the verse; **for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit**.

The kingdom of God could not be **seen** by Nicodemus except, unless, or until he was **born again**. Understand therefore that the **kingdom of God** in John 3 refers to the things of God, spiritual things, which are discerned and enjoyed by the regenerate; even while they are here upon earth. By faith we see the Kingdom of God; by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we enter the Kingdom of God.

**5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.** The Lord asserts that a man must be born of water and the Spirit, even the Holy Spirit; represented as water which cleanses, refreshes, and purifies the body. So the Holy Spirit purifies the soul, cleaning it and enabling the person to grasp spiritual truths to the saving of the soul.

Take Jesus Christ at His word, for you cannot in your present state enter into the kingdom of God. That which essentially belongs to the Christian dispensation and separates the Gentiles and the Jews from Christians is that the Lord Jesus Christ baptises all His followers with the Holy Spirit when they believe.

Though baptism by water, is or should be taught to every Jew and Gentile that enters into the Kingdom of God by faith, it is not necessary that by water and the Spirit as mentioned in this verse we should understand two different things. The Holy Spirit under the similitude of water; is as in Matthew 3<sup>3</sup>, the Holy Spirit and fire. There they do not mean two things, but one, the Holy Spirit under the similitude of fire affecting every part cleansing and purifying the whole.

**Born of water** is a word most often taken out of its context and used to support erroneous teaching. That baptism is in no wise essential to salvation, that it does not form one of the conditions which God requires the sinner to meet, is clear.

If baptism was necessary for salvation then no one was saved before the days of John the Baptist. Baptism is a doctrine of the New Testament. Many theologians talk of various rites as being the same as baptism and use the misrepresentations to support their argument. God has had but one way of salvation since Adam, and if baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to the forgiveness of sins, then all who died from Abel to the times of Christ are eternally lost. **By grace ye are saved.**

If baptism is necessary to salvation, then every believer who has died during this present dispensation is eternally lost, if they died without being baptized. The number of believers in various denominations is only known to God and it is unthinkable that God would not admit them into heaven because they are not baptised.

If baptism be necessary to salvation, then we must utterly ignore every passage in God's Word which teaches that salvation is by grace and not of works, that it is a free gift and not bought by anything the sinner does. If baptism be essential to salvation, it is remarkable that Jesus Christ Himself never baptized any one, John 4<sup>2</sup>, for **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners**, 1 Timothy 1<sup>15</sup>. If one cannot be redeemed without being baptised why did the Apostle Paul answer the Philippian jailer's question, **What must I do to be saved?** By saying, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.** The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians saying, **I thank God I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius** 1 Cor. 1<sup>14</sup>.

If the words of the Lord Jesus Christ **born of water** do not refer to being baptised in water, what do they signify? Before replying directly to this question, how the word **water** is used in other passages in this Gospel needs our careful consideration. To the woman at the well Christ said, **Whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life**" John 4<sup>14</sup>. This was not literal water; the word was used in a figurative way. In John 7<sup>37, 38</sup> we are told, **In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.** Here also the word "**water**" is not to be understood literally, but symbolically. These passages in John's Gospel are sufficient to warrant us in giving the word **water** in John 3<sup>5</sup> a figurative meaning.

Since then the Lord Jesus used the word "water" representatively in John 3<sup>5</sup>, to what was He referring? My considered opinion is that the Lord was saying **Water even the Spirit**. The Holy Spirit is God, working in the heart of all who come to God by faith and the regenerating influence in all who are Born Again.

By his first birth man enters this world a sinner, unaware of his state for some time but it is early manifest that he needs instruction in righteousness. Man is a stranger to his Creator; of the unregenerate it is said, **having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart**, Ephesians 4<sup>18</sup>. When Adam and Eve fell they were banished from Paradise, and their children were born outside of Paradise. Sin shuts man out from the presence of a holy God; when God, Jehovah, chose to live in the midst of the nation of Israel He had built a secluded place and none could enter without following His precise and exact commands. Jehovah decreed that once a year the High Priest could enter the most Holy Place with the blood of a sacrifice as atonement for the sins of the people. The precise instruction today is - **except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God.**

This is an abiding principle; Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. An unregenerate man is a stranger to the grace of God and would be miserable in heaven. Such a man could not spend eternity in the presence of God. The new birth is a vital necessity because the natural man is devoid of spiritual life. He is dead in trespasses and sins, as the Apostle Paul wrote; **And you hath he quickened, (made alive,) who were dead in trespasses and sins** Ephesians 2<sup>1</sup>; This is a solemn reality, the sinner is spiritually lifeless and needs quickening, he needs bringing from death unto life. Natural man is a member of the old creation, which is under the curse of God, and unless he is made a new creation in Christ, he will remain dead and spend eternity separated from God. The natural man needs life, Divine life; and as birth is the doorway to life in the flesh, spiritual life starts with being **born again**, and except he is **born again from above**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. This is the word of the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot be refuted, disproved or contested.

**9. Nicodemus answered and said unto Him, How can these things be?** Christ's explanation of the doctrine of the new birth did not make it clearer to Nicodemus. The natural man cannot understand the things of God. A corrupt nature makes a new birth necessary, and the Holy Spirit who makes it possible is mysterious to the natural man. Man may agree that Christ is a teacher sent from God and be unwilling to receive His teachings, especially when those teachings call for a commitment to a new life. Many profess to adhere to the doctrines of Christianity in general, yet will not submit to the Lord Jesus Christ, the dogmas of the Bible, or the new allegiance called for in submitting to the doctrines of the Faith.

The things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man. Because this doctrine of the new birth was unintelligible to Nicodemus he questions the truth of it. We are not asked to understand the gospel, for as the Apostle Paul said, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved**, Acts 16<sup>31</sup>.

Knowledge of salvation is by faith not by the acquisition of facts; the truth of the Gospel message is realised by believing faith.

**10. Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?** Have you taken upon yourself the role of a teacher; to guide the flock of God in the way of truth and yet know not that truth? Do you command proselytes to take part in various religious rites to become a member of the nation God has chosen? Are you totally ignorant of the cause, necessity, nature, and effect of the new birth?

How many “Christian” religious leaders are there following the teachings of man while disregarding the Word of God? Where the Word of God is not the final arbiter in any Christian discussion there is a possibility of grave error. It may seem surprising that Nicodemus, a man whose religious duty it was to teach the people should be a stranger to an important doctrine. When worldly-minded men are leaders in the church, when they seek an office for the sake of financial gain or reputation, it is sure they will be strangers to the plain truth of the Gospel. There are those in the ministry of the many “Christian churches” to whom the plainest doctrines of the gospel are obscure. No man can understand the Bible unless he is a humble believer in the Word of God and the easiest way, the only way to comprehend the truths of the Christian faith is to submit to the Gospel of the Grace of God and live for Him. Commitment calls for obedience to the written Word of God and adherence to the truths revealed in the Word.

**11. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.**

**12. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?** I and my disciples do not teach a religion which we do not understand. This is a continuing truth; all true Christians testify to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Jesus mildly reproves Nicodemus, who though a master in Israel, a teacher, did not understand the fundamental facts about the salvation the Lord Jesus Christ was talking of. He was ignorant of the nature of the new birth.

The Pharisees taught doctrines which they did not understand the spiritual meaning of or the practical application of. They taught much of the truth but they were ignorant of the spiritual application. Theirs was a religion of doing and not doing. In their teaching they could not direct the hearers to any personal experience of the truth in their lives. Every minister of the gospel ought to set before his hearers a relevant personal experience, to state that he knows the truth he is expressing for it is vital to his own walk with the Lord, something he knows is true and personally relevant.

**Ye receive not**, the Pharisees spoken to; we give evidence of the truth of the new religion; through signs and wonders, yet you reject it. **Our testimony** is backed with the evidence of miracles, lives changed and evidence of God working among you and **you receive not our testimony**. Men reject revelation though it is presented with irrefutable evidence, the most powerful evidence of lives changed for the better; of drug addicted felons suddenly and immediately relieved from the cravings upon believing the Gospel message; of good religious people knowing that the gift of God is not received as payment for self-righteousness.

**13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.**

**14. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:**

**15. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.**

**16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

**17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.**

**18. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

**19. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

**20. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.**

**21. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.**

**22. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.**

**23. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.**

**24. For John was not yet cast into prison.**

**25. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.**

**26. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.**

**27. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.**

**28. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.**



29. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

30. He must increase, but I must decrease.

31. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

32. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

33. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

34. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

35. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. 14. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can teach us heavenly things, for no man has ever bridged the gap between heaven and earth apart from Him. He only has ascended to Heaven as a man, since the Resurrection and now dwells in the Light. All spiritual light and understanding in man comes from Him who is the *light of the world*.

The Lord Jesus Christ is said to have **come down from heaven**, this must be understood as referring to His divine nature, of the manner of His conception. The conception and birth of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the earth was heavenly, divine in conception and execution, not earthly or of man, for He was conceived by the Holy Spirit; and a virgin brought forth her child as a result of this miracle. This verse and context declares the divinity of the Man, Christ Jesus.

What the Lord conveyed when He said, **No man hath ascended up to heaven** tells us the ascension of the Lord Jesus to glory is unique. The Apostle has not recorded for us of the entry of the Lord into the presence of His Father, though that was so, but of the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ after the resurrection. No man had, or ever will ascend into the presence of God as Jesus did. Of Enoch it is recorded that **he was translated** that he should not see death, Hebrews 11<sup>5</sup>. Of Elijah it is said that **he went up by a whirlwind** into heaven, 2 Kings 2<sup>11</sup>. Of the Church it is said that they shall be **caught up**, 1Thessalonians 4<sup>17</sup>, but only of the Lord Jesus Christ is it said that He **ascended**. An external power is applied to all but the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone has the power and ability to overcome death, and take full control over the destinies of sinful man and the redeemed.

This portion of the Word of God, John 3<sup>13</sup>, teaches us of the *omnipresence* of the Lord Jesus Christ; while He was on earth He was still at His Father's right hand in heaven, while speaking to Nicodemus on earth He was with the Father; further proof of His Deity. Jesus Christ was and is the only one who could make this claim; **no man has ascended up to heaven**, in truth.

This Gospel record gives us many examples of the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is remarkable to see that essential Deity is attributed to Him in this Gospel, the special object of which is to unveil His Divine perfections. His eternal nature is defined in John 1<sup>1</sup>. His Divine glory is mentioned in John 1<sup>14</sup>. His *omniscience* is seen in John 1<sup>48</sup> and again in John 2<sup>24, 25</sup> and many other places in this Gospel record reveal the Lord Jesus Christ is *omnipotent*. His matchless wisdom is seen in His answers on many occasions, and His unceasing and perfect love is confirmed in John 13:<sup>1</sup>. This Gospel is a testimony to the Son of Man being the Son of God, two complete and perfect natures in the one person.

Now we take note of the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ uses the Word of God to substantiate His claim as the Saviour of the lost and dying. He uses the scriptures to confirm and validate His claims and doctrines.

To illustrate the purpose of His death, the Lord refers to an incident in Israel's history of their wanderings in the wilderness recorded in Numbers 21<sup>4-9</sup>. Israel was murmuring against the Lord, and He sent fiery serpents among the people, which bit them so that many died and others were facing death from the serpents' poisonous bites. In their extremity they confessed they had sinned, and cried unto Moses, admitting they had sinned. He cried unto God, and the Lord instructed Moses to make a serpent of brass, (not **brass** as we know it for that is an alloy, **copper** is the true translation of the Hebrew word, a pure unalloyed material), fix it on a pole so it could be raised above the crowds for all to see. The bitten Israelites were instructed to look to this model of their tormentor in faith, and in so doing they should be healed. This was a remarkable foreshadowing of Christ being lifted up on the Cross in order that He might save all those who were dying, having sinned.

A **serpent's** bite portrayed the deadly and destructive power of sin, the origin of which is traced to the Serpent in the Garden of Eden, whose **seed** sinners are declared to be. The poison of the serpent's bite permeated the

entire system of its victim, and there was no deliverance, save that which God provided. The remedy which God provided was in the likeness of the serpent without the poison. In the type God provided there was the appearance of a serpent, not an actual serpent, so the One who is the sinners Saviour was sent **in the likeness of sinful flesh** Romans 8<sup>3</sup>, and God **made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him**, 2Corinthians 5<sup>21</sup>.

This manufactured serpent only foreshadowed Christ as He was **lifted up**; the lifting up pointed to the Cross. The *serpent* was a reminder, an emblem of the curse upon the sinner. It was through the agency of that old Serpent, the Devil that Adam and Eve were seduced. On the Cross the holy One of God, incarnate, was made a curse for us. In Galatians 3<sup>13</sup> we are told, **Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us**. A *serpent* was the only living thing among all creation which could accurately prefigure the crucified Saviour made a curse for all who are under the curse of sin. The curse was that all that sinned should die.

The Serpent in the Garden of Eden was beautiful to look upon, the talk of the Serpent was deceptive and beguiling, the purpose of the serpent was hidden from Adam and Eve. The way we are deceived by sin is the same in this 'enlightened' generation, sin in its various forms deceives to the point of making the world the flesh and the devil more enticing and desirable than fellowship with God.

In the Scripture types brass, (copper) is the emblem of Divine *judgment*. The *brazen* altar illustrates this truth, for on it sacrificial animals were slain, and upon it descended the consuming fire from heaven. Copper tells us of Christ's strength which was able to endure the awful judgment which fell upon Him, a Man; so bearing the wrath of God on behalf of all who look to Him in faith.

Being bitten by a deadly snake was the death sentence executed; **the wages of sin is death**. There was no escape from the poison working its way through the system of the bitten one. This is a clear picture of the certain destruction of the system of a man, depicting the destructive power and certainty of the corruption and death of a sinner. Sin, both large and small sins; whether in ignorance or deliberate bring the death sentence upon the sinner. The Israelites were instructed to look to the Serpent lifted up, just look, no other activity was called for, nor any ceremony or donation was needed; simply faith in the word of God as instructed by Moses; *look and live*.

For this purpose was the Lord Jesus Christ lifted up, that His followers, believers, might be saved. The offer of salvation is general, that whosoever believes in Him, without exception, might have all the blessings offered to those exercising faith in Him. Complete salvation, eternal life, peace with God. There is no promise of a peaceful life, *a bed of roses*, there may well be pain and persecution, accident and antagonism, but through all situations the Lord will be in control and will give His peace to the one who has trusted Him.

Eternal life given to the believer is the life of God imparted, making the life of the recipient everlasting. Eternal relating to God means without beginning and without end; this can never be applied truthfully to man. The life of God imparted to mortal man transforms the life in that man, which life had a beginning and has an appointed end; to a life which will no longer be subjected to death, a life which has no end; making the life in a believer everlasting. The Lord Jesus Christ came to save us by taking upon Himself the sin of the world, by bearing the punishment, the penalty of sin, death, so that we could live without the death penalty hanging over us. The start of life we experienced from our mother's womb had the death sentence passed on it; for we were as David says of himself, Psalm 51:<sup>5</sup> **Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me**. This is the record of a man who had an intimate knowledge of God; who can say they are without sin and therefore do not have an urgent need of salvation; the gift from God of eternal life.

**16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.** Such a love as that which induced God to give his only begotten son to die for the world of sinners is indescribable. The Apostle John does not attempt to do it. There is an infinite meaning in the particle, *so*, and we are left to wonder, and praise God. God giving His Son for the world of sinner's redemption is the great gospel revelation. The love of God the Father is the starting point for our new birth by the Spirit of God and our reconciliation, our redemption by the sacrifice of the Son of God.

The world of mankind was in a ruinous, condemned state, for all were sinners, condemned to death, utterly without power or means to avoid the penalty imposed by a righteous Judge. But God, through the workings of His grace and love, provided for man's redemption and salvation, by giving His Son to die in the place of sinful man.

The sacrifice of Jesus, the perfect man, was the only means by which the redemption of man could be affected, and it is sufficient to accomplish the planned purpose of God. It would have been inconsistent with the wisdom of God, to have appointed a sacrifice greater or lesser in merit than the situation warranted. Death was the penalty demanded by the Law, the penalty was exacted on an innocent victim.

Sin must be an indescribable evil, for it required no less a sacrifice, to make propitiation for it, than God manifested in the flesh. We are assured of God's love for us, for He has given His only begotten Son for us. God not only sent His Son into the world with power to settle all differences, to negotiate peace between God and man, but He gave Him up to suffer and die for us, as the one propitiating sacrifice. Jesus, a perfect sinless man died for imperfect sinners.

No man is saved through this sacrifice without obeying the command, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved**". The Lord Jesus Christ bore the sin of the world in His own body on the tree; so all can be saved; only those who believe the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ was for them personally are redeemed. He that believes, who credits what God has spoken concerning Christ, His sacrifice, can know they are right with God and be free from condemnation.

Those who believe receive a double benefit, they are freed from the curse of the Law- **the wages of sin is death**; and they are given life from God so they have **everlasting life**. These two benefits point to the state of man before and after salvation. He is guilty, and therefore due to be punished according to the Law; and he is spiritually unclean and therefore unfit to dwell in the presence of a Holy God. By grace the sinner is justified, the sin and the guilt of sin is removed, and the person is no longer committed to everlasting damnation, and by the work of grace the sinner is fitted for the Kingdom of God; sanctified.

God commends His love to the world of man, and man can see the depth and commitment of that love in that He sent His Son into the world to save man while man was rejecting Him and following his own lustful ways. The pious Jews expected God to send them a Messiah, but Christ tells them that He came in love to the whole world, Gentiles and Jews, 1John 2<sup>2</sup>. Though many perish without being saved from the penalty of sin that does not impinge on the love of God in sending His son to be the Saviour of the world; God giving His only begotten Son is a demonstration of His love to the whole world.

But there is more in the Cross of Christ than an exhibition of the righteousness of God; there is also a demonstration of His wondrous **love**. The Sacrifice of the Son of God was provided by Love. Christ died because God so loved men, and was determined to save them that obeyed Him by believing. The death of Christ was the ultimate demonstration of God's love. Propitiation was not the cause, but the effect, of God's love. **Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins** 1John 4<sup>9, 10</sup>. Only the love of God could be expressed in this way, pure unselfish love, love not seeking anything, totally self-sacrificing **LOVE**; pure sovereign divine **LOVE**.

The Love of God; only believers can appreciate it and then in a limited measure. It is a unique love displayed in a unique Saviour. The uniqueness of the Lord Jesus Christ is seen in His pre-existence; His Virgin Birth; His planned life; His person; Emanuel, God with us; the Christ; His Resurrection; His continuing Life; His promised return and His communing with all who live by the faith of **Him who love us and gave Himself for us**. He is unique; there never was one like Him, there is not one like Him and there will never will be another like Him; the Lord Jesus Christ is unique in His person and work of redemption.

In John 3<sup>16</sup> there are many facets about God's love. God **so** loved; it is not God loves, but He *loved*. We understand He loves us now that we are His children, but that He should have loved us before we became His children is beyond our ken. **God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us** Romans 5<sup>8</sup>. And **Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee** Jeremiah 31<sup>3</sup>.

The magnitude of His love for us is too vast to comprehend; we have words to use but they also are inadequate, God **so** loved. None can define or measure that little word **so**. There are dimensions to the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of His wondrous love, that none can say it begins here and ends there, is without measurements, the fifth dimension is infinite. The scope of God's love embraces the whole world; **God so loved the world**. It was not limited to the nation of Israel or to the Jews scattered abroad, it flowed out to Gentiles sinners also.

God gave the best; Love, real love, seeks the ultimate good of others, God's love seeks the good of all mankind, all peoples everywhere. Love unselfishly gives its best. God gave his only begotten Son. **God spared not His Son**, He freely delivered up Christ, even to the death of the Cross. The plan of God's love was that whosoever believes Jesus Christ is the provision God provided to deal with sin and sanctify the sinner **should not perish**. Many thousands died in the wilderness from the bites of the serpents; unfortunately many more will die without availing themselves of the salvation God has provided.

God so loved He gave his Son to die in the place of all who believe; God so loves He gives life to all who believe Jesus Christ is the sin bearer; the Father imparts of His life to the individual believer so their life will have no end; they have **everlasting life**. **Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us** 1John 3<sup>1</sup>.

A word of caution is due now; the world does not know the word LOVE as used in the New Testament. Christian love is described in the epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 13 and it does not allow for any attitude or action that will cause harm to another. What is called love by the world is so different from the concept of love the Apostle Paul describes. What man calls love is a selfish emotional, lusting desire as seen in the sin of Amnon recorded in 2Samuel 13, where the love he expresses turns to hate in minutes after indulging in sinful lust. The love of the Lord Jesus Christ, shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit has no room for emotions contrary to the teachings of the Word of God, nothing of self.

**17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.**

**18. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

**19. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

**20. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.**

**21. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.**

The nature and purpose of God's love is unselfish in its character for **love** does not seek a private or personal benefit; it always desires good for those to whom it is directed. When God sent His Son to this world it was not to **condemn the world**, as we might have expected. There were none righteous so there was no reason for God to have mercy or show grace; all had sinned so there was every reason why the world should have been condemned. All nations outside Israel were in an even worse condition than the Jews. Knowledge of the true and living God had been kept by the Jews to themselves; confined to a small nation leaving the Gentiles to idolatry and immorality, Romans 1<sup>18-32</sup>. But **we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world** 1John 4<sup>14</sup>. The word **might** in verse 17 and in the epistle to the Romans has no uncertainty in its meaning; it declares the purpose of God in the sending of His Son.

For the believer there is **no condemnation** Romans 8<sup>1</sup>, because Christ was condemned in the place of the sinner, the **chastisement of our peace was upon Him**. The unbeliever is condemned already because **he has not believed**.

The condemnation is that men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. The cause of man's unbelief is he loves the darkness, therefore hates the light. The darkness of living without the light of divine illumination can be dispelled by the light of the glorious gospel of Christ. Darkness is displayed by the enjoyment of living without a relationship with God; light is the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the soul and with light comes the sureness of sins forgiven and the blessedness of a close relationship with the Saviour. It is not only that man is in the dark, but that man loves the darkness; preferring ignorance, error, superstition to the light of truth and knowledge of God. The reason why they love darkness and hate light is because their deeds are evil; their deeds are shown up as evil when the light of the Word is shined on them; the illumination of the Son of God, the Word of God reveals all that is false.

Here is the final test, **every one that doeth** (practices) **evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light**, lest his deeds should be reproved. That is why men refuse to read the Scriptures, reject the Word preached and deny the preacher. On the contrary, **he that doeth truth** describing every believer, **cometh to the light**; comes again and again to the light of God's Word and into the presence of God in prayer, praise and adoration and enjoys the company of the believers when opportunity arises. We unite in fellowship to learn the mind of God, to be instructed in what is right, so we may cease doing the things which are displeasing to our Saviour.

There is no place for the Child of God to study what is wrong, to search out the errors and heresies of the cults; seeking the Truth and desiring a close walk with the Saviour will keep us free from error and give us the answer to all the errors we may be faced with.

**22. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.**

**23. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.**

**24. For John was not yet cast into prison.** After these things, after the Lord communed with Nicodemus He came into the land of Judea; for there was greater freedom to exercise and preach the truth. Outside of Jerusalem the people were less likely to argue points of religion the religious influence was lessened by

distance from Jerusalem. His preaching and miracles were not exactly welcomed among the more religious crowds; the formality of Judaism was accepted as the norm.

When Jesus came into the land of Judea his disciples came with him; these continued with Him. When we are determined to stay with the Lord Jesus Christ then He is content to abide with us. There **He tarried with them**; He spoke with them, He taught them and revealed some of His power in miraculous ways to them.

**And baptized**, it is not clear that Christ baptized any with water, but his disciples did, John 4<sup>2</sup>; and what they did is attributed to the Lord as John was a prophet sent from God. The work of the Lord done by Believers is Jesus Christ working in and through them.

**There was much water there**, not of necessity a large expanse of water, but certainly a depth of water to allow for immersion, there were many wanting to be baptized. Immersion is the meaning conveyed by the word Baptised; sprinkling has been the erroneous practise of some Christian groups and sects, and now also infants are sprinkled and the parents told the child is a Christian; sprinkling taking the place of immersion. This deception has, I am sure, seen many souls duped into a lost eternity while the religion has flourished and the coffers of the particular *sect* filled to overflowing.

John baptized in **Aenon near to Salim**, a place not readily identifiable, wherever it was is immaterial, for there was no command to baptise in Jordan. Baptism of believers is the command to obey, not to be limited to a time or a place. John chose a place where there was much water, as believers arrived there was no problem in finding a suitable place to immerse all who accepted his teaching. The meanings of the names of these places, like all others in the Gospels are significant. Aenon signifies *place of springs*, Salim means *peace*. These names reveal a contrast from the *wilderness of Judea* and *the region round about Jordan*, which convey the thought of drought and death. The place of drought and death was where God had called the forerunner of Christ to labour, and as John faithfully witnessed to the Lord Jesus it became to him a place where the blessing of God was realised.

It is noted that **John was not yet cast into prison**, John never stopped working of his own choice; he worked while he had the liberty to work. We read in the Old Testament that the work of the Lord requires haste; far greater urgency is there is to **be instant in season and out of season** while we have an opportunity to do the will of the Lord. Let none of us assume we can do the work of the Lord without the Lord working in us to engender dependence on Him, reliance on His Word, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

**25. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.**

**26. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.**

**27. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.**

**28. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.**

**29. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.**

**30. He must increase, but I must decrease.**

**31. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.**

**32. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.**

**33. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.**

**34. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.**

**35. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.**

**36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.**

**25. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.** In the economy being followed by the Rabbinate and relating to this question there was no custom or teaching about baptism, immersion in water. The questioners were concerned about a new thing; being baptised as a show of repentance. The whole nation was weened away from following the spirit of the Law to strict obedience to the letter of the Law. The legal washing of the priests or people was a cleansing of the flesh, not a demonstration of faith.

Christianity is going the same way, strictly adhering to the literal wording and commands of the Word of God rather than understanding and obeying the Truth of the Word.

What was the object of these Jews? Were they the same as in chapter 1<sup>19</sup>, seeking to make John envious? A favourite device of the devil is to provoke to jealousy, to make one servant of the Lord envious at the success of another. Those who seek the honour of men by adverse comments and devious actions would bring to nought the ministries of those preaching the Truth. Those who desire only the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ are proof against the attacks of the wicked one. The Apostle said to Timothy, **they that will live godly shall suffer persecution**; by living before the Lord in all honesty the pitfalls are avoided and the devices and attacks of the devil are finally brought to nought.

The question about purifying was related to ceremonial cleansing; the cleansing demanded by the Law which did not make a person neither fit for heaven nor meet an individual's need by making peace with God.

These ultra religious Jews would seek to make John envious. Why otherwise tell him of the evident success of Christ's ministry? A favourite device with the enemy of souls is to make one servant of the Lord envious at the success of another.

**John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.** John's reply was most appropriate. He owns God's sovereign will and he reminds his detractors of his previous repudiation of any pretensions to superiority other than his mission being 'one sent before the Lord'. John declared that he was not, neither was Israel the **Bride**; he went on to say he was pleased to see the result of his ministry in men turning to the Lord. John also insists that while Christ **must increase, he must decrease.**

**John answered and said, a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.** John was not surprised at the lack of spiritual perception in his religious leaders. The things of God cannot be discerned by man before he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Before a man can even receive spiritual truths they must first be **given him from heaven.** In the bestowing of spiritual gifts God is sovereign.

There are some brethren who do not see the truth of believer's baptism; there others who stumble over the subject of predestination, more who have departed from the simplicity of remembering the Lord in a simple way on a Sunday and countless thousands who are caught up in denominational divisions. What may be clear to some is not clear to others; in this we must not be puffed up. Denominational affiliation does not remove the responsibility of each believer to search the Scriptures to see whether these things are so, when they come across a controversy.

**He that hath the bride is the bridegroom.** The congregation of believers is the Bride the Lord Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom is he whom we now call the Best Man, the person whom the Greeks called the paranymph. There were two at each wedding one waited on the bride, the Bridesmaid, the other on the groom, the Groomsman. Their business was to serve them, to see that all things were in order for the wedding and to address any problems that may arise, and reconcile differences between husband and wife if there should be any. The couple were considered husband and wife from the betrothal. The Church as the bride is where any potential problem is, John considers himself as standing in this special relation to the Lord Jesus.

The explicit reference in this verse is to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Groom. Elsewhere in the New Testament the Church is the Bride. In the Revelation given to the Apostle John the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is mentioned and there the Church is the Bride, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamb and they who come through the Great Tribulation are the guests who rejoice with the Bride and Groom at the wedding.

With the sin question dealt with the believers meeting as a local church and all believers as the universal church are considered as the Bride. **For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ,** 2Corinthians 11<sup>2</sup> reveals how the Apostle Paul was enlightened as to the place of the Church in the eternal economy.

**30. He must increase, but I must decrease.** His authority and influence must grow and will grow as the Church grows; the building of the Church increases the fame of the Lord Jesus Christ. The doctrine of the Grace of God shall continue to spread till all the redeemed of the Lord are called into His presence.

**I must decrease,** the purpose of my ministry says John, is to point men to Christ. When that is done, my work is done, or my life is ended then my ministry is over. I am not here to form a party or sect of my own, nor to set up a religious order or be the leader of a group of my own. My ministry must cease when the Lord Jesus Christ is fully established as the Head of the Church.

My work as a Christian and your work as a Christian is the call attention to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour, as the Saviour who can and will save from the penalty of sin all that will come to Him in faith.

This humble nature of John is a good example for us; what I have achieved or accomplished is insignificant in the light of the Gospel or in the light of eternity. When we are willing to be regarded as nothing we can bring honour and glory to Christ our Saviour. The humility of the Baptist teaches us that it is sufficient for man to be used by God to point sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ. The work of making the Lord Jesus Christ known is

honourable, rewarding to the individual communicating the Word and the hearer listening for the voice of the Lord. Communicating the Gospel to the sinner and ministering to the saints the Word of God, leading one to salvation and the other to a closer walk with the Saviour.

**31. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.** John now testifies to the person, and the glory of Christ. John makes us aware of the contrast between the heavenly and the earthly, pointing out differences between Christ and himself. John was of the earth, and spoke of things which he knew, noting the special revelation he had of God manifest in the flesh. The Lord was from heaven, and is above all, superior to all that is of or from the earth; we mortals are made of the dust of the earth. We are limited by our finite understanding and physical shortcomings due to the effects of sin. Sin decreases the scope of and distorts our understanding and spiritual vision. Our vision is confined to the things of earth until and unless the Holy Spirit works in us. There were no limitations to the Lord Jesus, not physically or spiritually; He is the Son of God from heaven, perfect in humanity and divinity, omniscient.

**32. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth.** The testimony which Christ bore was perfect. The prophets received their message from the Holy Spirit, and they spoke of things which they had not seen. There are things which angels find mysterious and desire to look into, 1Peter 1:12. The Lord Jesus Christ knows all things, earthly and heavenly for He is the creator and sustainer of all things.

**32. And no man receiveth his testimony.** The Jews declared **all men come to Him**, 3<sup>26</sup>. They looked at the physical circumstances and from that point of view the Lord seemed to be reaching the hearts of the people. But John the Baptist looked at the true spiritual results and his conclusion was **no man receiveth his testimony**.

**No man receiveth his testimony** is not to be understood without qualification, for the next words declare,

**33 he that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.** It is evident that what John meant was that comparatively none received the testimony of Christ. Compared with the crowds which came to Him, compared with the nation of Israel as a whole, those who **received Christ's testimony** were so few in number as to be unrecognised.

Men do not receive the testimony of Jesus, He who came from heaven, 31; who testified of what He saw and heard 3. Natural man will not receive the testimony of Him who has the Holy Spirit without measure 34; He who is the Son of God revealed in the flesh, beloved of the Father, 35. Man is of the earth, earthly. Generally man has a heart only for what he sees, for things of the earth, things below. Others are too learned so the concept of faith in something or someone not seen is too difficult for them to believe. To believe anything so simple as the Gospel message is to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. But the basic reason for rejecting the testimony of Christ is that, **men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil** John 3:19.

**33. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.** This means the person who believes God has spoken to us in His Son agrees implicitly in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. This person has the assurance that God is true and by faith has received salvation's blessing. By faith in the Lord Jesus the believer has come to know God as a reality. Prior to the exercise of faith a personal God was not known. God says, He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and the believer finds that God is true by the witness of the Holy Spirit and the new life in Christ. **He that believeth on him is not condemned, 3<sup>18</sup>** and the believer knows it is so, for he now finds he has a nearness to God which was not so before faith was exercised. Those who receive Christ's testimony as true, no matter whether they can understand it or not; no matter whether their feelings agree with the Word or not, makes no difference; the Son of God has spoken, and that is enough. **Let God be true and every man a liar**, Romans 3<sup>4</sup>.

**34. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.** The Lord Jesus Christ was sent into this scene by God, and being God He spoke only the words of God. Testimony to this fact was borne to Him by the Father on the Mount of Transfiguration: **This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased: hear ye him**, Matthew 17<sup>5</sup>. And Christ was different from every other messenger sent by or from God; for He was not less than God. Others had the Holy Spirit but were limited by the flesh and the effect of sin; they knew a little of the Truth. To the Old Testament saints the Holy Spirit came upon them and departed when the specific task was done or when sin destroyed the communion. **God gave not the Spirit by measure unto Christ.**

The Lord Jesus knew the full truth of God, for the Lord Jesus Christ is the Truth. On Jesus the Holy Spirit abode, made His home, John 1<sup>32</sup>. The meaning of this phrase that Christ had the Spirit **without measure** agrees with Colossians 2<sup>9</sup>, **For in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.**

**Without measure applied in this dispensation** means not for a particular time, a certain people, a limited purpose, or partially, for all who have the Holy Spirit are permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

**35. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.** Christ is the Son beloved of the Father. He is the One into whose hand the Father has **given all things**.

**36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.** Salvation comes through believing, believing on the Son. Believing that the Son, Jesus, is the Saviour provided by God and is the Son of God. Those who believe on the Son have **everlasting life** as a present possession, though the full enjoyment of it is yet future.

**Believe** in the scriptures means more than intellectual assent; the scriptural word embraces the thoughts of trusting in, relying upon, having faith in, depending upon, putting ones confidence in and being sure of; enough to act confidently upon the Word as written without changing the meaning.

But those who **believe not the Son shall not see life**; can neither enter into it nor enjoy it. Eternal life is received by faith in the Son of God, exclusively. The **wrath of God abideth** on all who have not believed on the Son. The wrath of God rests upon each and every unbeliever even now, and if they believe not, continuing in unbelief it will abide on them for ever.

#### **John chapter 4**

**1. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,**

**2. (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)**

**3. He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.**

**4. And he must needs go through Samaria.**

**5. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.**

**6. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.**

**7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.**

**8. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)**

**9. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.**

**10. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.**

**11. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?**

**12. Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?**

**13. Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:**

**14. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.**

**15. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.**

**16. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.**

**17. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:**

**18. For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.**

**19. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.**

**20. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.**

**21. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.**

**22. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.**

**23. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.**

**24. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.**



25. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.
26. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.
27. And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?
28. The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,
29. Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?
30. Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.
31. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.
32. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.
33. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?
34. Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.
35. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.
36. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.
37. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.
38. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.
39. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.
40. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.
41. And many more believed because of his own word;
42. And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.
43. Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.
44. For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.
45. Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.
46. So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.
47. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.
48. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.
49. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.
50. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.
51. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.
52. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.
53. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.
54. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.

1-3. Jesus leaves for Galilee to avoid offending the Pharisees,

4-6. And passing through Samaria comes to Sychar, and rests at Jacob's well,

7-24. While his disciples went shopping a woman of Samaria comes to draw water, the Lord Jesus communes with her on the spiritual nature of His teachings, and the purity of true worship,

25-30. On telling her that He was the Messiah, she leaves her water jug, and goes to tell her friends and neighbours

31-38. Jesus talks with his disciples in her absence,

39-42; Many of the Samaritans believe on him from her testimony and His own word,

43-45. He stays two days with the Samaritans, and goes into Galilee,

46-54. He comes to Cana, and heals the son of a nobleman, the father believes on Him, as do his family.

**1. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,**

**2. (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)**

**3. He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.**

We read of Christ's coming into Judea after he had kept the feast at Jerusalem; and He left Judea four months before harvest, 4:<sup>35</sup>; so He stayed in Judea about six months.

The Lord made disciples, many embraced His doctrine and followed Him as a teacher come from God. His ministry was more successful than John's only in that He was divine and knew the hearts of all He spoke to. It is Christ's prerogative to make disciples, using various ones to direct souls to Him and then to form and fashion them by the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives. The Christian is made, not born naturally but is a product of the Holy Spirit of God by new birth.

The Lord Jesus Christ did as He instructed the Apostle Paul, not to focus on externals such as baptism; preaching the Word and thereby making the wisdom of God manifest in the salvation of the hearers, **which was the more excellent way**, 1Corinthians 1<sup>17</sup>.

If the Lord had baptized with water some would have boasted of that fact and may have sought a better position socially or later in the Church. The Lord Jesus reserved to Himself the baptism *of/with* the Holy Spirit, Acts 1:<sup>5</sup> and that remains the prerogative of the Lord. This verse teaches that baptism is neither the first nor the most important thing about Christianity. We frequently read of Christ preaching and praying, once of His institution of the Lord's Supper, but baptise He did not; teaching us by His example that baptism has nothing to do with salvation. Baptism is the start of a committed Christian life; the first step of a walk with the Lord.

When the Pharisees thought they had the control of the people again, John was by this time imprisoned, Jesus appears and He proved to be more troublesome to them than John had been. What upset them was that Christ made so many more disciples through teaching Love than they could through preaching the Law.

The success of the Gospel infuriates its enemies, and it is a good sign, and true to the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ that **they that will live godly shall suffer persecution**. Satan uses man to attack the Gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ uses saved man to proclaim the Gospel message by lifestyle and words in harmony.

The Lord Jesus Christ knew very well what was said about Him to the Pharisees. Pharisees prefer to work in the background, but none can hide their counsels from the Lord, Isaiah 29:<sup>15</sup>. He knew what was in the hearts and minds of the Pharisees, and how far it was from the truth. It is not likely that Jesus had baptised more than John, this argument was used as a stir by the Pharisees.

Jesus left Judea, not from fear of the Pharisees for He knew His time was not yet come. To escape their clutches and to thwart their plans Christ departed. The time fixed in the counsels of God, and the Old Testament prophecies were not yet ready for the Christ to be cut off. He had not finished His testimony, and therefore left the place and avoided the confrontation at this time.

We are not called to suffer needlessly, the scriptures do not teach we must not dodge or avoid harm when it is directed at us by those opposed to the Gospel of the Grace of God. When we can avoid trouble and conflict without sinning it is best to do so. The Lord Jesus moved away from the threat; not by a miracle, but in a manner we can copy without sinning.

He went into Galilee, where John the Baptist was working till being imprisoned by Herod. Galilee was under Herod's jurisdiction and John was in prison.

#### **John 4**

**4. And he must needs go through Samaria.**

**5. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.**

**6. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.**

**7. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.**

**8. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)**

**9. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.**

**10. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.**

**11. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?**

12. Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13. Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18. For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

19. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

21. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

25. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

26. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

27. And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

28. The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29. Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

30. Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

4. **And he must needs go through Samaria.** In going from Judea into Galilee, the most direct route lay through Samaria, a district of 'Palestine', (Palestine, means the land of the Philistines), bounded on the south by Judea, and on the north by Galilee, on the west by the Mediterranean Sea, and on the east by the river Jordan. Many of the strictest Jews took the long route around to avoid contact with the Samaritans. It was possible to go from Judea into Galilee by crossing the Jordan, and passing through Perea.

Samaria was a province allotted to Ephraim and the half tribe of Manasseh in the days of Joshua, Joshua 16 and 17. Jeroboam the son of Nebat introduced them to Gentile corruptions, and after the ten tribes had been carried away captives, and their inheritance left almost without inhabitant, the king of Assyria sent into their province a colony of various nations, 2 Kings 17:<sup>24</sup> who mingled with the few original inhabitants of the land and formed a religion called later the Samaritans. They **feared the Lord, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. They feared the Lord, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations who carried them away from thence... So these nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day,** 2 Kings 17:<sup>32, 33, 41</sup>.

At the time of the return of the remnant of Israel from the Babylonian captivity, the Samaritans offered to enter into an alliance with the Jews, Ezra 4:<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>, and on being refused they became enemies of the Jews and actively opposed the rebuilding of their Temple, Nehemiah 4 and 6.

The Samaritans received as Divine the five books of Moses, and probably some of the prophetic books; but they did not acknowledge the authenticity of the historical books written by the Jews. The consequence was that the Jews and Samaritans regarded each other with more malice and evil intent than they did the idolatrous nations around them.

This modern generation of Christians has many more divisions than the Jews ever did or have; the contempt one sect has for another and the evident rancour seen between the church groups is evidently not the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus did say His message would divide but the division was never intended to be between those who own the Lord Jesus Christ a Saviour.

The Lord Jesus Christ took on the nature of man; He did not in any degree or against any person take on the nature of sinful man. The Lord Jesus Christ presented Himself as a **certain Samaritan** in the parable, Luke 10<sup>33</sup>; He became the despised and hated One in order to procure our salvation.

**5. A city-called Sychar**, this city was anciently called Shechem, situated at the foot of Mount Gerizim, in the province of Samaria, on which the temple of the Samaritans was built. After the ruin of Samaria by Salmanezer, Sychar, or Shechem, became the capital of the Samaritans. It was about 16 kilometres from Shiloh, 65 from Jerusalem, and 63 from Jericho. It probably got the name of Sychar, which signifies drunken, from the drunkenness of its inhabitants. This place is remarkable in the Scriptures as being where Abram first stopped on his coming from Haran to Canaan. Where God first appeared to Abram and promised to give the land to his seed and the place where Abram first built an altar to the Lord, and called upon his name, Genesis 12<sup>7</sup>. The modern name of this city is Neapolis, Greek or Naplouse, Arabic.

**Jacob's well was there.** It is not mentioned in the Old Testament; the tradition is that it was Jacob's well and Jesus being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well. How truly human was the Lord Jesus. He was in all points like unto His brethren, so He did not avoid the legitimate weakness of the flesh such as fatigue. He can fully sympathise with the labourer; in every field of work both manual and intellectual, who is stressed out with the work he is engaged in. To the Saviour, a long walk brought weariness, and weariness needed rest, and to rest He **sat thus** on the well. The disciples continued on into the village to buy food.

The Lord Jesus had work to do and was wearied in a way the disciples had no experience of. Though Divine and omniscient He was truly a man upon earth. This mystery of His person we are asked to believe; not understand or comprehend, just believe. The Christian believes Jesus is Perfect God, and Perfect Man.

Now there are some conditions pertaining to humanity in general and there are others connected only with fallen, sinful humanity, such as sickness, disease, and even death. The Son of God was not subject to any condition brought on by sin, though a man. As a man He was able to die, and willingly gave up His life for the Church. To sickness and ills the Lord Jesus Christ was not, and could not have been subject. On the other hand from conditions of humanity as hunger, thirst and tiredness He was not exempt, nor did Jesus avoid such conditions. In the wilderness He was hungry; on the Cross He was thirsty; at the well He was weary.

Interestingly the Apostle Paul tells us in Galatians 6<sup>9</sup>, **and let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.** And 2Thessalonians 3<sup>13</sup> **But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.** He, by whom the worlds were made, was sitting a weary man by Jacob's well, and there for a while He was alone.

**Jesus therefore being wearied;** this phrase makes clear the reality of Christ's humanity. He was truly Man and as truly God. This is incomprehensible to man in his natural state, and is vital to salvation; the belief man has in the Lord Jesus Christ is as a Man He suffered and died and as God He has power over life and death. Understanding and explanation are not needed for faith; at the same time we must not lose sight of the reality of His humanity. The Lord Jesus was perfect Man: He ate and drank, laboured and slept, prayed and wept. And, precious thought, the Saviour knew what it was to be **weary**, not weary of well doing, but weary in well doing. Jesus the perfect man, God manifest in the flesh displays true human nature in that He is weary in the flesh and divinity in His intimate knowledge of this woman's lifestyle and associates.

**Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well.** It is important to note the place where each incident occurs. The meeting between the Saviour and this Samaritan woman of dubious character occurred at Sychar which means *purchased* and as He revealed to her the need of the water of life, He **sat on the well**. The well depicted the Lord as the source, and the water from the well was the emblem of salvation that is to be found in Him. Authority for this understanding is Isaiah 12<sup>3</sup>, **Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells;** (Hebrew the well of *salvation*.) The *well* of the Old Testament Scriptures foreshadowed Christ and what is to be found in Him.

The first time the **well** is mentioned in Scripture, is Genesis 16:<sup>6, 7, 13, 14</sup>. **But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleases thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face. And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness... And she called the name of the Lord which spake unto her, Thou God seest me... for she said, Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me? Wherefore the well was called, the well of him that liveth and seeth me.** The *well*, the **fountain of water** of verse 7 is the *well* in 14; it was the place where the angel of the Lord found this poor outcast, Hagar. This *well* was in the wilderness, a suitable description of this world. The *well* was the place where God was revealed to Hagar, **the well of him that liveth and seeth me.** The Lord Jesus Christ is the revelation of God and reveals God to man; **He that hath seen me, Jesus said hath seen the Father,** John 14<sup>9</sup>.

**6. Now Jacob's well was there.** There are three things in connection with this particular **well** that we need to consider. The well was purchased by Jacob, it was in the field. **And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of**

**Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-Aram; and pitched his tent before the city. And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money** Genesis 33<sup>18, 19</sup>. The word Sychar in John 4<sup>6</sup> is *purchased*. This *gift* costs us nothing, because it cost the Lord Jesus Christ everything.

The parcel of ground where this well was digged was afterwards given to Joseph. Genesis 48:<sup>21, 22</sup> **And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.** This is the same parcel of ground referred to in Genesis 33. This became a part of Joseph's birthright, for said Jacob; **I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren.**

Christ the second Man, the last Adam takes the inheritance which the first man forfeited and lost through sin. Putting these three together, we have the well purchased, possessed, and real and lasting pleasure found when drinking from this well. We who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation are purchased by the Lord with the price of His shed blood; we are His property and He dwells within His purchased possession; and what is more His delight, His joy is in His People, His property, the Church.

**7. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.** Here is a conversation starter we could learn a lot from. It is evident the Lord Jesus Christ knew the kind of woman this was but He was not deterred. The woman was at the well at midday to avoid the 'morning rush' and the 'evening crowds', trying to remain anonymous. This woman is observant, she sees a Jew without the means to draw water from the well. This woman knows the customs prevalent at the time related to the Samaritans and the Jews, the separation through different beliefs and customs. Jesus cuts through all the objections with the simple request **give me to drink.**

The disciples have left the Lord alone at the well for the stomach has a loud voice, making a lot of noise to gain sustenance, no pun intended. The disciples are conscious of their physical needs and those of the Lord. No special preparations are needed to meet the requirements of the disciples or their Lord, common fare is sufficient so they are away to buy the basic needs.

**9. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.** There is clearly an obvious distinction between the Jews and the Samaritans. I would suggest there should be a clear distinction between a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and an unbeliever, a difference the unsaved may readily observe. The difference may be seen in the places the believer will not attend, the words he will not use, the actions he will not perform and the clothing he will not copy or wear. On the positive side the man who trusts the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour will do his utmost to not be the cause of unfair or unjust criticisms that might harm the testimony or turn someone away from following the Lord.

It is likely that the Lord Jesus spoke the Galilean dialect, by which a Jew of that district might easily be known as was Peter, Mark 14<sup>70</sup>.

**No dealings** is understood to mean, the Jews will be under no obligation to the Samaritans; will borrow nothing from them; will not drink out of the same cup or draw water from the same well. The Samaritans will not sit down to meals with them, nor eat out of the same cooking pot; they would have no religious or business dealings with them. The Jews cursed the Samaritans and believed them to be accursed. The best the Jews thought concerning the Samaritans was that they might have no part in the resurrection.

In fact the Samaritans did not believe there would be a specific or general resurrection of the dead.

**10. If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.** How can someone steeped in religion from infancy know anything of the grace of God and salvation; the statement of the Lord seems on the surface to be out of order. **If you knew** is not a criticism, the observation is to bring this woman to a certain point in her experience, to make her realise religion has not been effective in giving her peace in her soul. Religion cannot give power over the lusts of the flesh; rather it gives license to indulge with excuses to condone failure to meet the standards God requires of His people. The most atrocious crimes have been committed in the name of religion and religious orders being the most ungodly, unchristian in perpetrating those atrocities.

The various religions of all countries do not give peace to the soul. One may find peace in the family and society, a practical peace without physical strife or bodily harm. Religions, all of them, can offer peace on this earth at best. The *water of life* offered to the Samaritan woman could bring peace, eternal life starting immediately, life to the spirit of the person; which life had been forfeited through sin. Spiritual life is experienced as one communes with God personally, the Water of Life is a personal experience of the Grace of God following the admission of guilt and the request for forgiveness on the basis of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Living water** comes only from the source of life. A gift is any thing that is given, for which nothing is to be returned; a free gift is that which is given though no request has been made. Such a gift was Jesus Christ to the world, John 3<sup>16</sup>; and by Him we receive the Holy Spirit, which all those who believe on His name were to receive. Christ was not sought for or desired except by a few in Israel, God moved by His own mercy and grace freely gave His Son. Through this great gift of the Holy Spirit all other blessings which are necessary to the salvation of a sinner and the new life of the believer are bestowed. As water quenches the thirst, refreshes and invigorates the body, as water washes and cleanses dirty things; as the rain makes the earth fruitful, so the Holy Spirit will reveal to those He indwells the dross and defilement and show how the life may be purified and become fruitful. The Spirit of God purifies from spiritual defilement so He is called the Holy Spirit; He reveals to the sinner all that is displeasing to God and He makes those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ fruitful in every good word and work.

**Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with.** These words illustrate another principle that stands between a sinner and salvation. The woman's mind was centred on how thirst could be permanently quenched rather than the result. She was occupied with how to get water from the well without a bucket rather than with the implicit truth related in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many are far more concerned with their own efforts than with the Saviour Himself and His promise to save all that come unto Him in faith. Many a preacher and evangelist put emphasis on the results, preaching prosperity and material blessing rather than peace with God. The Devil will get the sinner occupied with their own material needs to the exclusion of simple trust in the Lord, anything appearing to be legitimate so long as he can keep the sinner from looking to Christ alone.

Frequently we come across the situation where we assume there is a need for something or some one to precede the blessing God has planned for His people or an individual. We know intellectually that there is no limit to God working. We see this woman was limiting Christ to the use of means engineered by man. She supposed the Lord could not provide the **living water** unless He had something to draw with, to let down into the well. We must not limit God to a time or place, to a person or message; God can work as and when He pleases with whatever means He thinks fit for the occasion. We don't need a Revival Meeting, special teaching on evangelism or contrived situations to bring great numbers to hear. When it pleases God He acts independently of all the arrangements of man, not needing big auditoriums or large congregations; God needs only His Word, spoken, in tract form, or electronic media; it is the Word of God that brings life. When God created the worlds came into being at the command of His voice; He speaks and it is done.

**11. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?** She continues to raise objections, no sooner had the Lord answered one than she raises another. The Lord had replied to her how? by telling her of the **gift of God**, the living water. Now she asks where can I get this living water. She knew nothing of the Source of **living water**; her assumption was that the water was from an earthly source within the well dug by Jacob.

**The well is deep**; there is a profound meaning in these words. The well is deep, deeper far than man can dig to, or with all the modern machinery find or exploit. From where then can modern man obtain the **living water**? How can this generation gain **eternal life**? By keeping the Law? No, **for by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified**, Romans 3<sup>20</sup>. Is it by being good in the eyes of society? The bible teaches that **in my flesh dwells no good thing**, Romans 7<sup>18</sup>. The **water of life** is a gift, God's free gift in Christ to all who believe; **the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord**, Romans 6<sup>23</sup>. The Saviour had to descend into death before the life-giving Water could be made available to sinners.

**12. Art thou greater than our father Jacob** whose fame continues today, hundreds of years after his demise? We are his posterity; his line continues these hundreds of years later; can you better that? Jacob drank from this well and his children and livestock! The Lord answers this questioning indirectly.

The fountain of water the Lord Jesus Christ spoke of was flowing before the foundation of the world. The Water of Life Jesus referred to has no earthly source; many drank from it long before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, and even before Jacob digged the well mentioned. The water from Jacob's well at Sychar was used daily by the local residents and travellers; an essential source of water for the needs of the community. Even this source of physical satisfaction was not able to satisfy the soul or meet the deep needs of the sinner.

Most of us living in this modern world, not in the third world, do not know what it is to have to draw water from a well for the daily needs, cooking and cleansing and drinking. The **thirst** of man's soul is a spiritual one, and that is why no material source can slake it. As the woman at the well did not know she had a spiritual need so it is with the majority in all walks of life. The pursuit of material things, prestige, pleasures and acceptance in our social sphere and the broader community has robbed us of the importance of preparing for eternity.

**15. Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.** Something in the presence of the Lord Jesus causes the woman to be respectful. It is so that the disrespect shown to authority in this age is

reflected in the church and the frivolous and loud nature of our gatherings in not an inducement to worship. This woman had an attitude we who claim to be Christian would do well to copy. In the presence of the Lord privately and publically reverence is required; recognition we are in a holy place, a place where God is pleased to meet with His people. The earthly place is not significant but the mind set and the heart is of the utmost importance; holy and reverend is His name.

This woman had no idea of the significance of her request; the Lord did know her and the need she had to be free from the power of sin. So how does the Lord Jesus respond to the request of this seeking soul?

**16. Go, call thy husband, and come hither.** The Lord addresses the immediate spiritual need of the woman by causing her to look at her own life and make a true assessment of the situation. This woman was a Samaritan, taught the doctrines of that sect, an adulteress, and currently lived with one that was not her husband. She had had five husbands or lived with five men as a woman lives with a man who is her spouse.

*Notice* the legalities of a formal ceremony are not required to make a religiously lawful marriage, though we cannot rule out the possibility of that being the case with this woman. Such is the corrupt nature of man and the equally corrupt society that lust has free rein if not restrained by grace.

The Lord Jesus deals very gently with the woman; He does not call her a prostitute, nor chastise her for living with a man that was not legally her husband. The Lord reveals His deity in a subtle but obvious way; giving her to understand he knows the sinful life she lives.

*Notice* the Lord revealed to the woman her sinfulness privately, while His disciples were away, and there was no other to witness the unfolding of the degradation of this woman.

Private sins do not warrant public rebuke. It is sufficient for the sinner to admit the sin and turn in repentance to the Lord. In reproofing sin elders and church leaders need take great care not to divide the flock; reproof must be ministered with grace to the sinner. The Lord's gentle reproof of this sinner instructs us that sin is to be reproofed, but the sinner is to be left with his or her character repaired not irrevocably damaged. Nor must the community be divided or be led to take sides.

Specific identification of the sin is effective in making the sinner aware of the awfulness of falling short of the standard God has set. Christ dealt with this woman gently, without confrontation, as He opens her mind to her particular sin. The sin which the Lord Jesus Christ brings home to the conscience of this woman is the sin of social uncleanness, adultery, the man she lived with was not her husband.

This sin is directly opposed to sanctification and holiness; it works in the mind long before it takes effect in the body. All manner of excuses are used to condone this sin, all equally unacceptable. Man has based marriage on a physical attraction and lost the true spiritual significance of the union.

I am of the opinion that the scriptures allow divorce in certain cases but do not give permission to marry another while the previous partner is still living. Intimate relationships with another within or without the lawful agreement of marriage are contrary to the teachings of the Word of God. The example of the Lord Jesus Christ, with one Bride, the Church in a union that is blessed beyond the imagination of man, continuing beyond the concept of time as reckoned by man is the example we as the Church of God have. Marriage between man and woman is till the death of the man or woman destroys the partnership; death cannot separate between the Son of God and His Bride, the Church or break the union. The union of Christ and the Church was not forged in time nor is it confined to time as we know it. The marriage of a man and a woman is an earthly picture of a heavenly, a spiritual reality; the truth of this is lost when man is unfaithful to his partner and when either partner looks outside the relationship for satisfaction of a sensual nature.

**I have no husband,** the woman said. The reply of the Lord makes it evident the relationship this woman had was not legitimate. Nor were the previous partners true husbands; this the woman understood, knowing her lifestyle was not according to the law of the Lord, the Samaritans or the people. Reproof is generally more effective when it is gentle and gracious, least provoking.

**19. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. A prophet,** one sent from God, and who therefore had an insight concerning her life. This use of the word does not indicate one who foretells the future, but one who knew her heart and manner of life, and who therefore must have come from God.

This woman was as so many today who call Christian's religious, unable to see beyond the immediate situation to the reason for the statement or question they are faced with. She did not yet see Jesus as the Messiah, John 4<sup>25</sup>. Believing Him to be a man sent from God, she asked a question designed to remove the pressure from her; you are a Jew and I am a Samaritan so where is the proper place of worship.

This point had been a matter of dispute between the Samaritans and the Jews for many long years. She supposed a prophet could answer for her a question that plagued the nation, asking it of Him because she thought He could settle the question. Perhaps to change the subject under discussion from the unpleasant topic respecting her husbands to something less confronting and personal. Her manner of life was a very unpleasant

topic to her, as the sinful life of an unbeliever is always distasteful. Sinners do not want to talk about their lives and the need of a Saviour; she would gladly turn the conversation to a subject less personal and confronting. Sinners gladly and speedily change the conversation when it begins to hit home to their consciences; there is a willingness to talk of religion but not about a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. By showing to this woman that He knew her life, though He was a stranger to her, He convinced her that He was qualified to point out the difference between the Jews and the Samaritans and so prepared her to admit that He was in fact the Messiah.

When we ask a question of someone we know can give us the correct answer we should be prepared to listen, take note and respond appropriately. It is not good enough to know the right answer if it does not bring about a change in our thinking and response. This has been a problem in Christianity for many centuries with various churches putting forward their views containing a modicum of truth. *A half truth is a whole lie.*

**This mountain or Jerusalem,** church building or temple, chapel or cathedral, field or home, private or public; the discussion has continued from that time without an answer to satisfy because the question is not asked of the right person or with the right motive. With the Bible as the authoritative word containing the answer we need look no farther. Jesus said:

**Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.** To worship in a place, at a certain time or with chosen people may be right. What we worship, or who we worship and why we worship are questions we need to address personally. The answer to these questions tells us the standing we have with God. Jesus said: **Ye worship you know not what,** is that not the answer appropriate to the many peoples of the hundreds of religions of this modern world. With all the sects and cults of Christianity, the Jews, Hebrews, Arabs, Muslims, and Eastern religions, and those groups that claim to be irreligious yet following a leader in a variety of practices, it is well said by the Lord and expressly pertinent for today; **Ye worship you know not what!**

Having said that we must answer the question as to what is worship. For the Christian worship has at its centre the Lord Jesus Christ. That does not preclude public or private focus on the person of the Son of God. Worship includes the thoughts and emotions, the fellowship and the testimony, centred on the Man, Christ Jesus, **Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness:** 1Peter 2<sup>24</sup>. Worship may include prayer, preaching, reading the Bible and all aspects of life, including labouring and business, work and pleasure, where the Lord Jesus Christ remains the focal point, for the Word of God teaches **Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God** 1Corinthians 10<sup>31</sup>. **And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him,** Colossians 3<sup>17</sup>. **And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;** Colossians 3<sup>23</sup>.

Do you consider the Sunday meeting of the saints as the time to worship? Are you of the opinion that worship is singing hymns? Have you responded to the call to worship with dancing, hand waving, calling out Halleluiah, making vocal noises that are not understood? If any of these apply to you then you have missed out on the truth of knowing the Lord Jesus Christ in a personal way and being able to talk with Him at any time. Personal communion with the Saviour is worship, enjoying Him, being taken up with His perfection, spiritually revelling in Salvation's blessing is worship; being quiet in the presence of the Lord is worship. Preaching the Gospel of the Grace of God is worship as is also ministering the truth to saints and sinners. Worship is enjoying Christ, delighting in his presence, expressing His worth, in short knowing Him.

Why then the statement by the woman after hearing the Lord, Jerusalem is the place to worship? It was the place God chose to have the Temple; where the priests had various duties to perform for the people and as ordained by God, but when the people lost sight of their God and started to worship the system, the Temple, the ordinances and the hierarchy then God saw the people He had chosen to make His name great in the earth had failed. This failure continues in the same way in Christianity, how many leaders in the local congregations and the 'laity' use phrases like 'my church'. The Lord saw the problem and spoke concerning it:

**23. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.** There were two things she did not know, **the gift of God** and **who it was that was speaking to her.** As yet she knew not Christ as the all-sufficient Saviour for lost sinners. This woman was concerned with the problem of where to worship, not understanding what worship is, for she was lost as was the nation in rituals.

A simple question in her day has become one of major proportions in this modern era, Christian religions are legion and non-Christian religions increase with the population growth. The debate on where to worship is generally an excuse to avoid the personal issue of who to bow down to or to whom should I submit. Where ought we to worship? This is not a question for someone convicted by the Holy Spirit of being a sinner and needing salvation.



Important as this question is, it is not one to be discussed by a man or woman knowing they are on the way to a lost eternity. The all-important thing is to direct them into the presence of the Saviour. A convicted sinner can never be saved until he finds his place at the foot of the Cross, the place where the Lord Jesus Christ paid the full penalty for sin. Irreparable damage is done to men and women, young and old by leading them to a denomination or sect instead of to the Saviour. If the sinner joins a church group, a denomination, before he has received Christ Jesus as Lord he is in greater danger than he was previously. A church neither saves nor helps to save, salvation is of the Lord. Many regard the church fellowship as a stepping stone to Salvation, and frequently they find it a social meeting that directs them to all sorts of *good things, religious acts*, but leave out the essential need of a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ came personally from His Father's side to earth so we could have direct communion with Him and with His Father. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has purer eyes than to behold iniquity so the only safe place for the sinner is in the salvation offered by the Saviour. As a person with knowledge of sins forgiven I can worship God in spirit and truth.

The object of worship, God as Father, was not taught by the religious leaders; nor did they have a concept of a Saviour as we now know the Lord Jesus Christ is. With a false notion the Jews and probably the Samaritans worshipped with the concept that God was tied to a certain place and times; the same error is in the religions of today. The approaching termination of the Jewish economy, and the establishment of the Christian state, would take away from all focal points of all religions the false understanding that God is confined to a place and time. It shall be a thing of no import whether in Jerusalem or Samaria, Roman Catholic cathedral or non-conformist abbey, church building or chapel or any of these places where men worship God, they will not be tied to any place or time. The worship of God under the gospel is a free and spontaneous expression of devotion; under the law it was a requirement with times and places designated; under the Law there was a set pattern of worship, under Grace we are free to worship God in spirit and in truth.

Our economy and reason teaches us to have a convenient time and place for corporate worship: but the Bible gives no preference to one place above another. Those who prefer an ornate building or a particular person as leader miss the point of worship, they forget that the **hour is come** and there is no difference in God's account as to where we gather to give praise to God for the salvation He has provided for us.

**24. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. God is a Spirit,** the first and greatest truth in the whole universe of nature and man; there is a God. There is a God, the first cause of all in heaven and earth, the standard of perfection and truth, without measure, for He is Eternal. God upholds all things by the Word of His power; He is the infinite Spirit. This God has pleasure in those who come to Him in faith, in the way and by the Person He has appointed. God takes pleasure in those who are made partakers of His own Divine nature through faith in His Son. All creatures and creation are the work of His hands, so all owe Him due reverence and obedience.

For worship to be acceptable to God, the worship must be of a spiritual nature, must come from the heart as the Holy Spirit teaches and leads, and it must be in Truth, sincere, and in the way He has ordained. We mere mortals may worship God in spirit when the Holy Spirit has control of our affections, and our desires, when we can focus without interruption on the Truth; when every thought and desire is governed by the Word of God.

The Holy Spirit will not guide us into speech or activity contrary to the will of God nor will He teach anything that contradicts the Word of God. This standard is near impossible for a mortal to maintain but that is not a reason to stop trying; to cease from striving after holiness, to give in to the flesh.

**God is a spirit**, by this is meant that God is without a body; that He is not material or composed of various physical parts as we know them; He is invisible, He is omnipresent, absolute and holy. The Bible declares that He is Spirit. As a Spirit, He does not dwell in temples made with hands Acts 7<sup>48</sup>, neither is He worshipped with what men give of material things as though He needed anything. Pure, holy, and spiritual worship is such as God seeks; the offering of the whole man, body soul and spirit; rather than the formal offerings of things at proscribed times in set places. Worship is not limited to times and places, has no need of things manufactured by man, nor of times set aside by man; Worship comes from the heart and gives to God the glory that is due to Him for intervening in the lives of sinful man and making a way back to Himself for all who have fallen short of His standard.

Pure, that is with God alone as the focus untainted by the thoughts and ways of man. Holy, separate from all that is less than God requires, no taint of idolatry, human reasoning, selfish ambitions or anything less than is wholly centred on God. Spiritual Worship leaves the trappings of man behind, does not use anything of man's devising or turn to any ways of man; spiritual worship is when the worshipper's thought is solely concentrated on the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and presenting that focus to God the Father.

**God is a Spirit**; therefore His worshippers must worship Him in spirit and in truth; where spirit is opposed to the legal ceremonies, and truth is opposed to the Jewish rites and ceremonies. The Lord Jesus Christ is teaching we must leave the legalism of the past and enter a new age. The duty of a Christian is inferred; we who own the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour must worship God the Father in spirit and in truth. We may do so by presenting to the Father the delight we have in His Son and the joys of Salvation experienced since knowing freedom from the guilt and penalty of sin.

When bodily parts, hands and eyes, are ascribed to God it is only to cater to our inability to comprehend that a spirit does not have flesh and blood such as we have.

The worship due from the creature to God is spiritual worship, and is acceptable to God when spiritually performed; that is from spiritual principles, with sincere love, and due reverence. Worship is for God; directed in any other focus it is idolatry. Worship acceptable to God is with the whole heart, soul, and mind, with a Born Again spirit and awareness of His holiness.

The ceremonial worship of the Jews was abolished by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ; He initiated a new form of worship with no vestments, accoutrements or order of rank for the people to promote spirituality. God did not totally reject bodily worship under the gospel: for Jesus Christ worshipped God with his body. We are told in the letter to the Romans to present our bodies as spiritual worship; God has created the body as well as the soul and spirit; and He will glorify the body; therefore it is our duty to worship God with our bodies, and with our spirits, which are His.

**25. I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.** A general expectation among the Samaritans was of the coming of the Messiah; they had and read from the Pentateuch. Probably the words '**called Christ**' was the Apostle John explaining, for the Messiah and Christ have virtually the same meaning, being Hebrew and Greek. As the Samaritans acknowledged the five books of Moses, so they expected the coming of the Messiah.

**He will tell us all things**; the woman does not seem to have been satisfied with this answer, and said the Messiah would settle the question by a full revelation. Though a sinful woman, as all of us are in our own ways, she was expecting that the Messiah would soon appear. This is a result of **bringing up a child in the way he should go, for at the last he will not depart from it**, Proverbs 22<sup>6</sup>.

The Lord is omniscient and though He dwells by faith in each child of God there is a wealth of knowledge hid from us. So much is hidden from mortal man because of the advent of sin. **He will tell us all things** is a confident assertion of this woman though not realising the truth, the revelation will change her life permanently and give to her a hope for the future and eternity. When the Jews asked him, "**If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly**", John 10<sup>24</sup> Christ did not give them a straight answer; when John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus, whether He was the One that should come; Jesus did not answer the question directly: yet He makes himself plainly known to this poor woman. He discerned her humility and saw she was willing to receive the truth even though its true meaning is hidden from her. The religious Jews and Pharisees came to the Lord with questions designed to entangle Him in controversy, overly critical, not with a desire to know the truth. The Lord Jesus Christ delights to reveal Himself, and make known His mind and will to all who with a humble mind, and an honest simplicity desire to know Him. Knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour brings with that knowledge a duty of obedience, a desire to know more by diligence in reading His word and in direct communication with the Lord in prayer.

**All things** clearly does not relate to the sciences, technology, space ships, atomic research and engineering of mechanical devices et al; though all things are known to God and He has given to man the curiosity and ability to discover most intricate and varied things. Personal experience has taught me that even most unrelated difficulties encountered in engineering can be surmounted with diligence and faith in reliance upon the faithfulness of God. All things in the context are those things that relate to life and godliness; the way into the presence of God, the means of a full and free salvation. Praise God for the help and intuition He gives to us in our varied employments and tasks both physically and intellectually; praise Him also for the brilliance and intellectual competence He has bestowed on many who have used their gift to make life easier and more fulfilling for others.

**They went out of the city, and came unto Jesus** because the woman bore testimony of a power outside of herself that was not to be explained in natural terms. The inhabitants of the city knew the moral state of the woman therefore her testimony was to a personal experience and an evident change in her. See for yourself is the encouragement we need to place before those we talk to about the salvation the Lord offers. When those we associate with see a change for the better in us or witness the calm we possess in difficult times, when they notice our pleasant nature in dealing with unpleasant people, then our testimony to the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ will be more relevant.

**26. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.** The Lord addressed this soul whose salvation He sought and won. The moment the Samaritan woman expressed her desire for Christ, He answered, "*He is now speaking to you*". The Saviour of sinners was revealed. It was neither a mount nor a temple; it was neither Samaria nor Jerusalem. She had been found by Jesus, the Saviour; God manifest in the flesh. This woman discovered the wonderful fact that the He who had asked her for a drink knew all about her; that He could tell her all that ever she did. He talked to her of salvation and what more could she want?

**Upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? Or, Why talkest thou with her?** John 4<sup>27</sup>. These Disciples of Christ left the Saviour seated on the well, while they went into the city to buy food. Had they remained they would have witnessed the confrontation and confession of this sinner but that is not the way of the Lord. The Lord chooses to deal personally with all who come to Him. Grace again had the victory. This poor Samaritan sinner had been brought out of sin's darkness into God's marvellous light.

**Upon this came His disciples.** They were not allowed to hear what had been said between Christ and this woman; each sinner has to have private dealings with the Son of God; they returned in time to witness the effect of a person trusting the Lord. They needed to learn that the saving grace of God was not limited to Israel that it was reaching out to sinners of the Gentiles. They **marvelled** as they beheld their Master talking to this despised Samaritan, but they held their peace. None of them dared to ask Him a question at that moment; nor should any of us question the work of the Lord in another. A true work of grace always has the Lord Jesus Christ as the focal point and as the one to who all praise is directed.

**28. The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city.** 2Corinthians 4<sup>6</sup> **the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ** now shone into the heart of this sinner, for she heard the voice of the Lord and believed.

This woman referred directly to herself, she *acknowledged her thirst*, **Give me this water that I thirst not** 15. She *confessed her sin*, **I have no husband** 17. She showed a *beginning of understanding*, I perceive 19. And she declared her faith **I know that Messiah cometh** 25. Next she leaves her waterpot and goes to testify of Christ. Who of us who are saved by the power of a living Saviour can fail to testify of the work of the Lord Jesus accomplished in us.

**26. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am.** Note that the final word of this verse is in italics, which signifies there is no corresponding word in the Greek. Omitting the word "he" the verse as it reads in the A.V. makes no sense. The correct reading is **Jesus saith unto her, I am that speaketh unto thee.** It was the use of the title **I am**, the title of Jehovah as in Exodus 3<sup>14</sup>; it was the solemn declaration that God was speaking to her. This explains the silence of the disciples who marvelled when they found their Master talking with the woman, but asked Him no question.

**The woman then left her waterpot.** She left her waterpot because she had now found a well of *living water*. She came to the well for literal water; that was the motive and purpose of her carrying the waterpot. But now that she has salvation, the waterpot is of less importance and can be left behind as the *good news* of salvation is carried back to her friends and acquaintances. Once there is a clear perception of Christ to the soul, once He is received as a personal Saviour, the things of an earthly nature will be much less important for the carnal things give place to the spiritual. This woman's mind was now focussed upon Christ, and she lost interest in the well water, and waterpot. She had met the Messiah, now personal experience of the revelation of Christ will take over her life and testimony and she will proclaim Him to others.

**And went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?** John 4<sup>28, 29</sup>. This woman was transformed from a convicted sinner into a devoted saint. The work was thorough—**nothing could be put to it, nor anything taken from it: because God had done it**, Ecclesiastes 3<sup>14</sup>. There was no trial period for this woman, she was not on probation. She was not threatened with expulsion if she did not continue faithful to the end, nor was it suggested she could lose her salvation. She was saved; saved for all eternity; saved by grace through faith, no man or work of man, no demand for attendance at meetings, no pressure to conform or to be baptised, between her and the Saviour. As a child of God, a believer she wants to tell others of the Saviour. This woman was not conversant with the various doctrines of the new religion she was embracing. The love of Christ constrained her to witness to the lost; and she started in her home town among those who knew her. A change is most evident when we are with those who knew us before we were saved, a change there must be as a new life has begun and a new desire and motivation is awaking and entralling us from the moment we view the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Saviour.

This woman began at once to witness; no sooner had she discovered Christ for herself, than she straight way began to testify to the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us by word and deeds seek to bring as many as possible to the Person who has redeemed us, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Come see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?** Come was the word of invitation that this new believer extended to those who knew her. It was the word Christ bid her use to bring her 'husband' verse 16. It is the invitation word of the Gospel. Responding to this word has resulted in many being saved. It is the word which has resulted in many thousands coming to the Lord Jesus Christ and finding in Him the peace which passes all understanding. The last recorded words of this woman show her now as an active servant for Christ Jesus her Saviour.

**30. Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.** Effective witness is demonstrated by this woman; she came from the presence of the Lord and testified to Him among her friends and neighbours.

The woman returned to the city with food for the soul, she had come from the presence of the Lord. The disciples returned to the Lord with food for the body, they had come from the city the woman returned to.

The witness of the woman caused many to seek the Lord; this is the example we who profess to know the Lord Jesus as Saviour should follow.

The witness of the disciples at this early stage was still more concerned with the body and its wellbeing.

The woman said to those who she met **"come and see"** the disciples said to the Lord **"come and eat"** There is a lesson here for the evangelical church; do we invite the 'public' to a meal and then tell them of the Lord in timorous tones hoping they will not be offended, or do we invite them to see what the Lord has done in the lives of the saints, testify to the effectiveness of the Word of God, and show them the reality of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by the 'new life' exhibited in the believers.

**31. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.**

**32. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.**

**33. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?**

**34. Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.**

**35. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.**

**36. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.**

**37. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.**

**38. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.**

This section forms a parenthesis; it is a record of something that transpired during the interval from the woman leaving the well and the Samaritans coming to Christ because of her testimony concerning Him.

The disciples **gone away unto the city to buy meat**, and had returned to find their Master engaged in conversation with a woman of Samaria. They were surprised at this but did not question the Lord. They had heard the Lord Jesus pronounce the ineffable title **'I am'** causing them to pause, to question their understanding of who it was they were following. Now the conversation between the Lord Jesus and the Samaritan woman was over. A sinner had been brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light, and had left her waterpot to tell others the good news which had affected her so deeply.

The disciples received a practical lesson; they were taught by example that there was no difference between the Jews and the Samaritans. The disciples had returned in time to hear the end of the conversation, they saw the effect the Lord's words had on her. They were shown there was no good reason for the Jews to have **no dealings with the Samaritans**. This was a hard lesson for the disciples, but the Lord was gracious, knowing their spiritual dullness.

**31. In the meanwhile His disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.** Earlier in the day the disciples had left Jesus sitting on the well, wearied from the journey. They left to purchase food and returned to the Lord with it.

Instead of finding Christ weary and wanting food they found Him engaged in a spiritual work, refreshed with energy and power they knew nothing of. They could not understand so they begged Him to eat the food they had bought. Their quest was thoughtful, their appeal was well meant but it was merely directed to the comfort of the flesh.

Christians should always be noticed for good works but the works of the flesh, directed to the comfort of the body take second place to the work of the Gospel; the salvation of the soul is more important than the comfort of the flesh.

**32. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.** This was not a rebuke; it was a word designed to take their thoughts way from the mundane, to focus their minds on eternal matters. Their minds

were upon material things for the comfort of the flesh; the Lord draws their attention to that which is of a spiritual nature. **Meat** is used figuratively for that which satisfies; food satisfies the body; the Word of God satisfies the soul; something the disciples **knew not of** at this time.

In making the Lord known to the 'lost' and in ministry to the saints there are blessings to sustain the servant of the Lord. The obedient servant has **meat to eat** that those not engaged in the Lord's service know nothing of. Indeed it is an enigma to them, for they see the results but have no comprehension of how it is possible.

Not that the Lord Jesus did not want meat at this time, for He was both hungry and thirsty, as suggested by His asking water of the woman to drink, and by His sending His disciples into the city to buy food. The Lord was more focussed upon doing His Father's work, than upon satisfying His own hunger.

**33. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?** Strangely enough the minds of the disciples were as the minds of the saints today, not so strange really as they were not yet committed to the will of God. Their minds dwelt more upon material things, than the things of God. They were learning about the rapport of Christ to the Father. Their thoughts turned to the question food; has any man had **brought him ought to eat**. Let us not be critical of these disciples; let us view them as reflecting our own spiritual dullness, and see our need of being taught by God.

**34. Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.** What did the Lord mean in saying doing the will of God is **meat** to me and finishing what I have started is the goal set before me?

The Lord was giving instruction to His disciples, preparing them for their future work. He sets Himself before them as an example which will inspire all future acceptable service for God. The basic principle is that of obedience to the will of God; no selfish motive operating in the background. The servant is expected to do the will of his master without questioning the outcome or the reason behind the order. This the perfect Servant Himself epitomized. Jesus refers to God as **Him that sent me**. He could say with Job: **Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food**, Job 23<sup>12</sup>.

The will of the One who had sent Christ into the world was that all men, through Him might be saved. It was to deliver captives from the hands of the Devil and bring them into liberty. The will of the Father was that all those He had given to the Son should be redeemed.

Twice in this record the Lord refers to a work yet to be completed and twice to a completed work; 4<sup>34</sup> **Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.** 5<sup>36</sup> **for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.** 17<sup>4</sup> **I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.** 19<sup>30</sup> **When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.** The Lord Jesus Christ was not satisfied until he had completed the work set for him by His Father. Jesus Christ displayed a true picture of the holiness and divinity of His Father in a body like unto sinful man. The work was to accomplish the redemption of sinful man and to let all the redeemed know they were accepted by a holy God because the price of their redemption was paid in full. Hence Jesus could say "**I have finished the work**". This was said in prayer in the Garden, privately; revealed to the Apostle so we have a record of the mind that was in Christ Jesus; a determination to finish the work; no compromise, no easing of the burden, nothing less than the full price paid. The Lord was committed to the will of His Father; **My meat is to do the will of him that sent me**. The Lord was saying he was sustained by the knowledge He was doing the will of His Father.

**35. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.** The farmer, when he sows his seed, is compelled to wait some months before it produces a crop to be harvested. He is encouraged in sowing by previous harvests and his expectations are high when the seasonal rains are good. However the harvest is still a long way off. It is not so with preaching the Gospel; the Lord says **the fields are white already to harvest**. There are many who are troubled by sin and are conscious of the need of a Saviour; these are the fields ready to harvest. The seed has already sprung up, the roots have found good nourishment, the ears in the corn are fattened and the sickle is sharpened and ready. The Saviour began a work in the woman and the sown seed brought an abundance of fruit out of Samaria. The gospel was preached to a woman, she believed the message, and published abroad the truth and many of the Samaritans heard her and came to hear it from the lips of the Preacher, the One who had showed to her the way of life.

There is more encouragement to labour in the Gospel than in other fields for there is often an immediate harvest; the farmer must wait on the elements and time. The preparation of the soil is important to the farmer

and prayer and commitment to the work of the Lord is important to the evangelist, and equally important to every Christian bearing the word of the Lord to the lost.

No argument will suffice for not preaching the gospel; we may not have the words but we who are saved do have the Holy Spirit within to teach us and to guide us in our life style, thinking and speech relative to the salvation of souls. What I am, what I do, and where I go will speak volumes to those who observe me as a Christian.

**Look on the fields;** look around at the people you know, notice your workmates, the shopkeepers, the crowds at various sporting events, people at play and leisure. These are the fields waiting to be harvested. These lost souls are ready to hear the gospel message; preaching it is our duty, our responsibility, and our privilege. The disciples regarded Samaria as a most unlikely field for the Lord to work in; they considered it a field where extra work was needed to prepare the soil, sow the seed and then a long wait, before any ripened grain could be expected or harvested. These disciples never dreamed of telling the Samaritans that the Messiah was at their gates. Having met with the Lord the Samaritan woman was more faithful in reaching out to others than the disciples; can it be that we who have been saved for years are less diligent in the Gospel work than new believers. The Lord Jesus Christ; **must needs go through Samaria** to teach His disciples a lesson in missionary work, how that none are excluded from the benefits of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We must not judge by appearances. Often we look on certain people as hopeless cases, and are prone to think it useless to speak to *them* about Christ. We can never know what seeds of Truth have been sown in their hearts by the labours of others. We cannot tell how many months there are to harvest; nor can we work out which seed is more likely to take root and bring forth fruit.

**36. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.**

**37. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.** The wages of all who labour in the Gospel will be paid in full; the world may refuse the benefits of the evangelists; but the Lord sees and knows the effort expended and He will give to the labourer wages commensurate with the effort expended. The ministers of God shall receive good wages at His hand, even though ill treated by those they minister to.

The harvested souls have everlasting life; the evangel and the evangelised will be rewarded. God cannot refuse to reward those who do His work in His way; what rejoicing there will be as many find freedom from the penalty of sin, begin a new chapter in their life as a child of God and share fellowship with the one who showed them the blessings available to all who believe in the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

These words of the Lord confirm that the harvest spoken of by the Lord is not of grain sown in the earth; it is rather Seed sown in the soul. This Seed springs up with everlasting life in the soul that believes the truth of the word spoken.

A prayer partner, a venue supplier, a transporter, and a preacher can all share the reward. The many aspects of Gospel work are not hidden from the One who sent His Son into the world for the purpose to be the promised Redeemer. No one aspect of the work is more important than another; all workers in the Gospel will rejoice together when the Lord Jesus Christ is seen in the place God has for Him at His right side.

The sower and the reaper are not contestants in the work of the Lord, seeing who can do most or reach more people, have a bigger audience or congregation; fortunately the Lord Jesus Christ is the Judge and His judgement is not according to the standards of man and as the Apostle Paul adds; God gives the increase and will reward every man according to his work. 1Corinthians 3<sup>7</sup> **so then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.**

In the past sowing and reaping often occurred in the same hour; Gospel preachers many times saw sinners repenting and trusting the Saviour. Some mass evangelists, as Billy Graham and many before him counted in the hundreds the numbers seeking to be saved after they heard the Gospel message. These evangelists knew the truth of the fields being **white already to harvest**, and were used of the Lord in harvesting the 'crop'. This modern world's methods have encroached on the Church and the result is seen in 'teaching the Gospel'; in the use of methods and ministries to attract people by catering to the flesh and the emotions. So much of our time is taken up with extraneous things, related to Christian things but not to the building up of the church or even to the edifying of the Body.

**38. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.** Not only the successful, but the faithful labourer in God's harvest shall be rewarded; not only those will be rewarded which see the fruit of their ministry in the conversion of sinners and the edifying of the saints, but all which faithfully sow the Seed. Though the seed does not germinate till we are in our graves, even though it rots in unrepentant hearts, and does not come up at all, yet all the faithful sowers of the Seed are rewarded according to the labour, not according to the abundance of the harvest or lack of a harvest.

This generation of Christians reaps the benefit of many in the past who have laboured diligently in preaching and ministry of the Word of God.

It may be that the sower and the reaper are different people at different times, each man's work will be rewarded according to what sort it is. Sometimes the result will be seen and then the glory should be given to God, for He it is that gives the increase. Only God knows the extent of the harvest, and the flow on from the seeds sown and germinated because of that harvest.

**I sent you;** the commission given to preach the gospel was for the disciples directly from the Lord. You have not laboured in preparing the way for the great harvest which is now to be gathered in. Other men laboured. The prophets, who laboured to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah, the teachers among the Jews, John the Baptist, and the early disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Saviour Himself, who saw comparatively little fruit of His ministry. He confined His labours primarily to Judea, and the sowing of the seed there mostly sprang up after his death. Every Christian may consider himself as sent by the Lord Jesus Christ into the field to cultivate the ground, to sow the seed, to water the young plants, to protect from predators, and finally to harvest at the command of the Saviour.

The 'successful' evangelist has no cause of boasting over others, for the harvester has no work to do before the sower has spread the seed and the prayer has watered the ground on which the seed is scattered. The labour of both is equally necessary, and the labour of both is useless if God does not give the increase. We should not be discouraged if we do not see an immediate response to the preaching or prayerful attention to the Word. The man that sows waits patiently and expectantly for the first signs of life and then waits with anticipation for the time of harvest. He does not see the harvest immediately spring up. We sow our seed in the morning, and in the evening do not withhold our hand, for we know not whether the early or later sowing will prosper; we go forth bearing precious seed, weeping, praying, knowing that we shall come again rejoicing, bearing our sheaves with us, Ecclesiastes 11<sup>4</sup>; Psalm 126<sup>6</sup>.

Moses and the prophets sowed, but they reaped a small harvest, their writings have done much more and contributed to a greater harvest since they departed than ever their preaching did. The teachings of the past servants of the Lord have made way for the ministry of the present servants of the Lord.

Had it not been for the seed sown by the prophets, this Samaritan woman could not have said, **We know that Messiah cometh.** The writings of the Old Testament prophets are in some respects more useful to us than they could be to those to whom they were first written, because we see many prophecies fulfilled, 1Peter 1<sup>12</sup>; Hebrews 4<sup>2</sup>; Romans 16<sup>25-26</sup>. As has often been quoted there are hidden in the Old Testament many truths revealed in the New Testament. The Saviour of the world was not revealed in the Old Testament; the Saviour of the nation of Israel was made known by the prophets. One sacrifice for sin was not revealed in the Old Testament, for there was a continuing requirement on the Children of Israel for daily, monthly and yearly sacrifices; and more as the Children of Israel sinned in the course of life. The advent of the Messiah ushered in a new covenant, this woman spoke with the Lord Jesus Christ and saw in Him more than she could immediately comprehend, yet she could say with conviction to her peers, **Is not this the Christ!**

**39. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.**

**40. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.**

**41. And many more believed because of his own word;**

**42. And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.**

This woman was the first disciple of Christ in Samaria. She went and told her fellow citizens that the Messiah was among them; and for proof related how the Lord had told her the most private things she had ever done. This testimony strongly suggests a more particular and intimate conversation had taken place between the Lord Jesus and the Samaritan woman, more detailed than what is recorded here. They believed on Him as a prophet after listening to her testimony, and desired to know more from Him personally; they most probably believed Jesus was more than at first appeared. Many of the Samaritans, the Samaritans were not of the house of Israel, believed after hearing the Lord speak. Their faith was the first fruits from among the Gentiles; they welcomed that which the Jews rejected.

The Lord by instructing one poor woman caused the truth to be spread through the whole town. The testimony of one woman, saved by grace, reached out to the whole community. This woman could say little of Christ, but what she did say she spoke from personal experience. **He told me all that ever I did.** Our personal testimonies are most likely to be effective when we recount personal experience coupled with a changed life and expectation.

This new convert did not rest with simply telling her acquaintances of what she had heard, nor whom she had met. She encouraged, persuaded others with her testimony **Come** she said; **Come see a Man** for yourselves, come and meet this Man who has an insight into my life. God honoured this earnest witness, **many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman.** The aim in Christian service is to bring souls into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We are not able to save any so we take them to the Lord; **Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him,** Hebrews 7<sup>25</sup>.

These Samaritans had learned from the lips of the woman who He was, **The Christ**; now they discovered for themselves that He was the One who could meet their deepest spiritual need, **The Saviour.** The essential requirement for service in Christian work is a personal acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ. Remaining in contact with the Lord is the enabling for the faithful performance of our Christian duty; we then will be satisfied in the knowledge that we are in the will of God. The fields are ready for harvesting; wherever we look people need to know freedom from the guilt and penalty of sin. We are gathering fruit unto life eternal, fruit for which we will be paid by the Lord Jesus Christ in that day when we stand before Him. We are not individuals in this work; **one soweth and another reapeth**; there is mutual dependence one on the other. There can be no harvest without the previous sowing, no harvest until the Lord gives the increase. The person doing the harvesting is not more important than the one who prepares the ground, the sower, the cultivator, the weed destroyer or the reaper. The reaper must not be puffed up by success when many respond to the message preached, but must remember he is reaping the harvest of those who have worked earlier; the labours of those who have gone before. The objective is to bring souls into the presence of Christ, that they find Life in Him and learn to live with the Lord independently of the preacher.

**43. Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee.**

**44. For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.**

**45. Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.**

From verse 4 to the end of verse 42 is in the nature of a parenthesis, these verses record what occurred in Samaria, which was outside the sphere of Christ's regular ministry in Judea and Galilee. **Into Galilee**, but not to Nazareth, as this was strictly his own country. He went among the villages, but not to Nazareth the head city, for Jesus testified **that a prophet has no honour in his own country.**

Every minister of God, in the gospel or any other ministry to the Church or the Saints, ought to be respected by the persons to whom he ministers. Each ministry to the saints is commissioned by the Lord and as the minister is true to the Lord so he is due respect from those ministered to. It is usual for the ministers in the Kingdom of God to be least respected where they are best known. We find that where we are best known there is least respect; the world has a saying: *familiarity breeds contempt* but in the Church sharing the things of the Lord should foster unity and encourage fellowship. Rivalries and seeking preference among the saints is contrary to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Though the Lord Jesus Christ had no honour at Nazareth, yet he found acceptance among the rest of the Galileans. They received Him maybe as the promised Messiah, because of the miracles which they had seen him perform at Jerusalem, at the Passover.

If and when the Lord raises up from among our immediate circle one whom He wishes to use then we who are his or her companions in the Lord should be there as an encouragement to the one who the Lord wishes to bless. There is no room for jealousy or envy in the Church.

**46. So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.**

**47. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.**

**48. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.**

**49. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.**

**50. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.**

**51. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth.**

**52. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.**

**53. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.**

**54. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.**



These verses remind us of the sad condition of Judaism during the days of Christ's public ministry. The Lord Himself affirms He had no honour in his own country. Contrast this to His experience in Samaria where the citizens responded to Him excited by the testimony of the woman He spoke to at the well. We are told **the Galileans received Him**; it was not because they recognized the glory of His person, or the power inherent in His words, but because they were impressed by what they had seen Him do at Jerusalem.

This last paragraph of the chapter records the second miracle in Cana of Galilee, curing a nobleman's son that was sick of a fever. This nobleman heard from others that Christ displayed the characteristics of a prophet, and believed that if Jesus were bodily present with his son, he could cure the child. He did not believe him to be the Messiah, God manifest in flesh, and omnipresent; so Jesus proves beyond doubt that He was. He tells him his son is cured and the father believing is also cured. The child was cured of his fever, and the father of his doubts and unbelief.

**Except ye see signs and wonders**, the Lord Jesus does not tell this man that he had no faith, his asking the Lord to come and demonstrate His miraculous power simply implies he did not believe the Lord could do it at a distance. These people, the Jews in general demanded a sign; they wanted to see a miracle. They heard the ministry of John the Baptist; that was not accompanied with miracles, so his ministry was not generally approved as spiritually authoritative. They required the miracles of Christ, so they could be sure this prophet was the Christ. There are many like these Galileans in the world, in our societies; they deny that God can have any influence among men; and as to the work of the Holy Spirit, they assert they will not accept any man who professes to be indwelt by the Spirit of God unless he works a miracle.

Let us note that the grace of working miracles is very different from saving grace; though salvation is a miracle in the individual who believes.

A nobleman is no less in need of the Saviour than a woman living a promiscuous life. Prestige in the workforce, in government, in trades, or abilities in intellectual tasks is no defence against disease, suffering, burdens and pain; or indeed rejection by many in the group of people among whom we live, great men are troubled as other men. The wealth of this nobleman, nor his authority, could free him or his family from the consequences of the fall of Adam.

Many never come to Christ till they are overcome with a burden they find too difficult to bear on their own, it is then they will hear of the Saviour and are driven to the Cross. This nobleman was neither faithless nor faithful, he was as most are today, indifferent until the 'medicine' relied on fails; be it money or drugs issue by doctors.

**Come down** was the request, as if Christ could not have cured him being absent; **ere my son die**. It is good and natural for the father to be concerned for the health of his child. The same power required to heal the boy from sickness could raise the child from death. Consider the growing awareness of this man, hearsay gives way to sight and faith, he now believes the Lord can do what physicians cannot do. The Lord Jesus Christ responds to the hearts desire of this nobleman, he sees faith in the heart and the corresponding action so the prayer of the man is answered without the physical presence of the Lord at the bedside of the child.

Care for the education of our children is a priority we need bear in mind; much is left to those outside the family in the upbringing of our children. We put the responsibility on to the government or onto elected officials and then are disappointed with the results. Health, education, community awareness, social responsibility and most importantly the Christian faith ought to be passed on to our children; not that education will see them trusting the Lord for Salvation, but that the example of godly parents who live as they believe and teach what they have experienced will be the most effective testimony the children will ever know. The Word of God teaches we should **train up a child in the way he should go, for in the end he will not depart from it**, Proverbs 22<sup>6</sup>.

Hear the gracious words of the Lord Jesus Christ, **Go thy way, thy son liveth**. This man came to the Lord Jesus having heard of Him; can this prophet do for my son a miracle equal to the changing of water to wine? Jesus worked this miracle for the nobleman, not because of the man's position in society; because He loves with a love that is stronger than death. The Lord Jesus Christ may not give us what we ask immediately or exactly as requested, but when He gives it is discovered to be better than we asked. We ask what we think is best, but God gives what He knows to be best. Christ healed two patients; the son of his fever, the father of his lack of faith.

Faith at work in one is contagious and will reach out and touch many others. The testimony of this man related to the healing of his son had an effect on the entire household. A changed life is convincing evidence of God at work in a person.

Had the Lord Jesus gone with him, he would not have known the Lord's power was not limited to the Lord being present; that the power could reach far beyond the confines of sight. In order to correct his unbelief and bring him into a position of faith in His power, the Lord cures his child. The Lord did what this man requested Him to do, but not in the way requested. God is able to and will save all who call upon Him, but not always in

the way in the way asked. Salvation, eternal life, is the free gift of God, and He gives it to whom He will and as He pleases. His work is to bring glory to His own person, it is to promote His own interest; ultimately to set His Son over all.

## **Chapter 5**

- 1. After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.**
- 2. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.**
- 3. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.**
- 4. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.**
- 5. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.**
- 6. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?**
- 7. The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.**
- 8. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.**
- 9. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath.**
- 10. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.**
- 11. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.**
- 12. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?**
- 13. And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.**
- 14. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.**
- 15. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.**
- 16. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.**
- 17. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.**
- 18. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.**
- 19. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.**
- 20. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.**
- 21. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.**
- 22. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:**
- 23. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.**
- 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.**
- 25. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.**
- 26. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;**
- 27. And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.**
- 28. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,**
- 29. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.**

1-9. A man who has been diseased thirty-eight years is miraculously healed on the Sabbath day.

10-16. The Jews cavil, complain and persecute Christ, seeking to kill Him, because He cured this man on the Sabbath,

17-25 Jesus claims equality with the Father

22-29. Jesus speaks of life after death in two aspects

30-47 The Lord Jesus Christ vindicates His conduct, and shows, from the testimony of John the Baptist, His own works, the Father, and the Scriptures, that He came from God,

40. He reproves the Jews for their obstinate denial of the truth,

41, 42, their hatred toward God, His law and His work;

45-47 and disbelief of the law they claim to have from Moses.

The scene introduced to us in this passage is dismal. The background is the pool of Bethesda, around which lay a number of 'sick' people, of **impotent folk**. The Lord Jesus approaches this crowd of sufferers, who were not only sick but helpless.

The Lord Jesus Christ was neither wanted nor recognized, no different to the present day. Addressing one of the helpless sufferers, the Lord asked him if he would like to be healed. The Lord asked this strange question of one who was hoping to enter the water first for that very purpose. The man's reply confirmed his occupation with his own inability to care for himself. The Lord Jesus responded to the heart cry not to the words; the healing took place on the Sabbath day.

When the religious Jews learned that it was Jesus who had performed the miracle **they sought to slay him**.

**1. After this** is a phrase John uses in his writings 16 times, in this Gospel and in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, showing his careful and intelligent approach to the disclosure of the Son of God as Lord of all, in the past, present and into the future.

**After this** there was a feast of the Jews 5<sup>1</sup>. **After this** should be *after these things*, an expression characteristic of John's Gospel as **then** is of Matthew who writes of a King, **immediately** of Mark who tells us of the Servant, and **it came to pass** of Luke relating the historical facts. **After these things** is repeated in this Gospel seven times 3<sup>22</sup>; 5<sup>1</sup>; 5<sup>14</sup>; 6<sup>1</sup>; 7<sup>1</sup>, 11<sup>11</sup>; 21<sup>1</sup>, and nine times in the Revelation. The suggestion is the Lord lived and worked to a set timetable and plan, ordered by the Father who sent His Son into the world.

**1. A feast**, probably the Passover, there were two other feasts, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles at which all the males were required to be present, and it might have been one of them. This was a religious feast, a time when the people of God were encouraged to be present at Jerusalem, not a time of special foods and laden tables, tables laden with good things to eat or wines to gladden the hearts of men, **A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all things**, Ecclesiastes 10<sup>19</sup>. This religious festival the Lord attended was in compliance with the instructions given to the people of God.

There is a command to remember the Lord; the first day of the week was the precedent set by the early church. Do we show a lack of love and respect for the Word of God when we relegate the 'remembrance of the Lord' to monthly, yearly, or occasional, to suit the minister of the flock or the convenience of the congregation?

The **Sheep-gate** was the gate through which the sheep were taken into the city for sacrifice; the various entrances to the city being named according to the purpose for which they were used. A sheep-gate is mentioned by Nehemiah 3<sup>1</sup>, 12<sup>39</sup>, that gate by which sheep and oxen were brought into the city to be prepared for sacrifice. The gate was near the temple, and the pool was convenient for the washing of the sacrifices.

**Bethesda** meaning the house of mercy or the house of grace was named on account of its reputation of restoring health to the sick and infirm. This name was given to the site long after the building of the walls of Jerusalem. The apostle Paul to his own people wrote; **Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need** Hebrews 4<sup>16</sup>. Seeing, hearing, speaking, dexterity and mobility are aspects of our lives where we may be compromised; the five porches could represent these areas of life. The **five porches** were covered places where people could sit and be sheltered from extremes of the weather, places where each invalid could have easy access to the water. All those gathered at Bethesda wanted relief from some form of disability. None of us are without need in some way and all of us are without hope of redemption until we see our own need and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ for cleansing from sin.

**Waiting for the moving of the water**; these waters healed a man in a moment of whatever illness he had. There is no medicine or doctor of medicine that can cure a sick one immediately. We are obliged to accept the Word of God just as it stands, and so acknowledge the sovereign power and mercy of God exhibited here at the House of Mercy.

**Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches** I understand the reference here is to the sheep "gate" of Nehemiah 3<sup>1</sup>. Nehemiah 3 describes the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem when a remnant of Israel returned from the Babylonian

captivity. Various portions of rebuilding were allotted to different individuals or 'families'; these sections were from 'gate' to 'gate'. Ten gates are mentioned in the chapter, first the sheep gate and the last is the gate Miphkad which means judgment. It is interesting to note the first gate tells us of the 'Sheep' and bids we look forward to the sacrificial Lamb and the last gate reminds us of the Judgement. Note if we do not settle the question of sin at the 'sheep gate' the place where the sacrifice is prepared, we will be subject to the judgement of God at a later time.

**The sheep gate** is the gate through which the sacrificial animals were brought to the temple; the lamb was the animal most often sacrificed so the nearest entrance became known as the Sheep Gate. The sheep gate points us to Christ, and tells of His Person and His work; the Lamb of God, the Passover Lamb; the one sacrifice for sin. The pool which was called Bethesda, meaning mercy, was by the sheep gate; it is only in Christ that the sinner can find mercy, and it is only through His sacrifice on the Cross that this mercy is available to us sinners. Washing with water can cleanse the body, washing with the Word of God can cleanse the life, and washing in the Blood of the Lamb is the only way to cleanse the soul from sin and guilt. The preparation for eternal life is in the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God can present us to God **without spot or wrinkle or any such thing**, Ephesians 5<sup>27</sup>, clean every whit.

**Having five porches**, five in the Scriptures is the number representing *grace* or *favour*. Five and its multiples are on every part of the tabernacle. It was with five loaves the Lord Jesus fed the hungry multitude. The fifth clause in the Lord's Prayer is, **Give us this day our daily bread**; this fifth Commandment was the only one with a promise attached to it; and many more instances are recorded in the Word of God. So we note the importance of **five** porches around the Pool of Mercy, Bethesda, situated by the **sheep gate**.

**A great multitude of impotent folk** is not only a picture of the Jewish nation at that time; it also describes the states and countries in which we live. A few in Israel relatively, believed the prophets and accepted the message they spoke and knew they were sinners, and were saved, but the **great multitude** remained dead in their sins. Israel as a people was impotent; they had the Law, made their boast in the Law but were unable to keep it. they were **impotent**, **blind** to their own impotence, **blind** to their wretchedness, **blind** to their need, and **blind** to the One who stood in their midst.

A third word describing some of them is added, **halt** the term suggests one who is lame, crippled. Israel had the Law but they did not walk in the way of God's commandments. A blind man may be able to walk; a cripple may see but cannot walk properly.

This **great multitude** included those with **withered** limbs, referring to those whose hands were paralyzed; as a description of Israel it tells us that they were totally useless in the service of God. **Impotent**, useless for God; **blind**, without spiritual sight; **halt**, they could not walk in the ways of God; **withered**, hands not able to use the tools God has provided. They were **waiting**, expecting something from God, looking for a sign; at the same time not knowing that the Son of God was with them.

The natural man is **impotent**, without strength, Romans 5<sup>6</sup>.

He is **blind**, oblivious of the dangers. Blind for **the way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble**, Proverbs 4<sup>19</sup>. The unregenerate man is **blind** to all spiritual realities.

**Halt**, lame, crippled, unable to travel without help of some kind, describes all who are not saved from the penalty of sin. How can one who is spiritually blind walk the *Narrow Way* that leads unto life? We who know the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour must carry such a one to Christ for healing. Healing from the Lord causes blind eyes to see, cures paralysis, heals broken and distorted limbs, loosens the tongue of the dumb and makes the deaf to hear. Healing from the Lord Jesus Christ is a new birth, the beginning of everlasting life.

Withered body, blind eyes, crippled feet, paralyzed hands; unable to see, unable to walk, unable to work. A man cannot perform good works, as a Christian, unless he is walking with God; he will not walk with God until the eyes of his understanding have been opened to see his need of the Saviour. Then and only then can a person be saved, become a child of God and be used in His service.

While talking of 'good works' I make a distinction between human goodness and generosity of spirit, works done for the good of others, quite laudable activities and quite possible the same works done by a 'believer' in response to the Holy Spirit working in the life. The one has a reward on earth from man; indeed is praised by man, the other is rewarded by the Lord in a future time when He rewards His people for being obedient to Him. This is not to say there is no reward in this life, the reason for the good works is in obedience to the Lord, any reward from man or from God is a bonus.

**6. Wilt thou be made whole?** Christ knew the mind and disability of this person, yet He asks if he is willing to be cured of his infirmity. Though Christ knows our wants, our needs physical and material, yet He waits for us to own our need and request help. The Lord Jesus Christ is ever ready to assist all who will come to Him in faith and in this instance He approaches this man who clearly wishes to be healed of his ailment. 38 years of

dependence on others for transport, shopping, cleaning, mobility has left this man without a clear and straight forward answer to the question asked by the Lord.

Yes I would love to be independent of others! Yes I would love to be able to put the kettle on when I want a cup of tea! Yes I envy others who come and go as they please! The question you ask seems unnecessary as I am here where there is a slight chance I might be first into the waters when they are troubled! The Lord is not revealed to this man at this time, His person and power is still concealed; there is to be a revelation of power over sickness before the power over sin and death is made evident.

**Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool:** The answer of the man implied that he did wish it; he had no friend to aid him. This is an additional circumstance that added to his affliction. This emphasises the need of those without the Saviour, without the knowledge of sin and the consequences of sin. All Christians are bound by the love of the Lord Jesus Christ to take note of those around them, see the spiritual need and direct the needy to the One who can meet that need. The Lord Jesus Christ is ready to, indeed eager to deliver spiritually needy persons from their sinful state.

The impotent man was face to face with the Lord, moments away from a permanent cure. The obedience of faith saw him respond obediently to the command of the Lord. He had nothing to do to be made whole but being made whole he had to obey the command; **Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.** The man obeyed the Lord without questioning His command, without thought of the 38 years of helplessness; he did not look for help from friends or family.

If the Lord Jesus Christ waited until there was in the lame man an appreciation of who He was, he would not be saved. When asked if he were willing to be made whole there was no faith evident in the answer. In sovereign grace the Son of God spoke the life-giving word, a word calling for an immediate response from the man addressed.

When the Lord Jesus Christ speaks to a person there must be implicit confidence in His word, there must be recognition of His authority, and response to His commands.

**Take up thy bed**, padded material easily rolled up; where we are at ease or resting, or are sick and being cared for does not pre-empt a change in the command. The Lord Jesus expects obedience and does not allow for failure to obey His command, and no provision is made for a return to ill health. When there is faith in the person of Christ, a submission to His authority, the new life will show. The lame man ceased to be a burden to others; he was commanded to and was able to shoulder his own burden.

**And walk** is as though the Saviour is saying, you were unable to walk into the water for a cure but now that you are made whole, **walk.** This new experience will be a testimony to all who knew you when you could not stand or progress.

There are duties to be faced, situations we have had no previous experience in, conversations to have about a subject completely new and we must proceed in faith. In that faith in which the Lord bids us rise and walk will be found the strength needed to do His will.

**9. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath.** The cure was both instantaneous and complete. Christ saves, saves us with a perfect and eternal salvation the moment we believe. Solomon wrote, **“I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it”** Ecclesiastes 3<sup>14</sup>. The Lord did nothing but speak, and the miracle was accomplished.

The miracle of creation was at the word of the Lord, the miracle of salvation is at the word of the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ does a complete work each time. There is development and progression within a species even as a baby grows to maturity, the miracle of life but the inherent result is predetermined by the plan and purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**10. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, it is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.** When we surrender to the Lordship of Christ we must expect to meet with criticism. A life ordered by the Word of God will inevitably be met with opposition. Generally it is other religious groups that are fiercest in their opposition. Today we see the antagonism of Islam, Catholicism, Pentecostal groups and many other ‘Christian’ religions and sects, most of them claiming to be following the teachings of the Word of God. We must not subscribe to their creeds and observances, their rules of conduct may be laudable but if they think wrong of the Lord Jesus Christ then it is not a Christian faith true to the Word of God. The Lord Jesus Christ knew what the response of the religious people would be if this man carried his bed on the Sabbath day. The Law of the Jews was not always the Law of the Lord; as is common in all groups designed and run by man there are rules calculated to suit the leaders of that company. So it was with the Sanhedrin, the rules promulgated for the Jews kept them in subjection to the rulers with legalism and a system of punishments that bred fear in the people and disregarded the genuine needs of an individual.

**The Sabbath**, cessation or end as in the end of the first week, the seventh day appears in Scripture as the day when God rested after finishing the work of creation, [Genesis, 2<sup>2, 3</sup>](#). For about 2500 years of human life recorded in the scriptures no mention is made of the Sabbath. Then the Sabbath was revealed to the Israelites and invested with the character of a "sign" between God and the people He chose to be His, Israel, and it was a perpetual reminder to Israel of their separation unto God, [Exodus 16<sup>23</sup>](#); [Nehemiah 9<sup>13,14</sup>](#), and made a part of the law, [Exodus 20<sup>8-11</sup>](#), [Exodus 31<sup>13-17</sup>](#). It was observed by complete rest for all except the priests for they had the responsibility of the continual burnt-offering and with the annual feasts, feasts which in their designation were Sabbaths even when they did not fall on the seventh day.

The seventh day Sabbath was never made a day of sacrifice, worship, or religious service for the nation of Israel. It was a day of complete rest for man and beast, a humane provision for man's physical needs. The Lord Jesus Christ said **The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath**, [Mark 2<sup>27</sup>](#).

The Christian 'first day' perpetuates in this dispensation of grace a principle that one-seventh of the time can be set aside to the Lord without detriment or loss to the individual or group. The nation of Israel kept the seventh day religiously, the Christian keeps the first day out of love for the Lord. The Sabbath commemorates God's creation rest, the first day Christ's resurrection and the rest a believer can enjoy in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the seventh day God rested, on the first day Christ began actively building His church, a work that has not had a day of rest since the work was started. The Sabbath commemorates a finished creation; the first day is a reminder to all Christians of a finished redemption. The Sabbath, from sunset to sunset, was a day of legal obligation, the first day of the week, Sunday, is one of voluntary worship and service.

All Christians need to be reminded; **Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage**, Galatians 5<sup>1</sup>. Unfortunately most opposition comes from religious, even Christian groups. This healed man did not enter into an argument about religious beliefs. The evidence of a miracle was irrefutable. The religious leaders were offended because someone outside their Order had done what they were incapable of doing; not to be outdone they chose to denounce the work of the Lord. The Lord's work is seldom executed as expected by the establishment so it is not surprising when gatherings of believers are given a bad name by so called Christian religions.

The Jews, practising religious Jews asked of him, 12. **What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk?** This reveals to us the spiritual ignorance of the leaders among the people. This man had been given mobility; he obeyed the command given to him still not perceiving it was the Christ; he was obedient to the command of the Lord. The religious leaders were in a position to know it was a miracle and not a breaking of the law.

Note we go on to know the Lord; growth follows birth; knowledge and understanding are acquired with time and effort in the presence of the Saviour with the Bible open and studied. The Lord Jesus Christ ministered without fanfare; ostentation or heralds to announce His coming to a village. There was never any preparation of a venue, never an advertising campaign, and never any advance party to check out the land or people. The Lord Jesus Christ never sought to be popular or the centre of an admiring crowd. The Lord avoided the popular acclaim of the crowds; He received not **honour from men**, John 5<sup>41</sup>.

Does this teach us something about modern day evangelists and evangelism?

**13. He that was healed wist not who it was** that effected the cure for the Lord had moved on among the crowd. He was no longer hindered by his immobility so took the opportunity to go to the temple. This was where the Jews were taught to go to thank God for his blessings. In the temple they could recount the blessings bestowed on them. Shame it is on the leaders of religion when they do not see the work of God when it is clearly displayed before them; when they criticise the person who does the work of the Lord and vilify the person who has benefitted. The Jews had only criticism when this man decided to give praise in the temple. The Lord Jesus Christ is the one whom we should praise and thank for our salvation; the person or means He uses are secondary and not worthy of acclaim.

**14. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.** It was not difficult for the Lord to find the man He had healed, He knows the whereabouts of all His own. Crowds do not impede Him or make it harder for the Lord to meet with His saved ones. There was a great multitude at the pool waiting and wanting to be healed and I think many wanting to see the renowned miracle of the place re-enacted, verse 3, the healed man moved away from the multitude.

It may well be that this man had an unfulfilled desire to meet with others in the Temple at appointed times and was hindered by his disability. The work of grace in the life of a person opens up a new realm of desires, meeting with the saints in the house of the Lord is just one of them.

It is nice to get away from the crowds and to be alone with the Lord; those the Lord has healed He does not leave alone. The Lord Jesus Christ has promised never to leave or forsake those He has saved. Jesus finding this man tells us of the care the Lord exercises in keeping in touch with those He has redeemed. The impotent man lost contact with the Lord because of the crowds, many no doubt asking or pestering him for an answer as to who did what and how and when.

When we know who has saved us it is hard to keep that knowledge quiet; the blessing of a conscience free from guilt is too precious to be hoarded and too wonderful not to share at every opportunity. Crowds need never be a hindrance to speaking with the Lord.

**Sin no more** is the directive the Lord gives to this man; we ask is this possible, can he live the rest of his life without sin. I think the basic truth is that the man is told not to wilfully sin, end the habitual sinning, to change his lifestyle to one that puts the Saviour and His interests first. If we sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ. **And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.** 1John 2<sup>2</sup>.

What worse could happen to this man who is confined to bed, without friends? To die without the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour is the worst that could happen to any man; it means an eternity in the Lake of Fire.

**Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him:** After the man understood who had healed him he went and told the Jews, the rulers who questioned him, it was Jesus that had healed him. This he did to make known what Christ had done, to spread abroad His honour. It is the duty of all who have experienced the saving power of Christ to proclaim it to others, to the intent that all those called by the Lord will hear and be saved, be healed of the sickness causing eternal damnation. The healed man's desire was to spread abroad the fame of the Healer: but the blindness and hatred of the religious Jews made them seek to kill the Lord Jesus Christ for doing a good deed, for healing a cripple that had been thirty-eight years in discomfort and without friends.

The religions of the world seek to destroy the proponents of the Truth; the Truth is not compatible with the religions of the world; all of which teach you must do something or other to attain the goal they advocate. The Bible teaches the Lord Jesus Christ has done all that is necessary for the eternal security of all who believe on Him. **They sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath-day.**

That opposition against Christ and His church has always been disguised with a zeal for God and his commands. The opposition borrows a little of the Word of God using it out of context to support their claim. The Pharisees hated the Lord Jesus Christ, so to present their malice in a way that would sway the people they disparage the Lord as one who has no respect for the Law of the Sabbath, seeking to have the Lord put to death for doing this wonderful work on the Sabbath.

**17. My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.** The Lord Jesus goes far beyond the accusation of the Jews stating the example of His Father as His authority for working on the Sabbath. Jesus said unto them, **the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath** Luke 6<sup>5</sup>. The Lord Jesus is the Son of God, plainly stated in His calling God His Father; and as the giver of the Law; the architect of the world and all that is therein, including man, He has the right to do as He chooses on any and every day; **the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath,** Mark 2<sup>27</sup>.

God rested only from such work as He had done on the six days of creation; He is working every day, Sabbath days and weekdays; upholding and governing, providing and keeping all of His creation.

**I work** said the Lord Jesus Christ; I work with my Father. God created all things by Christ, so He supports and governs all by Him, Hebrews 1<sup>3</sup>. The Lord Jesus Christ was working His Father's will all the time He was here in the flesh and the work he begun of salvation, on the Cross, He continues doing to this day. All that go to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith will find He is able to save from the penalty of sin. The work does not end there; He is able to keep all who come unto Him, and to present them faultless before the presence of His Father in a future day.

**18. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.** The Lord's first argument to prove His equality with the Father in essence and nature, is that the Father and He are identical in operation, in desire and the manner of working; the Son does all that the Father does, and the Father does nothing apart from the Son, 5<sup>19</sup>. The Son can do nothing of Himself; as a man, as the Messiah, and as the Mediator, He could only do what He was sent forth to do. Perfect obedience to the will of his Father would not suffer the Lord to do any thing other than the will of His father; as God He could do all things of himself.

This is undeniable proof that the Father and Son are one in nature, essence and being; **What things soever the Father doth, these also doth the Son likewise; and the Son doth nothing of himself, but what he seeth the**

**Father do: 5<sup>19</sup>** therefore Father and Son doing the same things in the same way, together or separately are equal in nature and being; and both essentially, truly and really, God.

God the Father does nothing but what Christ the Son of God does; He only does what God wants done. What God does is the work of God alone and Jesus, God manifest in the flesh, can do whatever God does, and therefore is not a created being. **The Son can do nothing but what he sees the Father do.** Any man or woman may do what God cannot do; they may be in error, may sin. Since Jesus can do nothing but what God does, then He is not a created being; He can neither sin nor act imperfectly. The conclusion from the Lord's argument must be: If I have broken the Sabbath, so has God; for I can do nothing but what I see Him doing. God is ever sovereign over all and I am ever working continually toward the salvation of man. **My Father worketh hitherto and I work, 17.**

**19. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, Verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.** This verse has perplexed many of the commentators, and others have used this verse to deny His Deity. Some theologians suggest the Lord Jesus is limited; to them the words **The Son can do nothing of himself** seem to indicate a shortfall, a blemish in His person. The rest of this nineteenth verse will interpret correctly the phrase in question. Jesus was answering the critics from the authorities who claimed He had desecrated the Sabbath; He was replying to those who sought to kill Him; He was answering His enemies who were furious because He had made **himself equal with God**. In what follows, then, we have the Lord's response to their implied charge of blasphemy. The Son can do nothing of Himself was to do with His Deity and not His humanity.

**The Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do.** Instead of indicating an imperfection, this statement only serves to accentuate excellence as the obedient Son, His total dependence on His Father. In verse 30 a parallel statement is made, **The Son can do nothing of himself** and then the Lord explains His meaning by amplification; **because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.** The limitation the Lord has wilfully chosen was solely a matter of submitting His will, as a man, an obedient and a perfect man to the will of God. **The Son can do nothing of himself**, as proceeding from or originating with Himself. He said in fact, *I cannot act independently of the Father*. Jesus said, John 10<sup>30</sup> **I and my Father are one.**

**20. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.** Greater works than these, greater than healing the impotent man, greater than turning water into wine, the work of saving a soul is far greater. But the greater works to which the Lord refers are those which He now specifies; He will raise the dead and judge the world; He will open the way into the presence of His Father, The Lord Jesus will accomplish the redemption of sinful man. The dead in sin will be offered new life, a new beginning, a new birth.

All creation and redemption is of the Father and all creation and redemption is by the Son. The Father created the universe; the Son created all things. The Father upholds the universe; the Son upholds all things by the Word of His power. The leaders among the Jews did not misunderstand when they concluded that the Lord Jesus Christ claimed equality with God.

**21. As the Father raiseth up the dead.** God has power to raise the dead, we see Him exercising His power through Elijah the prophet, 1Kings 17<sup>22</sup>, and Elisha the prophet, 2Kings 4<sup>32-35</sup>. The Jews did not doubt that God had power to raise the dead. Jesus states categorically He has that power.

**Even so**, in the same manner, by the same authority and power the Lord Jesus demonstrates His divine nature. The power of raising the dead, giving life to the lifeless must be one of the most awesome attributes of God seen by man. As Jesus states that He has the power to do this in the same manner as the Father, so it follows that He must be equal with God.

The Son quickens, gives life to may refer to His raising the dead from their grave, or to His giving spiritual life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. The former He did in the case of Lazarus and the widow's son at Nain, John 11<sup>43, 44</sup>; Luke 7<sup>14, 15</sup>. The Lord Jesus Christ continues to bring from the dead all those who are converted by His power, who are saved by Him. The saved have eternal life bestowed on them making their life everlasting; **this life is in His Son** 1John 5<sup>11</sup>.

It is in the power of the Lord Jesus to give life to any dead person, dead as Lazarus or dead in trespasses and sins. The Lord Jesus Christ has power to put a new heart in a person with new desires and a new aim and a new prospect, taking a sinner from death to life.

**22. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:** This is further proof of the unity between Father and Son and proof positive of the equality of nature of both the Father and the Son. Why is all judgement committed to the Son? Because He has been tested and tried in all points like as we have



without sinning. The Lord Jesus Christ never succumbed to temptation from any source, human or spiritual, from the flesh or the Devil. He therefore is worthy to be the Judge, and will only judge with a righteous standard.

**23. That all men should honour the Son**, since then the Son is to be honoured, even as the Father is honoured, then the Son must be God, worship belongs to God alone as all honour is His. To worship any other thing or person is idolatry. Christ is to be honoured even as the Father is honoured; ergo Christ is not a created being; therefore not a creature, so He is the Creator, John 1<sup>3</sup>.

**23. He that does not honour the Son** does not honour the Father; God will not receive that man's worship if he refuses to honour the Son, Jesus. It is true also that God will not be honoured when any person or thing is put before the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jews expected the Messiah to come with all the pomp and ceremony of a great and powerful Person; they never envisaged God coming as a man with all His divine attributes hidden in human form. Christ, as God, has absolute power of life and death, of condemnation and forgiveness and He exercises this power in complete agreement with His Father.

Jesus having power to judge the world with the Father, shows that the same glory is due to the Son which is due to the Father. **All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.**

All such as pretend to honour Christ, but deny Him to be God, equal with the Father, keep from the Son of God the highest honour. Divine honour is only due to a divine person; to Him that is God.

**24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.** The assertion, **verily, verily**, made by the Lord Jesus is used about 25 times in this gospel narrative. We cannot escape the importance of the words of the Lord; of a truth, most certainly, be assured, without a doubt, truly, reliable is this statement. What follows tells us of the response the Lord Jesus looks for in all who hear His Word. If the Word is heard when preached, when quoted, when read, when remembered or seen in the life of a Christian it can have the same effect when believed. The Word of God applied to the heart and soul of man by the Spirit of God will reveal to the individual the Son of God to the salvation of the soul of that person.

**He that heareth my word**, My doctrine, and believes I am sent from the Father, he who credits my mission as one sent from God, that I am come to give light and life to the world by my teachings and sacrificial death has eternal life. The seed of this life is sown in the heart the moment of belief; of faith in Christ; the believer shall not come into judgment. Judgement and condemnation will speedily come on all who refuse the gospel of the grace of God.

**Hath everlasting life** as a present possession; is passed from death unto life. The believer has changed his allegiance and his destination is changed, no longer is he a citizen of earth and an inheritor of death; he is now a citizen of heaven and a possessor of eternal life. Death is the country where every person without the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour lives. The man who knows not the salvation of God lives a dying life, or a living death; but he who believes in the Son of God has passed from the death, to life.

Readers please accept this reminder that to live in sin is to invite eternal damnation; to live in Christ is to possess eternal life.

**25. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.** This is now the 'hour' when the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ can be heard. When the voice of the Son of God is heard above the noise and clamour of the world and the demands of the flesh the Gospel of the grace of God may be heard. When the devices of Satan are recognised as a ploy of the evil one then the voice of the Lord can be heard. The hour is with us, many all over the world are hearing and can testify to the saving power of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The saved have heard the message, believed the message, the Spirit of God has worked in the heart to the salvation of the soul. Intellectual understanding is not sufficient for salvation, emotional response is not enough to save the soul but together they may awake the heart and mind to the need, then the Holy Spirit can work and bring the individual so exercised to the one who alone can save the soul from the penalty of sin; the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we view this verse in conjunction with the first letter to Thessalonians 4<sup>16</sup> we see another side of the statement by the Lord. **For the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:** John may speak of the dead; those without salvation, still dead in trespasses and sin or those who have died as believers who will be raised at the coming of the Lord; when He returns for His Bride.

**The dead shall hear the voice;** three kinds of death are mentioned in the Scriptures; natural, spiritual, and the second death.

Natural death is when the soul departs from the body, awareness of self and surrounds ends. Separation from God, a spirit without life, spiritual death is described in the Word of God as being dead in trespasses and sin, the

state of all before salvation. The third is called the second death; described in the Book of Revelation. There are three kinds of life; Natural life, Spiritual life, and Eternal life. Natural life begins with birth, (some say conception, at this I will not argue); Spiritual life begins with the entry of the Holy Spirit to the person who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, the Son of God, the Lord who has paid the redemption price. Eternal life is the gift of God to all who have believing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, His death, His resurrection, and His promises, this new life expresses itself in a love and devotion to the Lord and His Word and His people.

**26. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;**

**27. And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.** This life He can impart to whom soever He will. This shows that the power or authority here spoken of was given or committed to the Lord Jesus. The power and authority which Christ speaks of is the power and authority of a mediator. The Lord is given the power of raising the dead and judging the world. This power is invested in the Man, Christ Jesus.; no man before the Lord had this power and none apart from the Lord will ever have this divine power. It is only in reference to His office as Mediator that Jesus is said to be appointed by the Father.

The Son, as Mediator, is subject to the Father; the Son as Man is subject to God, but neither case suggests the Lord Jesus Christ is inferior in any way. He came into the world for a specific purpose, a voluntary course of action in total agreement with His Father, as a Man choosing to be subject to His Father so He could be an acceptable sacrifice for sin.

The Lord Jesus Christ has the right, the authority, and the ability of imparting life to others, whether to raise them from the dead, as in the cases of Lazarus and the widow of Nain's daughter; or to remove the cause of spiritual death and impart spiritual life. The Lord Jesus Christ has in Him as it is in God the Father, the power and control of all aspects of life; animal, vegetable and human; this power is in Him as it is in God. He has control of this power and can exercise it as and when He will.

This commission Jesus received from His Father; to raise the dead, to give life to the dead in sin, and finally to raise up all the dead at the appropriate time and appoint to them the portion before determined. No one could do this but He who has the power of creation; equal in omnipotence to the Father, the one who alone can search the hearts, omniscient as God alone is.

**28. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.** Do not wonder or be astonished at this revelation I am putting to you, write John. All those that are in the graves, all the dead, of every age and nation are described as in the graves. Though many have returned to the dust, decomposed, perished from human view, yet God sees them, and can gather their remains and raise them up to life. The phrase all in the graves is not a statement to prove that the same molecules will be raised up in the same form; it is equivalent to saying all the dead all those who have ceased to communicate in this physical realm. Neither is it suggested that the resurrection will be at the same time for all those who have departed this life.

How are the dead raised up? In what way or manner; by what means. The question is one many raise today; it is a question asked in total ignorance of God and His power and His Word. Some of the dead have totally decomposed and returned to dust. They have become entirely disorganized, scattered, and absorbed in other forms; how shall the atoms or parts be separated and gathered together again in the same form? Some have been burned at the stake, and how shall the particles which composed their bodies be recollected and reorganized? What about those devoured by the lions, or fowls, or fish, and their flesh been food for other animals; how can it be separated, collected and restructured? The decomposed bodies may have been the food of plants, and now constitute vegetation, the leaves, flowers, so how can it be reassembled into a human frame?

**They that have done evil** describe the great company of the unsaved. These **shall come forth**. All they who have died without the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour are the ungodly dead; they will hear His voice, and obey it. They refused to hearken to Him while He spoke words of grace and truth, but then they will certainly hear the call that summons them to appear before the great white throne, where they will receive the condemnation and punishment for not believing. Unbelief is the sin for which there is no redemption. They would not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners, but they will have to own Him as **Lord of the dead**, Romans 14<sup>9</sup>. **They that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation;** it is the **resurrection unto damnation**.

Nothing more awaits them but impartial judgment and condemnation, the formal pronouncement and execution of their sentence, nothing but an eternity of torment spent in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. These have sinned in physical bodies so shall they suffer in physical bodies. Instead of having glorified bodies, they shall be raised in bodies marred by sin and made repugnant by sin. As hell is prepared for the devil and his

angels so all who have not believe on the Son of God will have a body prepared for them, they will be fully cognisant of the reason and unable to argue about the justice of the penalty imposed.

**30. My judgment is just** is profoundly solemn. The Lord Jesus Christ will deal not in grace, but in righteousness. He will minister justice; the opportunity for mercy has passed for those who will stand before the Great White Throne. This once more confirms there is no hope for all who are raised **unto damnation**.

**All that are in the graves shall hear** the voice of Christ and shall **come forth** is proof that He, Jesus, is more than the most exalted creature, more than mere man. Who but God is able to gather all the scattered elements of each person? Who but God is able to act as Judge of all the earth and act without prejudice, justly over all of mankind? None but God can read the heart, and none but He possesses the necessary wisdom for such a stupendous and awesome task as determining the sentence due to each one at that day.

**30. I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.**

**31. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.**

**32. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.**

**33. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.**

**34. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved.**

**35. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.**

**36. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.**

**37. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.**

**38. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.**

**39. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.**

**40. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.**

**41. I receive not honour from men.**

**42. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.**

**43. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.**

**44. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?**

**45. Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.**

**46. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.**

**47. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?**

Here Christ declares to the Jews, and through His word to all of us, that His judgment is righteous because He has no private will, or agenda, or power of His own, contrary to His Father's.

The Lord Jesus Christ, being the same in essence and nature, in power and operation, with the Father, had no personal private will or interest of His own. The Lord Jesus Christ acted at all times and in all things as the Son of God, in agreement with the Father; and as a man, the Son, subordinate to His Father

**I can of mine own self do nothing;** neither as God nor as Mediator for the Father and Christ being one, equal in power, what one did, was equally the work of the other. As Mediator Christ finished the work which His Father gave him to do, the will of the Father, and the will of the Son, being agreeable. As Christ was sent by His Father's order, so He was guided by His Father's will and desires, and they two being one were and always are in total agreement.

**My witness is not true,** says the Lord, not acceptable before the judges if it stands alone. **If I bear witness of myself,** though it is infallibly true, John 8<sup>14</sup>, according to the standard of judgment among men, also set by the Word of God, you will not admit it as legal proof, nor allow it to be given in evidence. **In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established,** 2Corinthians 13<sup>1</sup>, says the Apostle Paul quoting from Moses in the Pentateuch.

**32. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.** Apart from the testimony of the Lord, in His speech and His works there was John the Baptist. A further testimony to prove Christ to be the Messiah was that of John the Baptist. We read earlier in this Gospel narrative, John 1<sup>19</sup> how the Jews were sent to enquire of him, whether he were the Christ, or not; and he denied it, and pointed at Jesus, saying, **Behold the Lamb of God;** yet the Jews refused this testimony of John

concerning the Messiah. Nevertheless says Christ, I receive not testimony from John; he neither added to my witness nor detracted from it.

The divinity of Christ's person, and the truth of his doctrine, needs no testimony from man for confirmation. Notwithstanding this the Lord adds to the list of witnesses with those healed of incurable illnesses and others confronted with their past sin when it was not possible for a 'stranger' to know the details. Jesus can say "if you don't believe my words then believe when you see my works.

This testimony of John ought to have satisfied them. John the Baptist was an eminent man; many of the Pharisees believed he was sent from God; he was straightforward, without ambitious, and sincere, Jesus could have rested His claims on this testimony, John gave proof that Jesus was the Messiah, but Jesus was willing, to offer evidence of a higher and irrefragable source.

Jesus speaks well of John and tells the critics they were once in agreement with the testimony of John. John was a light, **a burning and a shining light**. He had in him the light of life, of knowledge; he was 'on fire for the Lord'. Those whom God calls to a ministry, he equips with abilities to suit their ministry, He gives them spiritual understanding and direction.

The brightest most enlightened in the church have a limited time in this world; they are subject, as we all are, to the limitations of the flesh, though burning bright, it is only for a season and the beam of light should point to none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. John was a burning and a shining light; but now extinguished but his testimony lingers.

**36. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.** Christ submits as evidence of His divine nature His miracles; which only the power of God could perform. Christ's miracles were real and present testimonies of His unity with the Father, and of His divine nature. He wrought His miracles in His own name, and by His own power and authority. The apostles expressly declared the contrary of their own exploits, **why look ye steadfastly on us, as if we by our own power had made this man whole? His name**, the name Jesus, **through faith in his name, hath made this man strong**, Acts 3<sup>12, 16</sup>.

The testimony of Christ's own works, His miracles wrought in His own name, and by His own authority and power, is a clearer confirmation of His being God, of His work, and doctrine, than the testimonies of men; even having greater trustworthiness than John Baptist's own testimony, **that he, John, saw the Spirit descending on him**. I prove that this God bears testimony to me, by my works; these miracles prove by themselves that nothing less than unlimited power could ever do them. You have seen that by my word only, I have instantly healed a man who was diseased thirty eight years. Ye saw the miracle; the man stands before you whole and healthy.

Why do you refuse to believe? Why do you fight the evidence? Why not believe my teaching?

To human eyes Christ appeared to be an ordinary man. Born into a poor family in the most humble surroundings, far from the family home of His mother. As a babe He was carried into Egypt to escape the cruel edict of Herod, returning later with his parents, to grow to manhood in anonymity; working for years, probably as a carpenter with Joseph. There was nothing to indicate that He was the Lord of Glory. He began His public ministry without display and ostentation, as the meek and lowly One. A few poor and unlettered fishermen attended Him. His claims were rejected by the religious leaders; the tide of popular opinion turned against Him; till they cried, **"Away with him: crucify him"** then nailed Him in shame to the cross.

By the year AD 90 maybe all except John, of His disciples *are with the risen Lord in glory*. False teachers are denying His Deity. There was a real need for an inspired, reliable presentation of the person of Christ as the Son of God. The Holy Spirit moved John and motivated him to record various acts and speeches that proved the deity of Jesus. In this record is abundant evidence to satisfy the most credulous of the Deity of the Lord Jesus. It is to the written word God now refers all who desire to know the truth concerning His beloved Son, and in the Word of God, the Bible, is presented the "many infallible proofs" for the divinity of our blessed Redeemer. Many salient points are to be found in John's Gospel.

Earlier in this chapter we considered a remarkable miracle performed by the Lord Jesus which clearly and amazingly displayed His Divine power. He singled out a hopeless case from among a crowd of needy people and by His spoken command made whole one that had suffered with an infirmity for thirty eight years. Because this miracle had been performed on the Sabbath day, the Jews persecuted the Lord Jesus. In gracious condescension the Lord replied to the criticisms by giving a powerful declaration of His unity and equality with the Father; the uniqueness of God manifest in the flesh.

**37. the Father --- hath sent me, the Father --- hath borne witness of me.** Here the Lord Jesus Christ puts forward the testimony of His Father, that He, Jesus, was the true and promised Messiah. This testimony was given at His baptism and His transfiguration. God the Father owned Jesus Christ to be his Son, by an audible

voice from heaven, saying, **this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.** The Father's declaration from heaven of Christ is greater than all the testimonies given concerning the Lord here on earth by man; greater than John's witness and greater than His miracles. At the baptism of Jesus the presence of the Triune God was evident when that testimony was given, Matthew 3<sup>1-17</sup>.

**Ye have neither heard his voice,** not that my Father ever appeared visibly or spoke audibly to any of you; but He did convey the truth by the mouths of His prophets.

We should note several things related to the miracles performed by the Lord. They were many and varied, and defied the natural course of events. They were not done in a corner but generally before many witnesses, often before those who proved to be enemies. They were usually works of love, the Lord Jesus having compassion, seeing a need and so helping man, not as an exhibitionist or for self glorification. The miracles of the Lord were clearly seen, they would stand after the most rigorous examination as having defied the natural course of events. They were not performed to impress an audience, occurring simply in the course of the Lord's ministry. There is no comparison of the miracles of the Lord with the false claims of those who claim miraculous powers of healing today in many 'Pentecostal' denominations. The cures of Christ were instantaneous, complete and perfect, and irreversible; never defective, deficient or disappointing.

God continues to 'speak' clearly through creation, the sustaining of all things by the word of His power, the gift of life, the salvation of countless thousands, and the miracle of all living things.

**38. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.** When the Word of God is believed and it finds an abiding place in the heart, then, and only then will a person be saved. The Word of God was among the Jews but not abiding in the hearts of the majority, the Word was in the mouth but not in their minds. To read the Scriptures, the Word of God and yet to miss out on salvation, through the false teaching of man, the religious perfidy of sects and self righteous zealots, is the work of the enemies of the Cross. Reading the Bible as a book may also cause the reader to miss the truth. David said in the Psalm 119<sup>11</sup>, **Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.**

There is a responsibility placed on each believer to search the scriptures to see whether these things are so. We will have to answer to God for following false teaching, for not doing what the Word of God teaches, for exclusivist behaviour, and all other forms of religion not conforming to the Word of God.

*My life will testify to what I believe. My eternal destiny is directly related to what I believe and what I believe concerning the Lord Jesus Christ is the benchmark.*

**39. Search the scriptures;** the Lord Jesus Christ instructs us to look carefully and diligently into the Word of God for the truth about Him. The writings of Moses and the prophets are ample proof of the veracity of the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ. **Search the Scriptures,** here is a command from the Lord to all who would know who He is and why He is here. The command is to **Search,** not merely read. Look carefully at the writer, his character, his place in the Hebrew economy, the content and the subject he writes of. In like manner we are to study God's Word, carefully examining each expression, and ascertain and make certain its meaning from previous usage and the then current use. The Scriptures testify of Christ more clearly than the testimony of man. The Lord Jesus Christ instructed these Jews to look carefully and diligently into the Word of God and there to see that He was the one spoken of, the one prophesied to come.

We have a **more sure word of prophesy** as we can see the fulfilment of the prophetic word in many areas. In the nation of Israel, the formation of the Church, the persecution of Christians, the rise of heretical sects and not least in the spread of the Gospel.

**39. Search the scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.** This imperative comes to all, though spoken originally to those who thought the scriptures were all that was needful for eternal life. They had missed the point of the record God had preserved of His dealings with the Children of Israel; the scriptures all pointed forward to the Lord Jesus Christ. Types, prophesies, quotes, direct references and certain characters spoke plainly of the coming and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We can only know God in the person of His Son, the Lord, Jesus Christ. To rely on the scrolls, the temple, the priests, the ordinances or even the sacrifices gives one a false hope. Ritual never saved anyone nor prepared a soul to meet the Life giver. Eternal life is a gift of God for anyone, and all who believe Jesus to be the sacrifice God planned; a perfect man to bear the penalty of sin. The Old Testament lays out in detail the plan of God for all mankind and the New Testament explains the Old Testament and details how each of us can experience the grace of God in salvation.

**40. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.** Life in the flesh has not the importance of life in the spirit. The Lord speaks of 'life' to people 'dead in trespasses and sin', people unaware of the salvation offered to them. He says, Though you search the Scriptures, in hope of finding the Messiah and eternal life, yet you will

not come unto me, said the Lord Jesus Christ, you will not believe in me, and be my disciples, though my words and miracles testify as to who I am you show a reluctance to believe.

**Ye will not** is clearly a case of choice, the Lord offered Life and the people refused to accept the gift offered. Eternal life makes a person whole; life in the flesh only is death in the spiritual world; unsaved is dead in trespasses and sin, unsaved is not Born Again, unsaved is out of fellowship with God. Unsaved is the state of all prior to faith being expressed in the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself as a sacrifice for sin so that all who believe should escape the penalty of sin; death and eternal damnation. **Ye will not** is clearly the case for the majority of mankind in the world today. Many have heard of the Lord Jesus Christ and all have the testimony of creation and all have a conscience. The conscience may be seared in many people in 'Christian' countries, they having had small doses of Christian teaching over many years causing them to build immunity to the truth; the creation is said by the many to be an 'accident' and Jesus, the Christ is to them no more than a man. Hearing peculiar aspects of the truth has led to the rise of the various denominations, unbalanced and even unsaved people claiming to be Christians; following the false teachings of a man or woman; failing to check the promoted doctrines against the Word of God.

**41. I receive not honour from men.** I do not need you or your testimony to prove who I am. What I do is never to put myself forward; I act neither through self-interest, pride nor vanity. What you say concerning me can add nothing to me, nor can you say or do anything that will injure me. **I am.**

**42. I know that ye have not the love of God in you.** What a deplorable state the Lord declares the people to be in, void of all true love to God. Love is the fountain of all good activity; love of God is the basis of all true obedience to the Lord and His word. The Jews would not come to Christ because they had no love for God in them; their love and concern was for the Law and the Temple; material things. They had developed a love of ritual and a concern for the religious state of the people of God without a spiritual concept. The scrolls and the building that housed them and the scribes, the Sanhedrin, the priesthood all conspired in their own ways to safeguard their position in the society.

**43. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; but if another (a seducer) should come in his own name, him ye will receive.** Though Christ was the Ambassador of His Father, the Son of God, and had His mission and His testimony from heaven, yet He was rejected, while impostors and deceivers, false Christs and anti-Christs were received and acclaimed, their claims accepted without accreditation or authentication.

**44. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?**

Is not this happening in Christianity today; many come in their own name, with accounts of deeds performed, and substantiated by man sometimes contrary to the Word of God. Many congregations are built on the exploits of man, the claims of 'Christ at work'; where the proponents build their reputation and wealth, increase the number of their followers, erect large buildings and claim it is God at work. Is it not recorded '**not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.**' The Lord Jesus Christ said He would build the Church and His way does not include ornate buildings, huge congregations, paid performers to entertain the saints, or a minister paid to do the work God expects all His children to be doing.

There is no reward for me if I let another do the work.

**45. Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.**

**46. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.**

**47. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?**

You have accused me with breaking the Law of the Sabbath; I have shown that to be a false accusation. I could accuse you, and substantiate the accusation, but this I do not, for Moses, in whom you trust, accuses you. You read the law he recorded, acknowledge you should obey it, and yet fail in both the letter and the spirit. The law Moses gave to you from God accuses and condemns you.

We have a propensity to change the rules or give to the rules an interpretation to suit ourselves. We do this with Christian festivals, Christmas, Easter, Whitsun and many other days, the church leaders adapting pagan festivals to a pseudo-Christian application which deceives many true believers who do not search the Scriptures to see whether these things are so. It could never be proved that using pagan festivals and customs draws non-Christians to embrace the truth. What it does do is distract Christians from the basic truth and lead them on a path away from the Lord and His word. Habits established over many years have become accepted and now are impossible to break; the major Christian religions give to these days a Christian inference thereby deceiving many. If we return to the Bible and the record it gives us of God's dealings with mankind then we avoid the pitfalls created by man's interference and false interpretations.

The Bible, both Old Testament and New Testament are God's word, the basis for faith. God's word is the instruction manual, God's word is the ultimate authority for all who claim to be Christian. Pastors, teachers, evangelists, elders, deacons, all have a duty to present the Word of God to those for whom they are responsible; interpretation is not permissible for that is based on human understanding. The Holy Spirit will give comprehension and discernment to those genuinely seeking the truth.

**How shall ye believe my words?** The Lord asks. We believe the words of the Lord because we have experienced the blessing of sins forgiven, the removal of guilt, the answer to prayer, and the fellowship of the saints, and not least the insight the Holy Spirit gives to us as we meditate on the Word of God. We believe the Bible to be the Word of God because we experience first hand the truth of the Word as we apply it to our lives in all aspects and relationships.

**He wrote of me,** Moses quoted the prophecy of Jacob, Genesis 49<sup>10</sup>, **The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until SHILOH come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.** And in Deuteronomy 18<sup>18</sup>, **I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth.** Moses pointed out the Messiah in the many types found in the history of the patriarchs, the ceremonial laws, and in the sacrifices. All these foreshadowed the birth, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The prophets also prophesied of the coming of the Lord and in prophetic terms described His life and relationship to His father and the work He would do as the Saviour.

There are reckoned to be many more references to the Lord Jesus in the Psalms and prophets, direct reference, type, and example than I can record here.

The Lord stated His nation, the Israelites, had enough evidence to ascertain the truth; we who have the further record of the life and exploits of the Son of God, His personal testimony and the simple declaration He made; **I and the Father are one** need no more. Faith in the Person, the object of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, is all that is required for eternal security.

## Chapter 6 verses 1-15

1. **After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.**
2. **And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.**
3. **And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.**
4. **And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.**
5. **When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?**
6. **And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.**
7. **Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.**
8. **One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,**
9. **There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?**
10. **And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.**
11. **And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.**
12. **When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.**
13. **Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.**
14. **Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.**
15. **When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.**

John is careful to maintain a sequence in his recording of the times and activities of the Lord. Eight times he uses the word 'after' in a chronological sense, after these things or after this. There are ten chapters, 4<sup>12</sup>-14<sup>12</sup> in Matthew's record not recorded in the gospel of John.

**1. After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.** After these things refers to what is recorded in the previous chapter, the healing of the impotent man, the persecution by the Jews because this miracle had been done on the Sabbath day, the Jews determination to kill Jesus because He made Himself equal with God. **After these things**, the Lord left Jerusalem and Judea and **went over the Sea of Galilee**. He knew many would follow to see what would happen next or to be the beneficiary of a miracle.

**2. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.** Christ had a comprehensive knowledge of all His followers, the reasons which induced them to follow Him. It was not the excellence of His person, or the truth of His doctrine that drew the multitude after Him on this occasion but the novelty of His miracles. **They saw the miracles which He did**; it is better to have the personal experience of one miracle wrought upon the heart, in change and renewal, than to see miracles in others. We can know and experience the power of the risen Lord working in us personally; follow the Lord according to His word and thereby have a testimony that will cause others to ask what caused the change in us. That change observed by peers may be the start for them of a journey with the Lord.

**3. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.** This may follow from the second verse, or be connected with verse 1. Verse 2 may be the reason why the Lord retired to the mountain with His disciples, Christ moving away from the unbelieving world. Many followed Him because of the miracles but only a few were drawn to Him as the Messiah. He knew why this **great multitude followed Him**, and it is sobering to see Him withdrawing to the mountain with His disciples. The Christ will not join with the crowds of unbelievers; with their celebrations, festivals, or pseudo Christian events, a lesson we need to heed in this day and age where much store is set on the size of a congregation, of the popularity of a festival or feast. The Lord will not be in the company of an unbelieving crowd apart from the person He is using at that moment in time. His place and where He has promised to be is among His own redeemed in a church situation, or by faith indwelling one of His redeemed according to His promise.

**He went up into a mountain** far above the organised religion, the crowds, into a cleaner place, setting an example for us. We can find a place apart from the crowds, away from the family, separate from work commitments, a place where we can be alone with our Redeemer and commune quietly with Him. The quiet place may at times be with other disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, learning, worshipping and praising, far from the clamour of the world, or it may be in the 'closet' shut off from all that would distract. There is a book we can take into the 'quiet place' it is called the Word of God, the Bible; the voice of God may be heard as we read what He has to say about any given situation or about Himself or the work He intends to do, or the work He would do through His servant. Communion is a two way conversation; we speak and the Lord answers or the Lord Jesus speaks through His word and we answer by following His instructions, obeying His will.

Crowds followed this miracle worker, looking for more exciting disclosures, waiting for another miracle, determined not to miss any further stirring revelations. But something about this crowd was different, they listened to the instructions of the disciples and organised themselves as directed. Jesus said, **make the men sit down**. For 5,000 men, and the women and children accompanying them this was no mean feat. The power of God can work in a crowd as easily as it can work in an individual.

The crowd followed the miracle worker; they saw a good doctor and followed Him, The Passover was imminent; it had **degenerated into a feast of the Jews**. As many Christian holy days have degenerated into holidays and feasts and festivals without Christ. We may easily be caught up in the hype, propaganda and excitement. The physical hunger of the people reflected their unrealised spiritual need.

**Make the men sit down** commands the Lord. The disciples can act though they cannot see what the Lord will do. So they obey His command. The men sit down, and Jesus begins to distribute His blessings. Blessing always accompanies obedience. Obedience is not limited to knowledge; the Lord expects us to walk in the light we have got; the result of an obedient walk is more spiritual illumination. The light we have may barely light the path nevertheless it is what God has given.

**He himself knew what he would do** the blessing He purposed was to flow through His obedient disciples. The Lord Jesus Christ **learned obedience, became obedient**, and obedience is the distinguishing mark of all His servants. **If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. He that hath my commandments and keeps them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him.**

**Make the men sit down**; the activities of the flesh must cease before we can take of the Bread of life.

The Lord asks you and me where we get food to share with the hungry; **whence shall we buy bread that these may eat**. He knows what is in the Larder; He knows how much each person can eat; He supplies what is needed at the right time through personal testimony, Church meetings, Gospel tracts, and example, He supplies through us what others need.



Philip, what is your understanding of the situation? Are you limited to the here and now? Do you see a solution to this problem? Human nature is the same in this twenty first century as it was then. The world is the same, the Devil is the same, and the trials of faith are the same. Philip was confronted with a testing situation. The Lord put him that situation. The Lord's design was to **prove or test** him.

**My God shall supply all your need**, Philippians 4:19

Philip saw the size of the crowd, Philip counted the cost, Philip was limited by his perceived values Philip did not realise the potential as did his brother Nathanael in ch.1.

Andrew saw a limited resource; Andrew did not look beyond the immediate circumstances; Andrew was concerned about the cost of feeding the crowd, Andrew knew the appetite of the crowd was greater than the lad could supply; Andrew lacked faith at this point in time.

The Lord Jesus Christ takes charge of the situation. He gives instruction to His disciples; He gives thanks for the food; He distributes the food to the disciples and instructs them to share in an appropriate way to the expectant crowd. The disciples are obedient giving to those who were ready to receive, giving to those who were seated till all were sated, gathering the remainder, so no food was wasted.

The bread is like the Word of God, able to bring life, able to sustain life. The Word of God is never wasted; the Word of God remains palatable to those ready to receive it.

*The Word of God reveals the Saviour the Son of God, the Word of God is food for the people of God; the Word of God brings life to the lost and sustains life in the redeemed.*

**9. There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes:** We have no record of as to why the lad was so far away from home with the bread and fish. Was this lad returning home with the shopping and distracted by the crowds. We have no sign of rebellion or antagonism at the loss of 'shopping', 'food for the parents', 'midday meal', or 'picnic pack'. This young man was willing to be quiet in the background and let the Lord Jesus use what resources he had in the way the Lord thought best. What a good example of faith is this! How many of us are prepared to give all of our needs without complaint or conditions, to the Lord to do with as He chooses. I wonder how much the Lord returned to the lad. I wonder how the Lord Jesus reimbursed the lad for his willingness to give all without question or promise of return. Of the baskets of bread collected I feel sure the lad continued his journey home from this special outdoors meal with more than he let the Lord Jesus Christ have. Of the twelve baskets collected how much was returned to the lad who gave his five barley loaves without questions?

A.W. Pink wrote, *The loaves were augmented by division and multiplied by subtraction! We are never impoverished, but always enriched by giving to others. It is the liberal soul that is made fat Proverbs 11<sup>25</sup>. We need never be anxious that there will not be enough left for our own needs. God never allows a generous giver to be the loser.*

**12. When they were filled;** God cannot give less than is needed to meet the present requirement. Philip thought only of a limited amount, **that every one of them may take a little**. The Lord would show the extent of God's grace, Philip the limitation of unbelief.

Christ continues to feed from His own inexhaustible resources, and when He feeds His people He leaves no genuine desire unfilled. Christ alone satisfies His people even as He promised. **He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.** John 6<sup>35</sup>.

**12. Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.** We cannot give to the Lord to increase His abundance, all our giving depletes our natural resources yet the promise is to us from the Lord Jesus, **Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.** Malachi 3<sup>10</sup>. All were filled from the dedicated supplies of a lad when those supplies were multiplied by the Lord Jesus. Countless sinners have been saved and their souls satisfied, their bodily needs met and their spirits enriched from this source of blessing; the riches of God's grace are still sufficient to meet every need of all the believers.

**Gather up the fragments** of time that may be wasted, **gather up** the emotions wasted when spent in the wrong place or on the wrong things, is a word that comes to us all. Gather up the fragments of leisure when the time belongs to our employer. Gather up your tools at the end of the day and clean and prepare them for the next day's work. Our sluggish service, our cold affections, our neglected duties are areas where we need to adjust our time and energies and plans.

15. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone. The miracle was convincing proof to many that Jesus was the Messiah. They saw that Jesus was not the person to put himself forward to a place of prominence, to assume the trappings of official recognition as a ruler. They thought they would proclaim him king, and so force Him into

that office. We cannot dictate to God, supposing we understand what is right and best in any given circumstance, better than the Lord does. The Jews were fond of ceremony and authority, but Jesus sought quietness out of the limelight. Though He had rightful claims to the honour and respect of the nation, yet Jesus did not want it in this manner. It is not fitting for us to make the Lord Jesus Christ a figure of pomp and ceremony; He was meek and lowly and His true followers are brought to a like manner by the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

**He departed again into a mountain himself alone;** his previous mountain experience, v3, was with His disciples; now Jesus is alone on the mountain. Alone is probably the wrong word to describe the Lord on the mountain. He teaches us He will never leave us or forsake us, but He suffered the separation from man and His God for a time when on the Cross. Here Jesus was 'alone' with His God setting an example for us; we each need time to be alone with God. When human honours were offered to the Lord, almost forced upon Him, He sought a quiet place alone with God. This teaches us to be very wary of the honours man bestows, to go to the Lord in prayer, to discover the will of God. The applause of man can easily distract us. Nothing is better able to keep us humble than to be alone with God in a quiet place; to shut out the world, with all its honours, privileges and distractions; and to realise that the great God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, would like our undivided attention.

### **Chapter 6 verses 16-21.**

**16. And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea,**

**17. And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.**

**18. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.**

**19. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.**

**20. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.**

**21. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.**

The disciples decided to travel without the Lord Jesus, what a drastic mistake! They **went down to the sea. But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt**, Isaiah 57<sup>20</sup>; this the disciples found to be true. The danger the disciples were in was decided by the Lord as a test for them, the difficulties they faced after seeing and experiencing Christ at work would stand them in good stead in later times. They were tossed upon a tempestuous sea; the Lord Jesus was not physically with them.

It is not unusual to be tested after being blessed; blessing may precede a time of testing thereby enforcing the lesson learned. The blessing encourages us to go on with the Lord and the testing strengthens our faith. With the Lord the disciples witnessed a miracle now without the Lord they are in strife; the storms of life teach us we can never succeed in conquering the problems in our own strength. Many times we will be tested until we learn to cast all our cares on our Lord and Saviour. An uninterrupted period of success and happiness is not promised to the Christian in this life, the Lord Jesus said, **"In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"** John 16<sup>33</sup>.

**Jesus drew nigh** unto the boat; nothing can separate the Lord from His own. Nothing can keep Christ from His redeemed in an hour of need. The disciples had obeyed the Lord and taken the boat, and as all of us at various times, suffered doubts when difficulty arose. The Lord Jesus Christ is always ready to save His redeemed from the dangers encountered in the world. As the disciples in the boat we may not recognise Him immediately, His help is not dependant upon our recognition for He will always look after His own in all the difficulties they face when they are obedient to His directives.

**It is I, be not afraid.** The presence of the Lord banishes all fear; the believer is kept by the power of God unto salvation. The disciples received Christ Jesus into the boat; they willingly received Him into the boat knowing first hand the power He wielded. They were comforted by the presence of the Lord.

The company of Christ is always pleasant and welcome to His obedient disciples, especially so in the hour of trial. No waves can swamp the boat when the Lord is aboard.

**Immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.** The problems of life, at home at work or in our leisure times are resolved the moment we ask the Lord to join us in the experience. That does not mean the broken leg is no longer a problem, or that the debt is immediately paid, or that the broken relationship is repaired. It means that in each and every situation we can be at peace knowing and experiencing the peace of God. It means we can rest confidently in the plan God has for us knowing it will be for the best, the one proviso

being that we stick to the truth, in obedience to the Word of God. The goal may not be reached, the end desire not achieved but as we rest in the Lord peace is guaranteed, we reach landfall with the Lord Jesus.

**22. The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone;**

**23. (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks :)**

**24. When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.**

**25. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?**

**26. Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.**

**27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.**

**28. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?**

**29. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.**

**The people which stood on the other side of the sea**, the side where Jesus remained to pray were surprised by the Lord's absence. Of the multitude many had deliberated and concluded the Miracle-worker should be their **king**, so they met early in the morning to give to Jesus earthly honours. He was nowhere to be found; they knew that on the previous evening there was only one boat on their side of the sea, and they had seen the disciples depart in this without the Lord. Evidently He exercised some miraculous power to leave the place without being seen; to leave unseen the Lord displayed a power equal to multiplying the loaves and fishes. This crowd 'hired' or 'commandeered' the boats which had just arrived from Tiberias, they crossed over to Capernaum, in the hope of finding the Lord Jesus there. They were not disappointed.

**26. Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.** Could this verse teach us something about the way we entice men and women into our church buildings, halls etc. Are people attracted to the food? Sure we use the opportunity to preach the gospel but why did the people come? Are a certain age group entertained by the 'music' or 'Christian film' or performance of an actor or artiste?

The Lord Jesus knows the hearts of each person, on the stage, platform, audience and congregation and can meet the spiritual need of each one when the individual agrees with God that all have sinned and have need of a Saviour. The unsaved may be attracted to the crowd, the building, the entertainer, or be amused by the program but if what is put before the people is less than the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ then the time is wasted.

The crowds flocked to see the Lord Jesus because they were fed. The miracles which Jesus wrought were proof that He came from God. To seek Jesus because they had seen Him and shared in the miracle, and were convinced by the miracle that He was the Messiah would have been a laudable reaction. To follow Him simply because their wants were supplied was a selfish motive. Many seek the association of Christians from no better motive than this. They suppose that it will add to their wellbeing or happiness, or they will be healed of an ill or have their conscience eased. Some even suppose Christianity will make them wealthy; all this is mere selfishness. If any of these motives are the main motive of our fellowship with the Lord's people we are not Christians.

**27. Labour not for the meat that perishes.** This does not forbid honest labour for our daily needs, the needs of the family or dependents, 2Thessalonians 3<sup>12</sup>. **If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel**, 1Timothy 5<sup>8</sup>. To make the things of this world, food or material possessions our main concern is what the Lord condemns. The things of the world are meat that perishes. Worldly wealth, honour, and pleasure, are meat; they feed the fancy (and many times this is

all) and fill the belly. These are things which men hunger after as meat, and are never satisfied with. It is foolishness for us to labour for and set our heart upon things that have no lasting (eternal) value or things that perish.

There is a food that endures, available to whosoever will accept it at the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ. Who gives this meat? The Son of man, the keeper of God's stores will dispense the favours of God freely to all who ask in faith. Who better to distribute the blessings God has for the children in His family than the Son of Man. He alone has power to give eternal life, and sustain it. We are told to labour for it, but even the hardest and most fervent labour does not merit eternal life; the Son of man gives it. It is the free gift of God available to any who ask in faith. The Lord Jesus Christ has authority to give eternal life; **for Him has God the Father sealed.** The Father having given the Son all authority, He gives to us assurance; the unlimited powers the Lord has are proof to us He can do all he says including giving to us eternal life. God the Father sealed Jesus with the Spirit that rested on Him, confirmed by the voice from heaven, and by the testimony the Father bore to the Son in signs and wonders. Jesus said, **all power is given unto me.**

**27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you.** The Lord here means labour for eternal life not simply for the essentials to maintain physical life, and certainly not for excesses in wealth or goods. Labour in this context means we should be earnest in seeking spiritual things; that we should be diligent to get what our souls so desperately need. Salvation is the object of intense desire and to know the Lord is the continuing desire of those who find the Salvation of God.

**For him hath God the Father sealed;** what is meant by Christ being **sealed** by God the Father? It is as **Son of man** that He is here said to be sealed. In this instance the thought is the Lord Jesus is given the authority. His sealing was confirmation of God's choice of a Man and a Sacrifice.

**29. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.** The Jews, who were strict observers of the ceremonial Law of Moses, and believed salvation was theirs when they kept the legal requirements of the Law, inquire of Jesus what they should do to please God? Jesus directs them to believe on the one God has sent, the true Messiah, and to rely upon Him alone for salvation; **this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.**

For a penitent humble sinner to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, is a 'work' pleasing and acceptable unto God. *Christ calls faith the work of God,* it is the work of His plan and execution; it is the work He commands; and it is the work He consents to and encourages. The work of faith in a child of God is initiated by the Lord, continued by the Holy Spirit and God is highly pleased with the result. **This is the work of God.**

The work of God is seen in the creation, in the sustaining and in the order of all things not interfered with by man. The work of God is evident in the continuance of order in the universe; it is most evident in the conversion of a sinner. A sinner who realises death and hell are the sure result and punishment of sin has the chance to move from the path of death to the path of life. A personal revelation of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man is the work of God commenced in a person and the work continues when the sinner seeks salvation. Salvation is that we believe Jesus is the Son of God sent into the world to be the Saviour. John 5<sup>17</sup>  
**But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.**

**30. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work?**

**31. Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.**

**32. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.**

**33. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.**

**34. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.**

**35. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.**

**36. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.**

**37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.**

**38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.**

**39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.**

**40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.**

**41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.**

**42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?**

**43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.**

**44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.**

**45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.**

**46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.**

**47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.**

**48 I am that bread of life.**

**49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.**

**50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.**

**51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.**

**52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?**

**53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.**

**54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.**

**55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.**

**56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.**

**57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.**

**58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.**

**59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.**

**30. What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work?** We need a miracle to share in, not one done in some other place; what will we see to convince us that you are someone special. We missed out on seeing you break the loaves; we were too far away, we only have the word of others. Do something now that we may see and believe.

Miracles are lost on persons whose hearts and minds are centred on the perishing and material things of the world, those whose minds are filled with prejudices against the truth. All without faith are in the same position, relying on sight, misleading sight.

I have a good example of sight being deceptive; in the mornings when I walk, often as the sun is rising ahead of me; the light on the road and objects discarded or left for a variety of reasons gives to those items a false colour, false shape, false size and a false material impression. It is not till closer inspection the error is discovered. So many people think they have heard or seen correctly yet have a distorted understanding because the light is shaded, reflected by a distorted mirror or through flawed glass. The Word of God is the only accurate source of the truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, His salvation, His keeping power and His return for the Church before the Tribulation.

It is probable that this request was put by other Jews, possibly rulers of the synagogue who were present now having heard of but not witnessed the feeding of the 5,000; those men were continually asking for signs and proofs that Jesus was the Messiah, Matthew 12<sup>38, 39</sup>; Mark 8<sup>11</sup>; Luke 9<sup>29</sup>. Jesus claimed the right of teaching them, and it was apparent that He would not teach them as Moses or the prophets, so it was natural to ask Him by what authority He claimed the right to be heard. These religious leaders were doing the right thing in determining who this Teacher, miracle worker was, and the pity is they did not accept the evidence as presented to them.

**31. Our fathers did eat manna in the desert;** the Jews truly believed and taught Moses gave the Manna. The Lord Jesus Christ immediately refutes that claim by saying;

**32. Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.**

There is a basic difference between Manna and Bread, the word used by the Jews, translated, is a question; *what is this?* The Word used by the Lord Jesus Christ is a word meaning *this is the Staff of Life*. The Word of God will correct all our errors, will lead us to the truth and will give to each of us who ask knowledge and understanding. Wisdom will result as we live in the light of the truth God has revealed to us. God gave to the Children of Israel the necessary food in their wilderness journey, throughout their travels they were not without

the needed sustenance; God supplied manna from heaven; not just one meal. Their daily requirements were met for years because God is faithful and will not fail in doing what He has promised.

The Word of God is food for the soul; food not to be despised; food needing not the addition of condiments, spices or flavours. This 'food' builds up the inner man is the subject of conversation with our Redeemer and the 'bread of life' the saints can offer to those seeking salvation.

A lesson for today comes as a cautionary note; we should accept the Word of God without interpreting it to suit the doctrines we assume. The Children of Israel despised this light bread; **and the people spoke against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loathes this light bread,** Numbers 21<sup>5</sup>.

The Jews mention manna to Jesus because it was a major event in their history directly linked to Moses. Jesus uses this link to make a comparison between Himself, the bread of life, and manna, the bread of Moses. It was not Moses that gave the Israelites manna; it was God responding to the prayer complaint of Moses. It is God that now offers them the bread of life.

The manna was not given from heaven, the abode of God, but from the aerial heavens; often in the scripture called heaven; but Christ **the bread of life** was given, sent by, the Father from His own presence, the glorious heaven. Manna was not strictly speaking spiritual food; it was food to meet a physical need. But Christ is real and spiritual bread, able to give life to men and woman dead in sin; manna did not, could not do so.

Manna was for a limited time and an exclusive people, Israelites only; Christ gives life to all, Gentiles as well as Jews.

**33. The bread of God ----- gives life unto the world.** Christ is the truth and substance of all the Old Testament types, the manna was demonstrably a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. As with all types they do not convey the whole picture. Manna came down from above, so did Christ; manna was freely given, so is Jesus Christ the free gift of God; manna was not fit to be eaten as it lay in the field, but must be ground in a mill, and baked in an oven before it was fit to be eaten.

Christ was ground and bruised by His sufferings, on the cross He endured the fire of His Father's wrath so that He might be the Saviour for us. He was tested in all points as we are so that He could be the Saviour of all that come to Him in faith. Surely Christ is the true bread that came down from heaven.

The manna was gathered by the Israelites daily and sufficient for the gatherer and their dependents, every man had his omer, his daily portion. Thus is Christ in the ministry of the Word the daily portion of His people and He is offered to sinners as the Saviour, and the sustainer of eternal life. All that believe in Him shall share alike in the benefits, as members of His body the Church. They are justified, sanctified and will be glorified with Him. The manna and Christ differ in that the type, Manna, falls far short of the reality, Jesus Christ. The Manna could only satisfy the body and only for a short time. The Bread of Life is quickening, life giving, life upholding and is satisfying for all eternity. Christ gives life to the spirit and feeds the soul, the souls of all believers, whether from among the Jews or the Gentiles; He is the Bread from heaven that gives eternal life to all who feed on this spiritual sustenance.

**35. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life** The Lord Jesus tells us in this statement, this metaphor that He is life giving and life sustaining food, given by His Father to believers to impart and maintain spiritual life.. The emblem is beautifully significant, and like all others used in Scripture calls for long and careful meditation. Bread is a necessary food, in some form basic to most peoples in most nations. Unlike many other foods which are more or less pleasant to the taste bread is essential to our very existence. Bread was in that day indispensable. Without Christ we perish. There is no spiritual life or health apart from the Bread of God which came down from heaven.

Few, if and are allergic to bread, it is the food of both of the highest and lowest in the land. So it is with the Lord Jesus Christ. He meets the need of all in the same way and to full satisfaction. He is able to satisfy every sinner, whether poverty stricken or wealthy, intelligent or illiterate, cultured or uncouth.

The Christian needs spiritual food daily, he needs a daily time with the Lord, with an open Bible to find spiritual food for the day and all the situations the day will bring forth. The Christian who relies on religious forms and ceremonies, books, rallies, or other modern modes of Christianity will be weak and sickly; though he may well appear to others to be 'on fire'. It is failure at this very vital point, daily intake of spiritual food, which is mainly responsible for the weakness and pseudo Christian activities of so many of the Lord's people.

**35. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.** In verse 33 Christ spoke of giving life to **the world**; believers the world over, all the redeemed are those who have this life. Now He speaks of the individual, **he that cometh to me... he that believeth**. A similar order is noticed in verse 37; the **all** is followed by **him**. There is a difference between **believing on** Christ, and **coming to** Him. To **believe on** Christ is to receive God's testimony

concerning His Son, and to rest on Him alone for salvation. To **come to Him** is the act of confident faith in the Lord. The two acts, believing and coming, are carefully distinguished in Hebrews 11<sup>6</sup> **without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is: and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.** The Lord Jesus taught in the Beatitudes, Mathew 5:<sup>6</sup>, **Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.**

We reconcile "*shall never hunger*" and "*shall never thirst*" with our present needs by the understanding of faith. Does the Christian never hunger or thirst? Of course he does as we all do, needing the food and drink for health and strength. The Lord Jesus Christ is speaking of spiritual life, of the fulness and satisfaction there is in Himself alone, not according to our imperfect understanding and appreciation of Him. If we are in difficult, restricted, confined social positions, or limited and cannot rise above the current seemingly impossible straits it is in us, not in Christ Jesus. When we hunger and thirst after righteousness we will be filled. The Lord has promised to fill the hungry and to quench the thirst of those that desire to know Him and he will do so when we go to Him in faith.

*The Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God is the Bread of Life.*

**36. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.** The world has continually said 'seeing is believing'; the Lord Jesus Christ refutes this dictum showing the error of this to the Jews who have seen great miracles. They say what sign will you show to us? so we may see and then believe. They ignore the earlier miracles 'feeding 5,000, the nobleman's son healed, the impotent man walking; sceptical man looks for excuses not to believe.

How like this modern age is that. We see alcoholics stop drinking, we see wife beaters in a loving relationship with their spouse, we see gamblers turn their backs on the cards and poker machines, and we see many changes for the better in people who claim to 'be saved' from the power of sin, living a life of usefulness in the community because they believe the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God and is also their personal Saviour. A life changed from evil pursuits and practices to follow in the footsteps of the Saviour is a powerful testimony to support the truth of the Word of God.

**37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.**

We learn from this that those who come to Christ, and who will be saved, are given to Him by His Father. God promised His Son that He should see of the travail of his soul, and should be satisfied, Isaiah 53<sup>11</sup>. All of us from wherever we come or whichever nation we were born into are inclined to reject the gospel. God, not willing that any should perish gives to each and everyone of us the chance to repent and believe. God graciously gives to us who believe the confidence that He is true and faithful to do all He has promised. He draws the sinner to Himself by His Word and the Holy Spirit; He opens the sinner's heart to understand the Scriptures, as Lydia, Acts 16<sup>14</sup>; and He leads to repentance and faith those who believe the Word He brings to them.

Of all who become Christians through an exercise of faith in the Word of God it may be said they are given to Jesus as the reward of His sufferings, for His death was the redemption price. Paul says Ephesians 1<sup>4, 5</sup> **he hath chosen us in him (that is, in Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."**

Coming to the Lord implies a need; more than a physical need (in this context) for material needs can be met in other ways, coming to the Lord Jesus is showing faith that He can help us, and a readiness to trust Him. The sinner comes to Jesus certain that he is unable to ease the spiritual burden he is carrying without external help; he is poor, and needy, and wretched, spiritually destitute and casts himself on the mercy of the Lord. No individual is compelled to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. They who believe are given to Him by the Father, and though His Spirit works in them to produce faith and repentance, no man is compelled to believe against his will. The Spirit of God moves equally in all men and one chooses life and the other rejects the offer of life. The offer of life is sometimes rejected deliberately and sometimes by neglect, it is a choice the individual makes, a choice for which he is solely responsible.

**Shall come to me** All that are drawn by the Father, John 6<sup>44</sup>, all those who are influenced by the Holy Spirit, and yield to the Holy Spirit's influences: **for as many as are led (not driven or dragged) by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God,** Romans 8<sup>14</sup>. God sent His prophets to proclaim His salvation; He accompanied the preaching with the power of His Holy Spirit. Those who yield are the saved those who do not yield are the lost. Those who come at the call of God, He gives to Christ as the building blocks for the Church, because it is through His blood alone that they can be redeemed. God, by His Spirit, convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment; those who acknowledge their iniquity, and their need of salvation, He gives to Christ.

**I will in no wise cast out**, I will by no means thrust out of doors; I will not chase him out of the house. The Lord Jesus alludes to the case of a person in deep distress and poverty, who comes to a nobleman's house, in order to get relief: the person appears; and the owner, welcomes and receives him kindly, and supplies his needs. Never has the Lord Jesus Christ rejected the plea of a penitent.

**38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.**

**39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.**

**40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.** The Son of God clearly states in this passage His determination to do as His Father directs; His own desires are fully compatible with the desires of His father.

The Son's will was to do as the Father determined without variation or deviation from the pathway set out. The Father's will is for the Son to accomplish successfully the objective set before Him by His Father. The Father and the Son desire that all who see the Son believe on Him. He is the Saviour from the penalty of sin, and the giver of eternal life. There is a promise from the Lord Jesus Christ for those who believe; they will be raised up from among the dead at a future day.

We should take special note of the numbers in verses 39 and 40. The **all** in 39 includes more than man for it is a word embracing the creation also. The **all** of verse 40 is specifically related to the believer. The redemption of the creation and the redemption of the sinner are committed to the Son of God. There is a remarkable development revealed as we read more of God's Word, all things are to be raised at the last day by His power and all the redeemed, given to the Lord Jesus Christ, He will raise them up at the last day. The LAST DAY has vast implications for creation and all peoples of the world and in a special way for the redeemed of the Lord. The LAST DAY may refer to the last day of the Christian dispensation, to the last day for the unbeliever to find faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, or the final time of this world as we know it. However then it shall appear that He has not lost a single one whom the Father gave to Him, has not failed to do all that was promised for each believer.

**Everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him;** it is not sufficient to see Him and hear Him, it is necessary to believe on Him. Many of the Jews saw and heard Him, but few believed on Him. Jesus had said 'all that the Father had given Him should be saved', but He never left a doctrine so obscure that men would misunderstand it to the loss of their own soul. The Father gives to the Son each person who believes; all who believe constitute the stones in the building of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the Foundation Stone. Faith, belief in the Lord Jesus Christ is the cement that holds the Stones together. The edifice taking shape as the Gospel is preached and more believe is called by the Lord Jesus Christ the Church. The Lord adds the stones as and where He sees they fit best.

All the teachings of Jesus, as He preached them, are pure, and consistent; as men preach them, they are often inconsistent and open to misinterpretation, producing in the hearers sometimes despair and sometimes self-confidence. Jesus teaches men to strive to enter heaven, as if they could achieve the goal by their own efforts. Their own efforts are dependence on the Word of the Lord, complete faith in the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. In so doing the Lord gets the glory.

**41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.** The Jews were murmuring against Christ. They were murmuring against Him because He had said, **I am the bread which came down from heaven.** This was a saying that offended them, they were offended at the suggestion that a man in their presence could be from heaven. They were ignorant of Christ's Divine glory, and so were opposed to the thought that this man whom some of them had seen grow up before in the humble home of Joseph and Mary in Nazareth, maybe had seen working as a carpenter with Joseph, should claim to be Divine. Pride of the human heart would not allow the Jews to see beyond the humanity of the son of Mary. They were blind to the teaching of the miracles, refusing the evidence of the scriptures and their eyes. Typically they refused to be indebted to, as they supposed, the carpenter's son.

The truth is they had *no hunger* for **the bread which came down from heaven.** So we ask, what has changed in the 2,000 years since Christ walked in Israel? The people we see today, our neighbours, workmates and sometimes family members still refuse to see more than a mere man when confronted with the Lord Jesus Christ. Pride is responsible for unbelief. Men despise and reject the teachings of Christ because they are not conscience of their sin so do not realise their need of a Saviour. Feeding upon the philosophies of man and the religions of cults, heresies of sects, and the perversities of nominal Christian religions, they have no appetite for the true Bread. When the claims of Christ are accurately presented to them they **murmur** and reject the truth.



**42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?** This shows that these Jews understood Christ's words **I am the bread which came down from heaven** as signifying that He was of God and from God; in this they were quite correct. None but the Lord Jesus Christ could truthfully claim their place was with God prior to being here on earth. This declaration of Christ meant that He had personally existed in heaven before He appeared among men, and as John the Baptist testified **He that cometh from above is above all** John 3<sup>31</sup>; **above all** because the first man Adam and all his family are of the earth; **the second man is the Lord from heaven** 1Corinthians 15<sup>47</sup>. For the Lord to take on humanity required the miracle of the virgin birth; required God to be manifest in flesh. God could only enter this world He created to do the work He planned, in a divine manner. These Jews were in total ignorance of Christ's divine origin. They supposed Him to be the natural son of Joseph and Mary; His father and mother we know. They did not know from whence He came for they did not believe the scriptures concerning Him. His Father they knew not, nor could they unless the Father revealed Himself unto them. Intellectual assent to a religious dogma is not the same as knowing personally and experiencing personally the Lord Jesus as the Son of God and Saviour. The revelation of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ to an individual is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit.

**43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.**

Christ Jesus had in the foregoing verses clearly asserted Himself to be the true bread that came down from heaven, not bread for the body but bread for eternal life; bread for the benefit of all men everywhere. The Jews, understanding the word of the Lord in a carnal sense are offended with Him. They cannot believe it possible for God to be manifest in flesh, for Jesus to have come down from heaven, when they (wrongfully) knew Him as the son of Joseph and Mary. They did not understand His divine nature, His miraculous conception, or believe what He was doing in an inexplicable way was by divine power inherit in Him. They were highly offended at Him for the suggestion He had a divine nature.

Ignorance of Christ's divine nature is the basic reason for the world to reject His claims and His person; the reason why so many blaspheme and use the name of the Lord in a derogatory way, pouring contempt upon His person and work.

Christ Jesus gave proof of His divine nature, by revealing what was in the hearts and thoughts of the murmuring Jews; Jesus said, **Murmur not among yourselves**. Christ knows the thoughts of all and He is aware of the desires of each person, there are no secret thoughts to Him, He knows the inward longings of our hearts. His knowledge of their murmurings was evidence and proof of His divinity, proof that He is truly God manifest in the flesh.

Understanding and intellectual assent to the truth does not constitute faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; it may go a long way towards salvation but falls short. By grace we are saved, through the exercise of faith in the person and work of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Doctrines and demeanour, good works and attendances at meetings, relationships and heritage are not prerequisites for salvation. Salvation is of the Lord, He is able to save all that come unto Him, drawn by the Holy Spirit, knowing their need and relying totally and only upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jews relied upon their heritage, as do many of the adherents to the various religions and sects as also they who say religiously 'there is no God'.

**44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.** By nature we are strangers, we are enemies, unto God. His holiness, when we would draw close to God is daunting and His nature is so pure we are without strength in His presence. We have no moral ground due to sin and we have no spiritual claim for we are dead in sin. This is due to the righteousness of his laws on the one hand and the sinful nature within us on the other hand.

All those who come unto Christ are drawn unto Him; the Father sends His Holy Spirit to convict the sinner. The sinner realising his state of alienation from God and the awful consequences of sin, seeks solace and finds it in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus alone has completely satisfied the claims of God on behalf of the sinner.

The drawing of sinful souls unto Jesus Christ is the special and peculiar work of God by the Holy Spirit. This drawing of a sinner to God is a powerful act, but not compelling, for the sinner must be in agreement and come of his own free will; for God does not draw any against their wills to Christ. The Father draws by gentle persuasion, albeit the awareness of sin and judgement, not by intense force. Impending condemnation and judgement is sufficient persuasion.

All who are drawn to Christ and find the promise of salvation will surely shall be raised up by Him to eternal life in due course. The promise of the Lord Jesus Christ remains sure; **I will raise him up at the last day**. Christ can never abandon any who are brought to Him by the Father. He will raise them from the grave if necessary and present them faultless and complete before His Father; they will be forever with the Lord.

Man's only hope lies outside of himself, in revelation and help from God. This word of the Lord Jesus Christ does not close the door of hope; it opens the singular way of hope. Since it is true that I cannot save myself from the penalty of sin and face the prospect of an eternity without Christ; what can I do? Acknowledge my helplessness and cry out for assistance from God who has shown me my helplessness. If these murmuring Jews had believed what Christ told them about their spiritual state, they would have cried out to the Lord. If the unsaved today would only believe God when He says that the sinner is lost, he would to that God for a Deliverer. Since I cannot come to Christ except the **Father draws** me, then the onus is upon me to beg the Father to **draw** me, to open the way for me; to open my eyes to see the pathway of life.

The unregenerate sinner is in such a state that with an unchanged heart and mind he will never come to Christ. The change which is absolutely essential is one which God alone can produce and He does so by *drawing* that person to see the inherent problem in himself and the solution to the problem in the Lord Jesus Christ. This *drawing* is the power of the Holy Spirit overcoming the self-righteousness of the sinner, and convicting him of his lost condition. It is the Holy Spirit awakening within the sinner a sense of need. It is the Holy Spirit overcoming the pride of the natural man, so that he is ready to come to Christ having exhausted all other means of securing peace. It is the Holy Spirit creating within a man or woman a hunger for the **bread of life**.

**45. In the prophets**, Isaiah, Micah and Jeremiah, but most likely Isaiah; shall **be all taught of God**. This explains the preceding verse. It is by the teaching of His Word and the Holy Spirit that men are drawn to God. This shows that it is not compulsory, and that there is no obstacle in the way of a repentant sinner other than a voluntary ignorance and unwillingness to believe. This helps us to identify the **all** in other passages, like John 12<sup>32</sup>, **I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me**. The **all** does not mean all of humanity, but all who believe or will believe in the Son of God as Saviour. God the Father having sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to save souls, souls are drawn to Jesus Christ to be saved by Him. When the claims of Christ are considered dispassionately the Holy Spirit does work in the mind, and can enter the heart and life on His own terms, at the request of the sinner.

**46. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father** This is very important for it stops the claims of many who would pervert the truth. It was spoken to prevent His hearers, and we who hear by faith today, from supposing that some direct communication from God the Father is necessary before a sinner can be saved. Christ confirms that only those who come to Him having heard and learned of the Father, in the way the Father has chosen, can be His disciples. This does not mean that certain people hear His *audible* voice or are *directly* spoken to by God the Father. Only the Saviour was, and remains in immediate communication with His Father. Today we hear and learn from the Father only through His written Word, read or spoken to us, even sometimes remembered after many years.

No man had seen the Father; but the one speaking had, and He had seen the Father because He is of the Godhead. Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh; He is very God of very God. Because He had **seen the Father**, He was fully qualified to speak of Him and for Him and to reveal Him. No other way could the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ be made known to sinful man; no other way could the light have penetrated our darkened and alienated minds to shine in our hearts; only by the Father's love and grace revealed in His Son Jesus Christ, and then only according to His mind and will.

**47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life**. Every believer in the Christ of God has as a present possession, everlasting life; he is entrusted with this new life on his believing Jesus to be the Christ of God, and trusting in Him alone for salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ reiterates here what He has said earlier. The person who is saved is,

1. Drawn by the Father to see the Son as the Saviour;
2. Hears His instructions by believing the Word of God and acting upon it;
3. Accepts the salvation offered by God, without any additions or subtractions;
4. Is given to Christ Jesus by God the Father and is justified by faith in Christ;
5. Is nourished, nurtured by the Bread of Life; the Word of God
6. Perseveres in the faith under the direction of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God;
7. Cannot be lost, but will be raised up at the last day; and
8. Is endowed with eternal life; the new life from God making the life of the believer everlasting.

**48. I am that bread of life** This is the first of the seven titles of Christ; **I am** titles found in this Gospel, and found nowhere else. **I am the light of the world** 8<sup>12</sup>; **I am the door** 10<sup>9</sup>; **I am the good shepherd** 10<sup>11</sup>; **I am the resurrection and the life** 11<sup>25</sup>; **I am the way, the truth, and the life** 14<sup>6</sup>; **I am the true vine** 15<sup>1</sup>. Each title looks back to the occasion when God appeared to Moses at the burning bush. Moses asked, **Who shall I say hath sent me?** The answer was, **Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you** Exodus 3<sup>14</sup>. In this Gospel of John, we have an expansion of the meaning of these three letters or two small

words; Christ's use of these titles identifies Him with the God of the Old Testament, He whom we now know as JEHOVAH (the anglicised rendition of the Hebrew name) and unequivocally determines the divinity of the Man, Jesus, as the Christ of God, or as God manifest in flesh.

**49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.** Manna is a familiar type of Christ to all Christian denominations. Both came down from heaven; both were freely given of God without any meriting or deserving of men; both given miraculously; both initially unknown as to substance and effect, and origin; both available to all without distinction: both were sufficient for all in every status of the nation socially and economically.

The manna, white in colour, emphasised the Lord's innocence; and sweet like honey made it enjoyable to all who shared in the provision. It was beaten and broken, prepared as food to be eaten, as was Christ on His cross, bleeding and dying, giving His life. The manna was only provided for the people of God as they travelled in the wilderness, and the supply ceased as soon as they came in to the land of promise. We enjoy the benefits now and will realise the full blessing when we are with the Lord in glory. Though the manna was the sustenance of life in the wilderness yet the travellers died. all who feed upon the True Manna, Christ, the bread of life, shall live forever in glory.

**51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven, if any man may eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.** It is evident that Christ is addressing these Jews on the basis of their human responsibility. It is true that none will come to Him save as they are drawn v44, by the Father; but this does not mean that the Father refuses to draw any sinner really desiring Christ as Saviour. That very desire for freedom from a guilty conscience is the proof the Father has commenced to **draw**. Christ is received as the gift from God.

**If any man** (no matter who) **eat of this bread he shall live forever.** Eating is fundamental if the body is to derive any nourishing advantage from the **bread** which this word is intended to convey. Looking at bread and admiring it; philosophising about bread and analyzing it; talking about bread and discussing its composition and its quality; handling it and admiring its texture cannot satisfy the hunger. Unless I eat it, I shall not be nourished by it. This is equally true of the spiritual bread, which is Christ. Knowing the truth, speculating and pondering about it, talking about it or even contending for it, is of no avail. I must receive the Truth into my heart and the Truth become part of my life before any benefit is derived from it. ***Jesus is the true bread which comes down from heaven.***

Eating is normally responding to a need; that need is felt and called hunger, only food will satisfy that need, and only the right food will nourish satisfactorily. When one is hungry he gladly takes that which is set before him. Once a sinner is awakened to his lost condition; is truly conscious of his need to have the question of his sin dealt with, when he becomes aware of the fact that without the Saviour he will perish eternally; looking in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ is an easy step. Looking to the Lord in faith, believing what God has revealed by His Holy Spirit is the means to satisfy spiritual hunger, is feeding on the Living Bread.

Eating implies taking nourishment to sustain the life possessed. Not until I eat the food provided does it become part of me. That food which previously was without me, is taken inside, assimilated, and becomes a part of me, supplying health and strength. So it is spiritually. Christ may be presented to me and be seen by me as delightful, I may marvel at the description of His ways and works and look at His life as depicted in the Gospels and still be on the path to a lost eternity. Not until I receive Him as my own and personal Saviour will I be saved from the wrath to come. Being Saved is synonymous with feeding on Christ; is the same as having the question of my sin dealt with so that God can look on me and see I am clean, every whit, because Christ Jesus has bourn the penalty for my sin on the Cross. The Lord Jesus Christ who before was outside, will now indwell me by His Spirit.

Eating is a personal act done by the individual for the individual and no one else can eat on the behalf of another. I must eat. Until you have eaten the Bread of life for yourself, until you have personally received Christ as your Saviour the Gospel will avail you nothing.

**51. And the bread that I will give is my flesh.** Jesus, in giving His flesh was to offer as a sacrifice His own body; voluntarily laying down His life as a sin offering; something no other could do and for which there was no substitute. Christ presents Himself, not only as one who came down from heaven, but as the One who had come to earth to die. This sacrifice was acceptable to God as Jesus was free from sin in all its many forms; sinless in thought word and deed. At this point we come to the heart of the Gospel. This shows me how far short of the standard I am, when I see myself clearly and look at the Son of God and the standard of righteousness He set then I cry 'woe is me, I am undone' who can deliver me from this vile body of death? There is only one answer; hope has fled every one born of woman, every member of Adam's fallen and guilty race is due to die for all have sinned and fallen short of the standard God has set. But wonderful as was the Lord's descent from heaven, wonderful as was His humble birth in Bethlehem, remarkable as was the faultless

life that He lived here for thirty plus years as He lived among men in the body prepared for Him; that was not all.

**51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.** It is only in the death Christ that sinners can find peace and have their spiritual needs met. Jesus gave His flesh in voluntary and vicarious sacrifice for the life of the world; not merely for the Jews, but for sinners of the Gentiles too. His commendable life was substituted for our forfeited life.

**52. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?** These words must have a different meaning from their literal application. These Jews, the leaders in the religious field, argued and discussed **among themselves** what was meant by the Lord. None asked the Lord what He meant though He was fully aware of their dilemma and conversation. *The Lord tells them that, strange and unintelligible, and incredible, and absurd, as His statements might appear, He had said nothing but what was indubitably true and incalculably important.* Dr. John Brown.

**53. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.** This verse and the two that follow contain an amplification of what He had said in verse 51. He was shortly to offer Himself as a Substitute victim, a propitiatory sacrifice, in order to make a full and free salvation for both Jews and Gentiles. Except men **eat the flesh** and **drink the blood** of Christ, they have **no life** in them. Teaching us this sacrificial death must be appropriated, received by faith, if men are to be saved from the penalty of sin and receive eternal life. For a man to have **no life** in him means that he continues in spiritual death and there is no relationship with the Lord as the Saviour. In that unredeemed state, the sinner is condemned.

As Son of man Jesus here speaks of Himself. He could only have suffered death as a man; the incarnation was a precursor to His death. This links the mysteries of the Babe of Bethlehem and the Man of Calvary; the incarnation and the Cross. The Son of God came from heaven to earth in order to die as a man. **But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself** Hebrews 9<sup>26</sup>.

It is not a dead Christ which the sinner is to feed upon, but on the death of one who is now alive forever more. His death is mine, when appropriated by faith; appropriated it becomes life in me. The figure of **eating** looks back to Genesis 3. Man died spiritually by eating of the forbidden fruit and he is made alive spiritually by eating the bread of life

**54. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day** Notice the change in the tense of the verb. In the previous verse it is, **Except ye eat**; here it is **whoso eateth**. Verse 53 defines the difference between one who is lost and one who is saved. In order to be saved, I must **eat** the flesh and **drink** the blood of the Son of man; I must appropriate Him, make Him mine by an act of faith. This act of receiving Christ is done once. I cannot receive Him a second time, for He never leaves me; His promise is to be with me forever. Having received Him as the Saviour of my soul I now feed on Him constantly, daily, as the Food for my soul. This I do by taking heed to His Word and living with His Word as the standard and basis of my new life. This confirms the interpretation of the previous verse. If we compare it with verse 47 it will be seen at once the **eating** is comparable to **believing**. The tense of the verbs is the same, verse 47 believes, verse 54 eats, also present tense. **He that believeth on me hath eternal life; Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.**

This passage does not refer to the Lord's Supper for the following reasons. The Lord's Supper had not been instituted when Christ delivered this discourse. Christ was addressing Himself to un-believers, and the Lord's Supper is for saints, not the unregenerate. The eating and drinking here relate to being saved; eating and drinking at the Lord's Table are for those who have been saved.

**55. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed;** clearly the connection between this and the previous verse is obvious. Here the Lord Jesus throws the emphasis on what it is which must be eaten, taken in and assimilated. It is not simply the eating of anything which will nourish us. Poisons have been eaten and death followed; substances without nutrition have been ingested and mal-nutrition and death the result. It is equally so spiritually; many there are who believed a lie and are on the road to perdition, the state of everlasting punishment in hell that sinners endure after death. It is Christ who alone can save; Christ as crucified, but now alive for evermore and able to save to the uttermost all that come unto Him by faith.

**56. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him;** the saved sinner is brought into vital union with Christ, and enjoys sweet enriching fellowship with Him. It is only the one who **eats and drinks** that lives in unbroken fellowship with his Lord and Saviour.

The risen Christ can dwell in the believer, and the believer, by faith lives in Him. It is with the risen Christ that we, who feed on Him, as the sacrifice, are identified. The Scripture here, for the first time, speaks of *union* with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As meat, food, is turned into the eater's substance, so believers and Christ become one; and by feeding on Him, by believing in Him, that is, who He is and what He has done there follows a mutual indwelling; Christ dwells in the believer, and the believer in Him. This is true of a spiritual feeding upon Christ. Christ Jesus tells us that as there is a real and vital union between the Father and Him, and as the Father lives who sent Him, the same life may be communicated to each believer.

**57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.** How evident it is, again, that Christ is here speaking of Himself as the Mediator, the man sent by God, and not as to His essential Being. It is Christ as the Son incarnate, come down from heaven. **I live by the Father** means Jesus lived His life in dependence upon the Father. This is what He stressed in replying to Satan's first assault in the temptation. When the Devil said, **If (since) thou be the Son of God**, he was not as commonly supposed questioning the deity of the Lord or casting doubt on the Deity of Christ, but asking Him to use His power and position in a self satisfying way. The force of what the Tempter said is this: Since you are the Son of God, exercise your Divine prerogatives, use your Divine power and supply your bodily need. Satan ignored the fact that the Son had taken upon Him the **form of a servant** and had voluntarily chosen to be subjected to all the trials and tests of sinful man. Therefore the Saviour points out to Satan his error, reminding him; **Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.** Now see what the Lord says; **he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.** The Son when on earth lived in humble dependence on the Father, so now the believer is to live his daily life in humble dependence on Christ.

**58. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever** Two different words for eating are here employed by Christ. One means to eat up, to consume, the other means to feed upon, rather than the mere act of eating. The first, Christ used when referring to Israel eating the manna in the wilderness: the second was employed when referring to believers feeding on Him. The one is eating to satisfy bodily needs, the other is a spiritual feeding; the one ends in death, the other ministers' life.

**59. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.** In the synagogue in Capernaum, verse 26; to this verse John tell us what the Lord preached in the synagogue, where He was repeatedly interrupted by the Jews. The synagogue was first a place of teaching and of learning; it became a place of worship after the time of the Lord. The Temple was always the place of worship until its destruction in AD70, then for want of a spiritual centre the synagogue became the place where the people gathered for that purpose.

**60. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?**

**61. When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?**

**63. It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.**

**64. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.**

**65. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.**

This is the final chapter in the Lord's ministry in Galilee. He had performed some wonderful miracles, and had given out some gracious teachings. It was here that He had turned the water into wine; and here He had healed the nobleman's son. He also fed the hungry multitude proving beyond doubt His divine mission; that He was sent from God. Each of these miracles was confirmation of His Deity; that He was sent by His Father to do a special work. He spoke of the Bread of Life; the Truth in veiled terms, and many of those following Him would not hear the truth and be saved for they were very much focused on the here and now. The people had no excuse for not believing the testimony of Jesus and the works He performed; unbelief was deliberate, without excuse. The Lord presented Himself to the crowd outside and to the Jews inside the synagogue, as the Bread of life. He offered to them eternal life through believing He was the 'Bread of Life' giving infallible proof of His deity, to no avail.

**60. Many therefore of his disciples,** followers, learners called disciples as they followed Him in His doctrines and were taught by Him. It does not imply that these were real Christians, but simply that they listened to His teaching, were learning from Him as did students of a rabbi. The doctrines which Jesus taught, offensive to the religious and curious, appear to have been, that he was superior to Moses. That God would save all that He had

chosen and those only. That Jesus claimed to be the bread that came from heaven, therefore the divine source of Life. That it was necessary to eat of that bread and by partaking of the Bread that came down from heaven was the way to enter into eternal Life. These doctrines are still the most offensive to the majority and many, rather than trust in them, have chosen to draw back to perdition, punishment in hell.

In the parable of the Sower only one in four would hear the Word and be moved by it to respond positively to the Lord. This current generation is so far removed and deceived by false doctrines, wealth, self aggrandisement, popularity, and possessions that the percentages are far less, less than one in four hundred, or even four thousand.

**61. When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?** Why should the Gospel of the grace of God be offensive? Why do most reject the truth even though it offers blessing untold? Why is it so difficult for sinners to seek freedom from the penalties imposed? Is it because the heart is desperately wicked? Is it because the sinner enjoys the sin? Is it because it is too difficult to believe? Do most follow the crowd, supposing the majority to be right? Jesus by giving them this proof that He knew their hearts He also proved that He was God; that He could not be deceived, and that it was impossible for Him to deceive any; therefore the doctrine He taught them must be the truth; must come from God.

**63. It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.** This first phrase has been understood in different ways. The word spirit, evidently does not refer to the Holy Spirit for the apostle records the Lord as saying **the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit**. The Lord refers to the doctrine which He had been teaching contrary to their expectations. My doctrine says the Lord Jesus is spiritual; it is food to give life to the spirit and nourish the soul. My teaching is directly from above, from heaven says the Lord. Your doctrine and opinions are plainly physical, they are of the flesh, or fleshly, they have relevance only to the health of the body. You place great value on the doctrine that Moses fed the body; that was of limited duration for your fathers are dead. You want me to feed you with bread and fish, such desires are only of the flesh. The bread that Moses gave and the food which you seek would not be of any value to the saving of your souls.

**The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit**, they have great spiritual import. They are not to be understood literally, as if you were really to eat my flesh, but are to be understood as indicating the need of a provision for the soul. God has made that provision by my coming into the world. Believing on me you will have the Bread of Life abiding in you. It is the spirit, or divine nature, that quickeneth; the flesh, or human nature, alone, separated from God, profits nothing, and can give no life. It is the deity of Christ Jesus which adds virtue and value to the obedience and sufferings of the human nature. It is the spirit, or divine nature of Christ, that gives eternal life to the believer, human nature alone is valueless, of itself profits nothing; and therefore the carnal eating of His flesh would do no good, nor is that the intended meaning of the words of the Lord.

**63. It is the Spirit that quickeneth;** to believe in the saving power of the death of Christ is not an act of the flesh. The Father draws, the Holy Spirit quickens. There must be life before there can be the activities of life; the flesh has no part in the works of God. All the activities of the flesh amount to nothing and achieve nothing in the regeneration of sinners. Logical arguments, emotional appeals, choirs and music may awake the senses yet remain impotent in giving life to the dead. It is **the Spirit that quickeneth**. The natural man will not accept this, pride interferes. The truth is humbling and is often set aside or ignored by the majority in our modern evangelistic campaigns. What is urgently needed today is faithful preaching of God's Word, with the saints humbly praying that God may be pleased to send His quickening Spirit to the work of regenerating sinners. Mere man is useless without the Spirit of God working in him and with him.

**63. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.** This confirms our interpretation of the first part of the verse. Christ is speaking of regeneration, which is the one great need of those who were offended at His teaching, and is the one great need of this generation and indeed of all peoples of the earth. Spiritual things will not be discerned or understood without spiritual life, and that new life is in those *quickened* by the Spirit of God. First Jesus told them who did the quickening; it was the Holy Spirit; now He states the *words* of God bring about that quickening. The Spirit is the Divine Agent; the Word is the Divine instrument. God begets with **the word of truth** James 1<sup>18</sup>. We are **born again of incorruptible seed, by the word of God**, 1 Peter 1<sup>23</sup>. We are made **partakers of the Divine nature by God's exceeding great and precious promises** 2 Peter 1<sup>4</sup>. In this word from the Lord, Jesus explains the words of God **are spirit, and they are life**; they are spiritual, and used by the Holy Spirit to give life.

**64. and who should betray him,** or who would deliver Him up. Jesus knew all things; He knew from the first, from Judas's call as one of the twelve, even from eternity, who it was who *would*, not should, deliver Him up into the hands of the Jews. Should implies necessity and compulsion; would implies that Judas acted of his own

free will, without coercion, necessity or constraint. Judas acting through his own free will, abused his power, and was guilty of complicity in the murder of an innocent man, and deserved the perdition to which he went. The Omniscience of the Lord is evidenced in His knowledge of who would not believe and the person who would betray Him.

**66. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.**

**67. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?**

**68. Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.**

**69. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.**

**70. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?**

**71. He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.**

**66. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.** The words of Christ which were addressed to human responsibility created an offence and many of His disciples turned back. The *drawing* of the Father is exercised according to His sovereign will, is effective in all who sincerely seek; the desire for Christ and salvation is the initial effect of this *drawing*. From the human side men are so depraved they love the darkness and hate the light. From the Divine side any who do seek Christ is because God in His sovereign grace has worked in the heart and mind of the sinner. But God is under no moral obligation to do so. He effectively draws one and not another according to His own eternal counsels and sovereign pleasure, yet leaves the individual fully responsible for the choice. The natural man is offended at this concept; he would prefer to think he is in complete control of his own destiny. Earlier that day many had crossed the Sea and sought Him out; now many turned their backs upon Him.

**66. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.** From what time we ask? From the time that Christ had declared, **No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.** This was too much for the religious, self satisfied, self seeking Jews. They would not stay to hear any more that could upset their complacency. Those who left were **many of his disciples.** It is no surprise when the Gospel is faithfully preached that there is an upsurge of opposition and antagonism. These disciples may be of the number that were ever learning and never coming to knowledge of the truth.

**67. Will you also go away?** This question touches the heart of all Christians and the answer Peter gives is to be expected of all believers. Shall we go to the philosophers, listen to their ravings, and become their disciples? There is no comfort in the philosophies of man; we would die with the one who propounds the nonsense, suffering everlasting loss. The philosophers of the world **are become vain in their imaginations, and, professing themselves to be wise** are become fools. Shall we go to the nice comfortable religions of the world, to the do gooders, and learn from them? Where is the Lord in any of the writings which ignore the Word of God, or have made void the commandments of God? Shall we go to back to the Law of Moses; the Law was a burden none could bear? The only way to peace with God is in following the Lord Jesus Christ; even if it means a cross.

**68. Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.**

**69. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.** The answer of Peter is perceptive and comprehensive; where else can we receive such teaching, behold such wonders? Who is there apart from Thyself who can do as you have done or teach with the same authority? We know not of any who have the power and authority you have displayed. We do not have, nor do our religious leaders have such intimacy with our God! What you have said and done ensures us that you are unique. The words you speak are the basis of eternal life. The miracles you perform confirm the truth you are the Christ, the Son of God. More than all this we are convinced you are not as the gods of the heathen, inanimate objects carved by man or some wood or stone supposedly representing some deity; you are **that Christ**, the anointed of God to perform the work of God in the salvation of man. You are **the Son of the living God** here among men for the specific purpose of redemption; redeeming the purchased possession.

The miracles attracted crowds even as the claims to miraculous powers attract crowds to some Christian denominations today. They who are attracted by sight are often repelled by doctrine; the truth demands obedience.

**70. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?**

**71. He spoke of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.** Peter having made his profession public and it would appear for the rest of the twelve, that they would not leave Jesus, whom they believed to be the Christ, the Son of God; Jesus tells Peter there is a traitor among them. Christ Jesus reads the hearts of all and knew the intention of Judas Iscariot and in a sense warned Peter not to be so quick to conclude all to have the same faith as he does in the Saviour.

Christ knew Judas was hypocritical, but does not reprove Peter for having a better opinion of Judas than he deserved. It is better to be charitable, than censorious, or judgemental and the onus is on a true child of God to determine the eternal destiny of a contact by making the Gospel clear to them. Not that they can do the work that is committed to the Son of God. The responsibility is then with the sinner. Hypocrites and betrayers of Christ are no better than adversaries, as Judas is termed by the Lord. Is it possible many religious people appearing to follow the faith of Christians are in fact adversaries to the truth? Judas cast out demons, and appeared an enemy to the realm of Satan, and was working towards his own ends all the while he was counted with the eleven faithful Apostles.

There are those even today who are chosen by Christ; **have not I chosen you twelve**, to special services, the ministry of the gospel, missionary endeavours, pastoral care, teaching, etc, who yet prove false to Him, seeking first their own ends.

## Chapter 7

**1. After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.**

**2. Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.**

**3. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.**

**4. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.**

**5. For neither did his brethren believe in him.**

**6. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready.**

**7. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.**

**8. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.**

**9. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee.**

**10. But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.**

**11. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?**

**12. And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.**

**13. Howbeit no man spoke openly of him for fear of the Jews.**

**1. After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.** From the words of the Lord, delivered a little before the Passover, to the Feast of Tabernacles, which happened about six months later, many things mentioned in the other Gospels are omitted, which the Lord Jesus Christ said and did during that time. He had already walked through Galilee four or five times; and continued there, because He knew the ill feelings of the Jews was such that they would kill Him if they found opportunity in Judea. The Lord's time to suffer and die was not yet come.

Jesus was no longer tolerated, and could not preach publicly in Judea, to do so was a risk of His life. His time was not yet come to suffer and to die. Jesus was free to minister in Galilee, was He not called a Galilean? The chief priests and rulers in Judea were continually plotting His death; the time was not yet come. Solomon in the Book of Wisdom, Ecclesiastes, tells us there is a time for everything under the sun, and the Lord's time to die was not yet come.

None of us know when our end will come, or how that end will be. Whether through illness, accident, violence, disaster, famine or old age it is imperative we determine our eternal destiny while we have opportunity, while we can decide. There is a Door through which we may pass, opened by the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary, and entered by faith, taking us into the realms of glory. Eternal life is bestowed on all believers, all who enter through that Door, making them fit for everlasting life. The Lord Jesus Christ said, and it leaves no room for doubt or questioning, **I am the door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved.**

**He would not walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him** The Jews are not only to be distinguished from the Galileans, they are of Judea, but are not the common people of Judea. **The Jews** were evidently the leaders, the religious leaders. In 8<sup>48</sup> it is **the Jews** who say to Christ **Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon.** It was **the Jews** who cast out of the synagogue the man born blind, whose eyes Christ had opened, 9<sup>22</sup>, and 34. It was **the Jews** who took up stones to stone Christ 10<sup>31</sup>. It was **the officers of the Jews** who **took Jesus, and bound him** 18<sup>12</sup>. It was through **fear of the Jews** that Joseph of Arimathaea came secretly to Pilate and begged the body of the Saviour 19<sup>38</sup>. Here it was because of the Jews, the religious leaders, who sought to kill Him that



Jesus would not walk in Judea, but remained in Galilee. **His time was not yet come.** By the example of the Lord Jesus, He teaches us not to invite danger, not to place ourselves in places and circumstances before the enemies of the Cross that could give them an advantage by hindering the work of the Gospel. The Lord was careful to avoid confrontation and subsequent persecution till His time was fully come. We should do all that is expedient to preserve ourselves so that the work of evangelism is not hindered; that we may continue to spread the Gospel without restraint. It is not said of the Lord He *dared* not, but, He *would not*, walk in Judea; it was not through fear but because His hour was not yet come. The Gospel is hid to them that are lost and taken from those who refuse it and those who go about to discredit it. Christ will hide His face from those that spurn Him.

In times of extreme danger and persecution it is advisable to seek our own safety that the Gospel message may continue to go forth. But when the Lord sends us into places where we are in danger then into danger we must go; He is able to preserve us in the most adverse situations. The Lord Jesus did not sit still in Galilee, nor did He hide there, but walked; He went about doing good. When we cannot do what we would like to do in the service of the Lord, then we must do what we can do. The proviso is that we do as the Lord teaches and as the Holy Spirit guides, for then the ministry will be spiritually fruitful.

**2. Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.** There were three great feasts which the Jews celebrated every year; the feast of the Passover, the feasts of Weeks, what we now know as Pentecost, and the feast of Tabernacles. This feast was celebrated on the fifteenth day of the month Tisri, late September, early October. Tisri was the seventh month of the ceremonial, religious year, and the first month of the civil year. Tabernacles or Succoth, took its name from the tents which were erected in public places, in courtyards, on the flat roofs of their houses, in gardens. These temporary buildings, made of the branches of the olive tree, myrtle, palms and pine branches, thick trees, to make booths, as is written. The Jews dwelt for eight days in these temporary shelters reminding them of their forty years in the wilderness. It was one of the three solemn annual feasts in which all the males were obliged, by the law, to appear at Jerusalem. This feast was observed after they had gathered in the harvest; so it was also called the Feast of Ingathering. Succoth, meaning Booths, was a reminder to the Israelites of their time in the wilderness when they had no permanent abode.

The feast of Tabernacles was a yearly reminder to the Israelites of the grace of God exercised in their national redemption. The Jews, when settled in Canaan, going out of their houses yearly, and dwelling in booths, did testify that present blessings and prosperity had not caused them to forget the times of oppression and hardship, their troubles as slaves/servants to tyrannical masters. The feast of Tabernacles was celebrated some six months after the Passover.

The first time the Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned by name is in Leviticus 23, verses 34-36 and 39-44. The Feast began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, v34. It was a *holy convocation*, when Israel was to offer *an offering made by fire unto the Lord*, v36. It lasted for eight days v39. Those who celebrated this Feast were to take *boughs of goodly trees* v40, and they were to *rejoice before the Lord their God seven days* v40. They were to  *dwell in booths* v42, as a memorial that the Lord Jehovah made their fathers dwell in booths when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, v43. In Numbers 29<sup>12-40</sup> we have a record of the sacrificial requirements related to this Feast.

Though Leviticus 23 is the first time the Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned by name, there is one earlier reference to it in Exodus 23<sup>16</sup>, where it is called the Feast of Ingathering, *when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field*. The Feast of tabernacles was the Harvest Festival, when the Lord of the harvest was praised for all His temporal mercies. This feast was the most joyous Feast of the year. It was not observed by Israel till after they had entered and settled in Canaan. Their dwelling in booths at this Feast was a reminder and a memorial of their wanderings in the wilderness and the grace of God in meeting their temporal needs all through their wanderings.

**3. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.**

**4. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.**

**5. For neither did his brethren believe in him.** The brethren of the Lord here are family members, it is well established that the Hebrews gave the name of brethren to all the relatives, often distant relatives, of a particular family. There may well have been offspring of Joseph and Mary among these brethren or only offspring; we have no way of being sure.

Christ's brethren advise him not to stay any longer in Galilee, in obscurity, but to go into Judea and work miracles there, where there is more likelihood of popular acclaim. Notice the arrogance and presumption of the people in telling the Creator where to go and where to minister. The same arrogance is evident today as we hear the 'prayers' of some telling the Lord He must do this or that to gain the confidence or win acclaim among the

people. What is it in us, except pride, which supposes we can direct the Son of God to do as we ask or as we think best?

**Show thyself to the world;** let as many as possible see what great things you can do. You should receive from man due honours for the miracles you have performed. We can then bask in your reputation being your brethren. This is a subtle deception many have fallen for; public acclaim is not always a sign of God working with a man, often it is the opposite. Surely the reputation and praise of man is a snare many of the Lord's people have been trapped by. **There is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly.** Surely this is why the Lord Jesus tells us to enter our closet and pray in secret; we are not in a position to claim honour for the work the Lord does through us or among us. Praying in secret is a soul-searching experience which may lead to working in the open. It will surely be a refining experience. The brethren of Jesus supposed that He was influenced as so often men are, by repute, public acceptance. It is a common among men to seek popularity, so these brethren supposed Jesus sought to be known for the works He did. As a great multitude would be assembled at Jerusalem for this feast, they supposed it would be a good opportunity for the miracle worker to make himself known. Was this said insincerely, were these brethren adding to the Lord's anguish? If so we may expect the same from our relatives and friends until such a time as they see the change the Lord can bring about in our lives. It appears from this that they did not really believe He was the Christ. How could they believe the miracles and not believe Jesus was the Christ. How can it be that one sees the remarkable change wrought in the life of a lame man, a blind man, a dumb man, a wanton woman, and still not give the honour to the person who wrought the change? There is no evidence that these relatives had been present at any of His miracles, maybe all they knew of the mighty works was from hearsay.

**6. Then Jesus said 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 the works thereof are evil.** These words of Christ must be viewed in the immediate context. His brethren had said; **Go show thyself to the world.** But His time to do this had not yet come, nor would He vindicate Himself by openly displaying His glory. This was the time of His humiliation. The words of the Lord Jesus imply there is a time coming when He will publicly reveal His majesty and his glory.

His time was set, theirs was not. My time is not yet come to go up to the feast. Every minute of Christ's time was predetermined, planned to reveal the glory of God in the salvation of man. The other Gospels tell us of the sending forth the seventy disciples Lu 10<sup>1-12</sup>, and the Lord will not be distracted from the work or change the priorities. The servants are not free to do as they choose at any time they choose.

The time and energy spent in legitimate business and work is more profitable than hours of idleness and self indulgence. The present is all we have; the Lord Jesus Christ had the present and the future in His control and would use both for the interest of His Father. The brethren of the Lord in going up to the feast were going to enjoy themselves, feasting in the joyous time of the harvest completed.

**The world cannot hate you,** you do and say nothing contrary to its interests, its people, its pleasures; the world loves its own; John 15<sup>19</sup>. **Me it hateth.** Christ was not only slighted, affronted, insulted, but hated, as if He had been the immediate cause of the ill will and problems faced through the powers and practices of the religious leaders, Romans and others. Jesus said "I testify of it, that the works of it are evil", therefore they hated Him. The works of an evil world, no matter how good they appear in the eyes of the world, are evil works when seen in the light of the Word of God and the Gospel. The real cause of the world's enmity to the Gospel is the testimony it bears against sin and sinners. If we witness by our teaching and manner of life the holiness of God, it is an affront to all those who live for themselves, living without the Lord as their Saviour.

**Your time is always ready,** said the Lord to those who wanted Him to openly show He was the miracle worker. Your time is always ready, meant, your time to display yourself before the world, boasting in intellect and expertise in order to court its favour, is ever opportune. This was because they were in league with the one who was the arch enemy of the Lord without knowing it, not understanding that friendship with the world was enmity with God. The world would not hate them because they were of the world. The world, those in the world with self interest motivating them, hated Christ because He testified the works of the world were evil.

If we are popular with the world then we need to take time away from the world and spend time in the presence of the Lord with an open Bible and also in quietness and let the Lord speak, being ready to hear Him. The world has not changed; it still hates those whose lives condemn theirs.

John 15<sup>19</sup> **If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.** Here our Lord tells us plainly that the world hates those who are truly His.

Concerning the work of the Lord and the people of God there is no shady area between Love and Hate, they are mutually exclusive. If we do not love the Lord Jesus then we hate Him; hate will be manifest in various ways,

the most common being a total disregard of all things related to Him, the Bible, Christians, Church Fellowship, and general conversation where the mention of the Lord Jesus Christ is taboo or His name is only mentioned in the most derogatory terms.

Living a good Christian life in the midst of unbelievers is condemnation to their way of life and their beliefs. They are threatened, or feel threatened so rebel and show antagonism, hence the religious Jews of that day finally plotted to put the Lord Jesus to death.

**6. My time is not yet come** said the Lord, the right time for the Lord to go to Jerusalem and the feast was not the same time as the multitudes for the reason was different. They were going to Jerusalem to have a good time a feast an enjoyable time catching up with family and friends at the harvest festival. We suppose it was not yet a proper time for Jesus to go, Jesus knew the plans of the religious Jews were not complete. If Jesus went in the company of revellers and with the crowds it would seem as though He was part of the parade and ostentation. He would be lost in the crowds and no testimony of being in the world but not of the world evidenced; the crowds would accept Him as one of them. The time of the Lord to reveal Himself openly and clearly as the Saviour and the Sacrifice, was not yet come.

**8. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.** Jesus has read the hearts of His brethren so will not hinder their going to the feast, though their motives were carnal. Are there not many that attend 'church' because it is socially correct? We may pray for those who do so, that the Word of God reach through the form and into the heart and mind; pray also the minister, in such gatherings, church, chapel, temple or other building will be confronted with the truth. To join with the saints with a wrong motive is not the best reason but the Lord Jesus Christ can still manifest Himself to the unbeliever in a secular gathering or a pseudo Christian meeting.

How sad it is when men and women are misled by religious leaders or their own motives are based on carnal incentives. How much more sad when the Lord Jesus says He will not go with them; **I go not up yet unto this feast.** Though the Lord Jesus Christ was willing, and ready, to lay down his life for sinners, He would not expose His life to hazard and danger with a selfish motive. This teaches us not to run from danger to our person when God calls us to it; also not court danger when we may avoid it without offending the Lord.

If the presence of Christ is not with us in our ministry, whichever gift we are exercising, what purpose do we serve? The Lord will be with us when we recognise of ourselves we can do nothing, the power for Christian service is entirely from the Lord and the 'success' in the service is as the Lord blesses.

**9. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee.**

**10. But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.** Christ continued in Galilee till his full time was come, He abode still in Galilee not influenced by those who would have Him acclaimed by men, nor would He go along with those who desired a prominent personality. He remained true to His own purpose. He had said that He would not **go up yet** to this feast, therefore He abode still in Galilee.

He went when **His brethren were gone up**, three or four days later. Many 'go to church' from habit, or custom or parental example, as a religious exercise. Jesus went up quietly; He would not provoke the Jews by going with the crowds. The work of the Lord is done quietly allowing the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of the people without the distractions of personalities and gimmicks. We may do the work of God privately and effectively without ostentation or public acclaim. Jesus in perfect submission to the will of His Father went up to Jerusalem to keep the feast. It was written so had to be even though the **Jews sought to kill him**; Jesus obeyed the written Word. On the one hand, danger should not be courted by us; on the other, when the Word of God plainly bids us follow a certain line of conduct, we are to do so, no matter what the consequences.

**11-13 Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, he is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spoke openly of him for fear of the Jews.**

Jews here are the scribes, Pharisees, and rulers of the people, and not specifically the inhabitants of the province of Judea. Many of the people were prejudiced in His favour, but they dared not to own it publicly for **fear of the Jews**, for fear of the rulers of the people. The rulers were seeking the Lord for the wrong reasons; they were looking for an excuse to discredit Him.

It is good to seek the Lord; indeed Isaiah 55<sup>6</sup> says, **Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.** The reason these Jews sought the Lord was questionable; it was with a view to stopping His ministry. Isaiah exhorts the people to get right with God, to change their way of life, to return to God from following the dictates of man even though those men were the religious leaders.

The people differed in their opinions concerning the Lord Jesus. There was murmuring among the people concerning Him. This murmuring was not in opposition to Christ, but concerning Him; some murmured at the

rulers, because they did not accept the person of Christ and His teaching; others murmured at the religious leaders because they did not silence the Lord. The enmity of the rulers, scribes and Pharisees against Christ, and their asking after Him, caused the conversations of the people to be centred on the Lord Jesus Christ; by the opposition causing the Lord to be the main topic of conversation. When the opponents of the Gospel are loud and antagonistic then the spread of the Gospel is greatest. Christ and Christianity have been, and will continue to be the subject of controversy and debate. Agreement as to the person and the work of Christ would bring peace to the community; but when some receive the Truth and others reject it or are openly opposed there will be murmuring.

**Some said, he is a good man;** this was a truth, but it was not the whole truth. He was much more than a good man, more than a man; He was the Son of God. Many of our acquaintances think Jesus was a good man, they don't necessarily speak well of Him neither do they speak ill of Him; neither case honours Him. **Others said, Nay, but he deceiveth the people;** if this was true, He was a bad man. The truths he preached were sound, incontestable; His miracles were real, and could be inspected; His conversation was good and enlightening; and yet it the rulers thought there was evil intent in the words and works of the Lord. It was in the interest of the chief priests to oppose Jesus and discredit Him. Such murmuring as there was among the Jews concerning Christ continues today among our contemporary society.

**No man spoke openly of him, for fear of the Jews.** The leaders knew there was nothing to be said truthfully against Christ so they tried to stop all conversation concerning Him. The people dared not speak openly of the Lord; nothing could truthfully be said against Him, so the rulers tried to suppress all conversation concerning Him. What an awful thing is the fear of man! How often it has silenced faithful witness for Christ. It is written, **the fear of man bringeth a snare,** Proverbs 29<sup>25</sup>. This is as true today as when it was first penned. Let us seek the Lord for spiritual strength and boldness that we may testify faithfully for the Saviour before a world that cast Him out.

For a moment let us draw aside. How often after a meeting has the conversation been of sports or entertainments, how little does the time spent with the Lord's people grip us to the point of setting the things of the world in the back of our minds; including our work, business, family, possessions, hobbies and all other things that may be legitimate occupations? Is it because we feel out of it with our peers if we are occupied with the things of the Lord? Is there a fear we will be ostracised, criticised as 'too heavenly minded and no earthly use'?

**14. Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.**

**15. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knowest this man letters, having never learned?**

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

**17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.**

**18. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory 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 keep the law? Why go ye about to kill me?**

**20. The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?**

**21. Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel.**

**22. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man.**

**23. If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day?**

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

**25. Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill?**

**26. But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?**

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

**28. Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.**

**29. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.**

**30. Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.**

**31. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?**

**14. Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.** The Lord Jesus was the embodiment of the Gospel and He preached and taught it at every opportunity, by word and example. The gospel is the same to all ranks and all levels of society, to rich and poor, to learned and ignorant, to young and old, and to all nations. It was about the **midst of the feast**; the fourth or fifth day of the eight. When He did come up to Jerusalem is not clear, what is clear it was the middle of the feast when He taught in the temple. Why did he not go to the temple sooner, to preach? The initial festivities were over, now there was a breathing space and the people were more ready to listen.

Twice previously has **the temple** been mentioned in this Gospel. In John chapter 2 we see Christ as the Defender of the Father's house and reputation, cleansing the Temple. In chapter 7<sup>14</sup> we read how Christ found in the temple the impotent man whom He had healed, in the Temple to give God praise. Here in John 7, the third time, we find our Lord Jesus teaching in the Temple.

We note the Lord Jesus did not have a formal education, no university degree, did not attend a Bible school, was not a member of the Rabbinate, was not commended from a fellowship; Jesus is teaching in the temple as an obedient servant of God. The House of God is a place for the Word of God to be taught; it is not the only place nor is the teaching limited to those with a formal education in the subject taught.

**15. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knowest this man letters, having never learned?** The Lord Jesus Christ was not educated in the schools of the prophets, or at the feet of the Rabbi; His learning was from private communion with His Father. We must spend time with the Lord to have understanding of His ways, spend time in the Word of God to learn His truths and spend time in prayer to be conformed to the image of our Saviour. Moses was taught the ways of the Egyptians; we will be taught in the schools and universities of the world; but Christ was not taught in a formal school the ways of any contemporaries or learned men of the past. The Lord Jesus Christ was led by the Spirit so He needed not to receive any instruction from man or have the example of any man.

Learning flourished in the Roman Empire and in the Hebrew nation more than in any previous age; in such a time God chose to introduce Christianity. That Christ had a thorough education, through the instruction of the Holy Spirit, was mighty in the scriptures, through the same source, though He never had a degree in theology, it was no hindrance to His ministry. The same intelligence is available from the same source to us if we wait on the Lord. It is necessary, essential, that the ministers of the Gospel should be instructed as the Lord was. Since we have not the wisdom, power, understanding, or acumen of the Lord we must strive for learning and wisdom in an ordinary way, and by diligence in prayer, reading the Word of God and listening to and for the Lord to speak to us through His ministers and His word. Education is an aid but the Holy Spirit's teaching is more necessary than a degree in theology. Head knowledge is not a substitute for spiritual wisdom. Spiritual wisdom is gained through the grace of God, study of the Word of God and prayer; not forgetting obedience to the Word of God is the ground on which we receive the blessing.

We set great store by those who have academic attainments, degrees in theology, or large congregations, often overlooking the fact that it is closeness to the Lord Jesus Christ that is the best source of learning and the best means of communicating that learning.

If our young believers are taught that they must go to bible school or get a degree in theology to become able ministers of God's Word then we do them a disservice. If a course in some Bible School is advocated in preference to personal waiting upon God and the daily searching of the Scriptures in private, then we will see the seminaries and universities issuing worldly merits and the students striving for academic acclaim. When leading institutes are constantly appealing for financial help it is conclusive proof that material benefit is the primary aim and that the institute is being run in the energy of the flesh.

**16. Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.** The Lord Jesus Christ sets us an example; He taught and did as instructed by His Father. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ gave to Him the doctrines He should teach, Jesus was sent into the world with instructions, doctrines, commands and His disciples are expected to follow the Lord in the same way He obeyed and followed the instructions His Father gave to Him.

**17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.** Our Lord vindicates His doctrine, telling the Jews the doctrine He delivered was not of His own devising; it was not His private plan, nor was it taught Him by men. The Lord Jesus Christ received from His Father all He should teach and what He should do. The writer to the Hebrews tells us, **Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;** 5<sup>8</sup>. Remember that Christ is here speaking not from the standpoint of His essential glory, but as God manifest in the flesh; the incarnate Son, that is as the Servant. Jesus said; **As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.** It was not in school Jesus learned,

not in Bible College He was taught to speak and teach so that men marvelled. His doctrine came from the One who sent Him; He expounded what He was taught.

It was the same with the apostle Paul. He says to the Galatians, **But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ**, Galatians 1<sup>11, 12</sup>. It is not mandatory to go to Bible School in order to gain spiritual knowledge and Scriptural understanding. Many of the men most used of God in the past were not graduates of Bible Institutes; Bible Institutes are not an essential adjunct to the ministry of the Gospel. Each believer may have the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to guide into all truth. God may use human instruments to instruct and enlighten you, or He may give you the greater honour and privilege of teaching you personally as you spend time in the Word with Him as your Teacher.

When Christ says, **My doctrine is not mine**, not my private teaching; it is my Father's and mine. The doctrine of the gospel is wholly from God; He planned it, and sent His own Son into the world to execute it. Christ was sent, and His doctrine was not His own, but His that sent Him. Remember, the **Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world**. There is no surer way to find the truth, and know the reality of God with us than by doing the will of God.

**18. He that seeketh his glory that sent him, that same is true.** The Lord Jesus Christ sought His Father's glory, and not His own; the nature and scope of that doctrine which Christ delivered, was entirely for the glorifying of His Father, therefore is an undoubted proof and indisputable evidence that His doctrine was of God. What the Lord Jesus Christ taught was no different to what He did; His doctrine matched perfectly His practice.

Jesus in effect said I will give you another rule; if I speak to promote myself, through assumption, or for secular interests, reject me as a false prophet. But if I act only to advance the glory of God, to draw men to love and obey Him you must acknowledge me as a true prophet. Add to this the proofs which I have given, power to heal, teaching that confounds the teachers, insights beyond the normal level of man, irrefutable truths, therefore you must acknowledge me as the promised Messiah.

**19. Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keep the law? Why go ye about to kill me?** The Jews in general admitted **the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ**, 1:<sup>17</sup>; and on this they prided themselves. Every violation of the Law they considered as deserving of death. They accused Jesus of violating the Law because he had healed a man on the Sabbath, and for that they sought His life. Jesus reminds them of that, and shows them their respect for the Law was far from the intention of God. The religious leaders over the years had added so much to the Law of God the people were floundering, falling short of the standard required by God.

The Lord having vindicated His doctrine now vindicates His practice. For healing the impotent man on the Sabbath the Jews sought His life, saying He had disobeyed the fourth commandment. Jesus shows them their zeal for the Law of Moses is misplaced in that they broke the sixth commandment, by going about to kill Him, an innocent person; a greater violation of the Law than healing on the Sabbath.

It is hypocritical to point out the sins of others, when there are worse sins in ourselves.

**20. Thou hast a devil.** Christ was reproached for our sake. The meekness of Christ, in passing over this reproach and defamation, without a word in reply is an example to us. Guilt is often the cause of impatience and a harsh reply, innocence in the Lord Jesus Christ was silent through all the insults and misrepresentations.

Jesus continues His discourse, and justifies His own action in healing a man on the Sabbath day. The Jews circumcised their children on the Sabbath if it happened to be the eighth day. The Lord Jesus argued; since circumcision may be practised on the Sabbath, a religious work, without blame, why am I censured for healing a man on the Sabbath by a spoken word?

It has never been wrong to do the right thing, religion sometimes makes a law forbidding good at certain times and seasons. The law of righteous deeds is a more ancient law than circumcision upon the eighth day. The law of nature has precedence over man's laws or legally adhering to religious laws at the detriment of health or obedience to God. The Lord Jesus said in effect if you circumcise a child on the Sabbath, I am free to heal a man on the Sabbath. You wield a knife without being rebuked; I simply speak a word and you plot my demise.

**20 The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?** The people are evidently the motley company of Israelites in the Temple courts at that time. They came from all parts of Israel to Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Tabernacles. Many of them were ignorant of the fact that the leaders in Judea had purposed to take the life of Christ; and when He said to the Jews: **Why go ye about to kill me?** 19, these *people* considered the Lord Jesus insane, and said **Thou hast a demon**. Irrational behaviour and speech is often an indication of demonic possession. Their eyes were not open to the glory of the Lord. This blasphemy exposed their blindness to the person of Christ, and revealed the evil nature of their thoughts and of their hearts.

**22, 23. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the Law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day?** Our Lord continued to point out how unreasonable was their criticism of Himself for healing the impotent man on the Sabbath day. He reminds them that circumcision was performed on the Sabbath; why then should they complain because He had made a suffering man whole on that day! By this argument Christ teaches us that works of necessity and works of mercy may be legitimately performed on any day. Circumcision was a work of necessity if the Law of Moses was to be observed, for if the infant reached its eighth day on the Sabbath, it was then he must be circumcised. The healing of the impotent man was a work of mercy. We, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, are not under the Law; the Apostle Paul teaches we are free from the Law; we are free to engage in works of necessity and works of mercy on any day of the week.

Notice Christ here refers to circumcision as belonging to the *Law of Moses*. We must take notice of the difference between the *Law of God* and the *Law of Moses*. The Law of God is found in the Ten Commandments which He Himself wrote on the two tables of stone, stone suggesting their permanence. This is correctly called the moral Law, for the Ten Commandments detail a rule of conduct. The moral Law is permanent and binding on every member of the human race for it was given expressing the obligations of every man and woman to the Creator of all things, the One who alone gives life. The moral law sets the standard of righteousness required for man to satisfy God. That no one has been able to fulfil the requirements of the Law does not make the Law ineffective or of no value. It is with wonder and awe we see the Lord Jesus Christ keep all the requirements of the Law perfectly, maintaining a standard of righteousness no one before or since has been able to achieve. The *Law of God* has not changed; the various dispensations only confirm it. The *Law of Moses* consists of the moral, social, and ceremonial laws which God gave to Moses after the Ten Commandments. The Law of Moses included the Ten Commandments as we learn from Deuteronomy chapter 5.

The Lord Jesus Christ alone has done all the Law of God required and at the same time, and because He did all the Law required He purchased for all who believe a full and free salvation.

In one sense the Law of Moses is broader than *the law of God*, inasmuch as it contains far more than the Ten Commandments. In another sense it is limited for *the Law of Moses* is binding only upon Israelites and those Gentiles who chose to follow the religion of the Jews, proselytes. The *law of God* is binding on Jews and Gentiles alike, all mankind. Christ makes this distinction clearly by referring to circumcision as belonging not to the *Law of God*, but as being an essential part of the *Law of Moses*; which Law was specifically given to Israel.

**I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day;** my word had an effect on the whole man not just a small part. Make your judgement according to the results and not based on the laws of society, laws which suit the religious rulers; laws added to, or misinterpreted from the Law given to you by the hand of God.

**24. Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.** Take careful note of the Law, not the legal, literal interpretation of it but its spirit and propose. Understand that the Law which commands men to rest on the Sabbath day is inferior to the law of love. The law of love requires us to promote the glory of God in the salvation and wellbeing of our friends, family and neighbours; and not to judge the merit or demerit of an action from the first impression. The Law of the Sabbath had to give way to the Law of Love.

**25, 26. Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?** In this chapter first the *brethren* of Christ are shown to be unbelievers and worldly; then the Jews, *the leaders in Judea* display their carnal nature, their interest in the intellectual world. Then the crowd, *the people* reveal their hearts. Now the inhabitants of Jerusalem reveal their spiritual condition. The common people were no better than the rulers; the Lord's brethren no more believed on Him than did the Jews; the inhabitants of Jerusalem had no more spiritual awareness than the country folk who had come to Jerusalem for the feast. All mankind in all levels of the social order are opposed to the Gospel. Human nature is the same the world over. It is by the grace of God alone that one is different from another.

**27. Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.** The religious leaders had some doubts, but they knew where Christ was from. They were well acquainted with His early life in Nazareth. Supposed that Joseph was His father, and they were satisfied that He was merely a man: We know **this man** indicates the line of thinking their thoughts followed.

**But when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.** Verse 42 tells us many the people knew that the Christ would be of the seed of David and from Bethlehem. The peculiar circumstances and supernatural nature of the birth of Christ was beyond their understanding for they were instructed by the Rabbi's differently. That

Christ would be born of a virgin Isaiah 7<sup>14</sup>, was not part of the teaching given to the people; neither was the time frame understood.

We who believe the Lord Jesus is coming again soon, are the smallest group among the Christian denominations even as Jews expecting the Messiah were the smallest group in that nation. The Rabbi's teach three things come unexpectedly, a thing found by chance; the sting of a scorpion; and the Messiah.

2,000 years later the return of the Lord is imminent, and still there are relatively few expecting the Lord at any moment; we are engaged in so many Christian activities the expectancy is lost in busyness.

**28. Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.**

**29. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.** Some of them who lived in Jerusalem had declared, **We know this man whence he is.** Christ takes up their words and refutes them. **Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am,** such was their vain glorying in the flesh. You suppose my appearance among you to be no different to others. You see my mother and suppose Joseph is my father; you see my upbringing as the same as others in the nation. You assume I am a Galilean, in fact I was born in Bethlehem. The Saviour continues by saying, **I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.** They did not know Him, from whence He was, or from where He came; the divine or earthly origins. When Christ declared **He that sent me is true,** He was referring to the Old Testament Scriptures. God was **true** to His promises, many of which had already been fulfilled, and others were even then being fulfilled; the people rejecting Jesus as the Son was the evidence that proved the Word of God, the Scriptures, to be of God.

**But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.** It was because Christ knew the Father, and was from Him, was sent by His Father, that He could reveal Him; for it is by the Son, and by Him alone, that the Father is made known to the world or to an individual. **No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him,** Matthew 11<sup>27</sup>. No one cometh unto the Father but by Christ; and none can know the Father without knowing the Son. The various religions may claim access to God via a multitude of devices or sacrifices, the scriptures are clear in stating the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to enter the presence of God and the only way to know Him.

Knowing about Jesus, knowing about God, knowing about Christianity is not what the Lord Jesus Christ is meaning. To know the Lord is the Saviour is still insufficient; a personal experience, experiencing the forgiveness of sin through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the way in which we may *know* Him and enjoy the salvation of God. Knowing the Lord Jesus Christ is not limited to head knowledge; we see head knowledge in many of the religious institutions and Christian denominations and no power to change the sinner into a saint. The Word of God is specific in detailing that knowledge of God equating to salvation is a personal relationship with Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour.

**30. Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.**

**31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?** This verse should be of great comfort to God's people when received by faith. God controls His enemies. He gives the opportunity for loving obedience to His children. We see here an example of God keeping His own from harm by restraining their enemies. There was to be a time, already set by the Father, for the Son to be taken; that time was not yet come. The Christian is blessed by knowing that everything is under the immediate control of God.

**His hour was not yet come** tells us there is a set time, set by God for each event in the Christians life, and a time to die. God had decreed that the Saviour should be betrayed by a familiar friend, and sold for thirty pieces of silver. They could not arrest Christ before the appointed time any more than they could stop the sun from shining. All the hatred of men, the devices of the rulers or of the religious zealots; all the enmity of Satan and the multitude that followed him could not speed Christ's death. When the appointed hour was come then the Son bowed to His Father's good pleasure, He was immortal till the appointed hour. Death cannot take a child of God before the moment set by God arrives for us to go to Him. The Psalmist said **my times are in Thine hands.** The enemy of souls will war against us, he may harm our bodies; and if our lives are shortened it is only as God has decreed. Our souls are secure, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

**Is there not an appointed time for man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of a hireling? Job 7<sup>1</sup>. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass . . . If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come Job 14<sup>5, 14</sup>.**

Jesus did not go to the Cross because He was unable to escape it; nor did He die because He could not prevent it; it was not at the whim of man the Jesus was crucified. He could have slain these men with a word, but that was not necessary. They were not able to harm a hair of His head for His hour was not yet come.



**And many of the people believed on Him**, whether or not this was a saving faith it is difficult to fathom. My personal opinion is it was not. There are other instances where it is recorded that the people, many, believed on Him only to turn back when the Lord said something too hard for them to understand or contrary to the teachings of the Rabbis. We must take extra care today in hearing and believing what is taught; we do have a reference book, the Bible, we have prayer and the Holy Spirit, sources we should resort to and check all that is propounded before accepting it as truth. The proliferation of sects, dogmas, and such like can be put down to hearers accepting doctrines and practices without reference to the Bible. Even when reference is made to the Bible it can be taken out of context or proof claimed on the ground of one verse or part of a verse, and no indication as to the specific detail in relation to the overall subject.

**32. The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.**

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

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

**35. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? {Gentiles: or, Greeks}**

**36. What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?**

**37. In the last day, that 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, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.**

**39. (But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)**

**40. Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.**

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

**42. Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?**

**43. So there was a division among the people because of him.**

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

**45. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?**

**46. The officers answered, Never man spoke like this man.**

**47. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?**

**48. Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?**

**49. But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.**

**50. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)**

**51. Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?**

**52. They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.**

**53. And every man went unto his own house.**

**32. The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.** An interval of but six months comes between this time and the crucifixion of Christ. The religious leaders were losing their hold over many of the people. When the Pharisees and chief priests heard the dissention, they sent out officers to arrest the Jesus.

**33. Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.** Clearly the Lord being among the people was a problem for the Pharisees and leaders of the people. Jesus said it would not be for much longer. No one, or any order of authority could remove Jesus until His work was finished. **Yet a little while am I with you.** That little while is only six months, but no power on earth, religious or secular could abbreviate that little while, not even by an hour. *Of His own self He would lay down His life, and of His own self would He take it again.*

Christ is now here, with us, in the Person of the Holy Spirit. There is a time coming when the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the world, with the Church when the Lord calls His people home. All the signs point to the imminence of that event.

**34. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.** Where He was going to, the Glory via the Cross, they could not come, for **Except a man be born again he cannot enter the**

**kingdom of God.** The Jews sought their Messiah in vain, because there is a veil over their hearts as they read their own Scriptures, 2Corinthians 3<sup>15</sup>. They as the majority today sought the Lord in religious activity or by the intervention of man or by the invention of man in religious activities.

These same words have a message for all living today. **And where I am, thither ye cannot come.** Jesus does not say, *Where I shall be*, or *Where I am at present* ye cannot come; but declared, **Where I am, thither ye cannot come.** In the previous verse He had said, **I go unto him that sent me.** These two statements refer to His Divine and human natures. **Where I am** suggests His continuous presence in heaven by virtue of His Divine nature; His going there physically was yet in the future. Christ in the flesh, as a man among men, was confined by His choice to the limitations of the flesh, saying **Yet a little while am I with you.**

There is a remarkable contrast here between the Children of Israel and the Children of God. The Israelites were given the Law as the way to enter the presence of God; they then made the Law a set of rules, a standard too demanding for any Law abiding citizen or religious zealot, to live by and satisfy God. The Children of God in the present age are the redeemed of the Lord. They live by the faithfulness of the One who lived and died for them; trusting Him and His Word. Where the Jew could not come, for he trusted in the flesh; the Believer can come for the Forerunner has already entered within the veil on our behalf and we enter with Him by faith. Jesus did all the Law demanded, and His Father demonstrated Jesus was an acceptable sacrifice for us when He raised Him from among the dead.

**35. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?**

**36. What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?**

Here is a clear example of speaking of someone behind their back. They were not forbidden to speak to the Lord, there was no injunction set by the Sanhedrin, no problem caused by too many speaking at once. Was there intimidation caused by those sent to take the Lord? Was there a fear of appearing to be in agreement with the Lord Jesus? Clearly there was a misunderstanding as to the purpose of the Lord at that time. So often is the Word of the Lord misunderstood or misapplied; it is imperative the Holy Spirit takes and applies the Word of God for it to be known as the Word of God.

Why were the people concerned to know where the Lord was going to? They had not grasped the significance of His words. The people could not see the Cross nor comprehend the import of His words related to His Father or His ministry. Always missing in those who do not understand what the Lord is saying and missed in what the followers of the Lord are saying is the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the reason He came into the world and the personal application of His teachings.

Jesus had expressly said He would go to Him that sent Him, to his Father in heaven. The Jews said, will He go and teach the Gentiles? Will he carry His doctrine to them who are outside the nation chosen and set apart by God?

Perhaps they had heard of Jesus ministering to the Gentiles in his sermon at Nazareth, and the centurion and the woman of Canaan. The religious Jews were opposed to the Word of God going to the Gentiles; they considered themselves as having exclusive rights to the Law and the revelation of God.

There is a parallel in Christianity today with the Christian religions that are exclusive. It is common for those who call themselves Christian and have lost personal touch with the Lord to exclude all others by their doctrines or practises; they become a cult or sect.

**37. In the last day, that 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, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.**

The feast of Tabernacles is coming to an end; the first day was a Sabbath and this eighth day is also a Sabbath. Note there are many other days designated as Sabbaths as well as the seventh day of the week. These days were nominated as 'holy convocations' as special days set apart and to be recognised and treated as the weekly Sabbaths. Leviticus 23 lists some of them, also showing the possibility of having two or even three days as consecutive Sabbaths. In the Hebrew calendar the Passover cannot fall on the weekly Sabbath, and the day following the Passover, the first day of Unleavened Bread is also a Sabbath.

On the **last day of the feast** the chief Rabbi sent a 'servant' to the pool of Siloam to fetch water. The priest filled a golden vial with water from the fount of Siloam which was solemnly carried, with the sound of trumpets through the gate of the temple, mixed with wine and was poured on the sacrifice on the altar. This was not command by Moses but became a tradition from much usage. Jesus stood and cried while they were performing this ceremony, that he might illustrate the nature of his doctrine and distract their attention from a ritual ordained by man; a ceremony distracting the attention from spiritual things and focusing their attention on

external issues. There was no life in the performance of these rituals even as there is no life in the rituals of many 'Christian' denominations' that could not confer eternal life.

Jesus stood in the temple, in the midst of many people, raised His voice, caused many to give heed to what He was about to say. **If any man thirst, spiritually**, if any man is weighed down with guilt, feeling his need of salvation let him come unto me. I have the water of cleansing, I can mend the broken heart, and I can redeem you. Instead of depending on this ceremony of drawing water, says the Lord, let him come to me, the Messiah, the fountain of living water and he shall find a never failing supply for all spiritual needs.

This water from the pool of Siloam was poured out and prayers of thanksgiving were offered to the Lord of the Harvest. The Lord Jesus Christ takes up this symbolism, applying it to Himself as the Water of Life. All who drink of the *fountain* opened for sin and uncleanness will find everlasting life.

The invitation itself: Let him come to me. Let him not go to the ceremonial law, which would neither pacify the conscience nor purify it, and therefore could not make the comers thereunto perfect, Heb 10:1. Nor let him go to the heathen philosophy, which does but beguile men, lead them into a wood, and leave them there; but let him go to Christ, admit his doctrine, submit to his discipline, believe in him; come to him as the fountain of living waters, the giver of all comfort.

The Lord Jesus Christ promises to satisfy the thirsty soul; He says, **Let him come and drink**, he shall have what he comes to me for, he will not only be refreshed, but will also know the joy of the Lord.

**39. (But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)** Although the Holy Spirit was in some measure given by God from the beginning to chosen individuals, the Holy Spirit was not given to the Church till after the resurrection. The Holy Spirit was with John the Baptist, his father and his mother. Luke 1<sup>15</sup>, **For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.** 1<sup>41</sup>, **And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.** 1<sup>67</sup>, **And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost.** The Holy Spirit was with king David and with Samson, and the Psalmist prayed, let not thy spirit depart from me.

The Holy Spirit had been promised conditionally to some prior to the resurrection but the gift of the Holy Spirit spoken of by Joel 2<sup>28</sup>, which characterises the Gospel age, this day of grace, was not granted till after the ascension of Christ. Jesus promised He would send the Holy Spirit when He ascended to His father. The Holy Spirit in his fulness was to be sent consequent to the sacrificial death of Christ; and therefore could not come till after His crucifixion. Jesus promised He would send the Holy Spirit after He was raised from among the dead. All believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit so Christ lives in His disciples by His Spirit.

**39 The Holy Ghost was not yet given: because that Jesus was not yet glorified.** This suggests a further reason why we are told in verse 37 that the words were spoken by Christ on **the last day**, which is the eighth day of the Feast. In Scripture eight generally refers to a new beginning, and for this reason eight is also the number of resurrection. Matthew 28<sup>1</sup> Christ arose on the eighth day, **in the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first of the week.** Considered doctrinally, Christ was referring to a post resurrection time. He was referring to that which would be accomplished after He had risen from among the dead. We see the Holy Spirit was given to those gathered in the Upper Room and they, in the power of the Holy Spirit spoke and acted with spiritual vigour uncommon to the natural man, a man still dead in sin.

**40. Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.**

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

**42. Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?**

**43. So there was a division among the people because of him.** The great prophet, or teacher, spoken of by Moses, Deuteronomy 18<sup>15</sup>, which the people erroneously thought was other than the Messiah, John 7<sup>41</sup>. Some no doubt knew that by *the prophet*, the Messiah was intended; but others seemed to think that one of the prophets should be raised from the dead, and precede the advent of the Messiah. The prophet they expected to precede the Christ was either Elijah or Jeremiah. Matthew 16<sup>14</sup>. The Lord's sermon had various effects upon His hearers' hearts; some believed Him to be the prophet promised to Israel, Deuteronomy 18<sup>18</sup>. Others thought Him to be the Christ; still others argued both were wrong, supposing Jesus to have been born in Galilee. These varying views caused a division amongst them, some even planning to have Jesus arrested. They were restrained from this course of action for **His time was not yet come.**

Diverse opinions concerning Christ himself have flourished from the beginning. Good and bad reports of the Lord continued among the people and the same attends the followers of Christ today. The truth does not protect

us from evil reports but it does give peace in the midst of the turmoil stirred up by those who reject or distort the truth.

**43. There was a division among the people because of him.** This fulfilled Jesus' prophetic word. Near the beginning of His public ministry He said, **Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay;** Luke 12<sup>51, 52</sup>, the world has been at war with the Church since its inception.

There will be another *division* among the people of the earth when the Lord Jesus calls the Church, all those saved by faith, to be with the Him in person. The rest will be left behind. The division among the peoples of the earth most important in eternal matters is not colour, language, country, social upbringing, education, wealth or influence, family connections or any of the worlds standards; the distinction carried into eternity and determining the destiny of us all is whether we are 'saved' or 'unsaved'. Saved by faith in the work God planned and executed for the redemption of all who would believe in the work finished by the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary; and confirmed to us by the resurrection of the Saviour three days later.

Should you be reading this and know you do not belong to the Lord Jesus Christ as one saved by the grace of God then now is the moment when you should put your faith and trust in Him. **Jesus is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto him by faith, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them,** Hebrews 7<sup>25</sup>. Saved from eternal damnation; saved from the power of sin as it works through the flesh; saved to live a life pleasing to the Lord; saved to enjoy living with the Lord Jesus Christ as a friend, confident He will never let you down.

**44. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.** That diversity of opinions concerning Christ himself is evident from the beginning of the Lord's ministry. Some thought Him a prophet, others the Messiah; some thought Him an impostor and deceiver. The Lord Jesus Christ when here on earth, passed through evil report and good report; His followers, Christians, can expect and should be prepared for the same evil reports and misrepresentations. Innocence cannot protect from slander and false accusation. They wished to seize Jesus and would have done so, and destroyed Him too at that time. They were divided in their opinions so did not reach a unanimous decision; His life was preserved for **His hour was not yet come.**

**45. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?**

**46. The officers answered, Never man spoke like this man.** The officers, those who had been sent to take Jesus into custody found Jesus in the midst of the people, speaking freely to them. They impressed with what He said so chose not to obey their leaders. The words of the Lord convinced the officers Jesus was from God they were so impressed that they were convinced of His innocence, and they dared do as instructed. The intentions of evil men may be restrained by the presence of a good man, when they see and comprehend he is not motivated by the flesh, lust for gain or prestige.

These men were sent for a particular purpose, with power and authority from the chief priests and Pharisees; commissioned by the highest authority of the nation. Jesus was without means of defence, without external protection, yet in a manner foreign to the officers and the high-priests Jesus was preserved.

God will defend and deliver us when in the midst of danger when it is to advance His Kingdom in some measure. We may not see the whole picture but that is not necessary to the child of God living by faith. If we could see the future as it affects us we would be forever fearful, for ourselves or our kindred. Faith enables us to see the future in a totally different light; faith removes all the fears and opens a new prospect far beyond the imagination of all who cannot see or know the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, seated at the right hand of God.

No prophet, apostle, or minister or child of God has ever spoken the truth with as much power, grace, and beauty as the Lord Jesus Christ. We are encouraged to listen to His words, to sit at His feet and learn wisdom from His example and guidance and recorded words.

God can speak directly to us through His Word, the Bible; when He does so and we tell others they may say of us, **never man spoke like this man** because it is the Lord speaking through us what He has revealed to us through His Word, the Bible.

**47. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?**

**48. Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?**

**49. But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.** The Pharisees set down the claims of Jesus as an imposture, pretence. They did not examine His claims, but like thousands today, determined to believe that He is a deceiver. They did not ask the officers sent to arrest Jesus whether they were convinced, or had seen evidence that he was the Messiah; they asked if they were taken in by a deceiver, telling the officers they were misled. Many assume Christianity to be a religion; as a religion of the world displayed in the variety of cults, sects, and secret societies and so on; and when one becomes a Christian, the assumption is that he is deceived, and treat him with ridicule or scorn. Frankness and honesty would require them to ask whether such changes

were not proof of the power and truth of the gospel. Sincerity in the case of the rulers required them to ask whether Jesus had given them evidence that He was from God; their main concern was not truth but the preservation of their position in the society.

**Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him,** Was a question designed to make the people look foolish in the sight of their peers? The suggestion is the rulers and religious leaders were too wise to believe. They would have us believe faith is for fools, wise religious leaders, priests and secular rulers of the people tell us faith is for those deceived by rhetoric, for the ignorant and unlearned. They counted the common people cursed, especially those who believed on Christ.

Prominence among the people is not always a sign of wisdom or spiritual maturity; great men may lack spiritual discernment and prominent figures in the community seldom possess the wisdom of a real Christian.

The **rulers** were men of official rank; the **Pharisees** were the strict religious formalists of that day. Few 'leaders' or 'eminent' men, few men of 'learning', few moralists, are numbered among Christians. Of course there are some; prominence in the world of man seems to disregard the things of the Lord and the truth of the Word of God. The rulers and Pharisees were too well satisfied with themselves to see any need of a Saviour. The attitude and speech of these Pharisees is repeated in our communities, our social groups today.

The Apostle Paul said, **Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things which are,** 1Corinthians 1<sup>26-28</sup>.

This people who knoweth not the law are cursed say the Pharisees 49. This people was derogatory a term of contempt. Some scholars translate it, this rabble, this mob, this riff raff. Nothing was more humiliating to these proud Pharisees, they were amazed at the teaching of the Lord; He was saying sinners would be entering the kingdom while they are left outside.

50, 51, **Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?** Have any of the Pharisees believed on Christ, they asked? Not many had, but we have a record of one, Nicodemus. Nicodemus is evidence God is not a respecter of persons; He does not judge according to our standards. God in His sovereign grace had a Pharisee courageous enough to rebuke his unrighteous companions. Nicodemus did not say much on this occasion, but he said sufficient to break up the meeting; he was no longer an enemy of the Lord. In the case of Nicodemus it is over a year since John 3.

John's Gospel portrays three stages in the spiritual awakening of Nicodemus. In John 3 it is midnight; in John 7 it is twilight; in John 19 it is daylight. Applying this thought to his spiritual life is not inappropriate.

**52. The contemporaries of Nicodemus, said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.** But they were wrong. Their own Scriptures proved them wrong. Jonah was a prophet and he arose from Galilee 2Kings 14<sup>25</sup>. When they asked Nicodemus, **Art thou also of Galilee?** They implied he was one of the followers of the Lord.

**53. And every man went unto his own house.** This reference is to **every man** mentioned throughout this chapter. The Feast was now over. The temporary booths taken down, all the visitors to Jerusalem would now leave for their respective homes.

They left the Lord; they departed from Him, for they wanted no more to do with the Lord. Not that the message of salvation was not to their liking; more that they would have to change, repent and be obedient to the Word of God.

Though each of the Lord's servants speaks of a reality, can show a changed life and interests yet the unsaved cannot see the difference or hear the truth. Sadly so many depart, returning to their former pursuits after having heard the Gospel message God speaks through His servants.

## Chapter 8

**1. Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives.**

**2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.**

**3. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,**

**4. They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.**

**5. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?**

**6. This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.**

**7. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.**

**8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.**

**9. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.**

**10. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?**

**11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.**

This passage calls attention to the miserable condition of Israel typified by this woman.

The Holy Spirit calls our attention again to the appalling state Israel was in during the time of Christ's earthly ministry. In chapter 1<sup>14</sup> we see the Jews have not recognised the Lord's forerunner, and are blind to the Lord in their midst 1<sup>26</sup>. In chapter 2 we have a picture of the nation without a true spiritual leader, and are shown the desecration of the Father's House. In chapter 3<sup>7</sup> we see a member of the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus, dead in trespasses and sins, needing to be born again; and the Jews splitting hairs with John's disciples about purifying 3<sup>25</sup>. In chapter 4<sup>9</sup> we discover the Jews will have nothing to do with their Gentile neighbours, the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. In chapter 5 is a portrayal of God's covenant people, impotent folk, blind, halt and withered. In chapter 6 they are shown as needing the Bread of life. In chapter 7 the rulers of the nation send officers to arrest Christ.

And now in chapter 8 Israel is depicted as an unfaithful wife, adulterous.

**1. Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives.** This contrasts with the closing verse of the previous chapter. There we read **every man went unto his own house**. Here we are told **Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives**. Matthew 8<sup>20</sup>, **The Son of man had not where to lay His head**. Jesus going to Mount of Olives suggests He was seeking a quiet place, the likelihood He was to spend the night in prayer. This mountain was about a mile directly east of Jerusalem. This was the place in which Jesus most likely passed the night when attending the feasts at Jerusalem. The Garden of Gethsemane was on the western side of that mountain, and Bethany, the home of Martha and Mary was on the east side, John 11<sup>1</sup>.

The example for us is to give priority to our spiritual life, to put time with the Lord before our physical needs. It is remarkable to find that when we miss sleep by spending time with the Lord we are refreshed sufficiently for the tasks before us.

**2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.** In the first sermon of the Lord Jesus recorded in the New Testament we find that He said, **Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness** Matthew 6<sup>33</sup>, and He only ever practised what He preached. We learn from this that we need to begin our day by seeking and having communion with the Lord. The promise of God is **they that seek me early shall find me** Proverbs 8<sup>17</sup>. Jesus learned what to teach and when to teach and why He should teach before ever going forth to teach; early in the day alone with His God. Before the cares of family, work, and relationships start to cause worries is the best time for us to have communion with our Saviour. Before the day's problems overtake us we can be instructed in how to overcome them and be given the Divine resources to stand firm through the trouble and strife caused by spiritual or physical enemies to the gospel and the testimony of the saints.

The Saviour's life was busy; He spent the day teaching in the temple, the night praying on the Mount of Olives; and the next morning early He returns to the task of teaching. The Lord Jesus Christ continued in His Father's business. To glorify His Father and to be the obedient servant was His food by day and His rest by night.

**All the people came unto Him** does not include those who had gone to their respective homes after the Feast of Tabernacles. What the Lord had taught and the reaction of the authorities had stirred up the people; they wanted to hear more.

The Lord Jesus is ever ready to instruct all who come unto Him in faith; the author of the Bible and has sent the Holy Spirit to guide all who wait upon the Lord Jesus Christ into truth for the mind and life style for the body and attitude, interaction in the community. The words He speaks or has recorded never contradict or oppose and will always point away from the individual quoting them to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said **I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all unto me**, John 12<sup>32</sup>, but this does not mean all without exception. Everybody is not *drawn* to Christ. The *all* in John 12<sup>32</sup> is *all without distinction*. So here all the people came unto him signifies all that were in the temple, men from all walks of life, all physical and mental conditions, men of varied age and social standing, men from the different tribes; it is unlikely or questionable that women were

included in that number; the cultural situation was so different to what we are accustomed. Possibly many women were on the fringes of the crowds; no doubt many women were waiting for their husbands to tell them what was of interest and importance as soon as they came home.

**3. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,**

**4. They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.**

**5. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?** It is not strictly true that Moses ordered adultery in general to be punished by stoning. The law simply says that the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death, Leviticus 20<sup>10</sup>; Deuteronomy 22<sup>22</sup>. The rabbis today say they were strangled. This they insist was the ordinary mode of punishment, where the type of death was not specified in the law. If the person guilty of an act of this kind had been betrothed, but not married, she was to be stoned, Deuteronomy 22<sup>23</sup>, but if she was the daughter of a priest, she was to be burned alive, Leviticus 16<sup>9</sup>. Ezekiel 16<sup>38, 40</sup>, shows that adulteresses in the time of that prophet were stoned, and pierced with a sword. It is confirmed historically that adultery was exceedingly common at the time of the Lord, so common that they had ceased to do as the Law required. The waters of jealousy were no longer drunk; the culprits or those suspected of this crime, being so numerous; and the men who were guilty themselves dared not try their wives when they suspected them, as it was believed the waters would have no evil effect upon the wife, if the husband himself had been guilty of adultery. Numbers 5<sup>11-21</sup> gives an account of the actions and responsibilities of a husband.

There are six people or groups in this narrative, the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Woman, her Husband, and the Man with whom she committed adultery and the Crowd. Ask yourself what was the nation like morally if these two, the adulterous man and the woman's husband could be left out of the accusations and judgements. The Scribes were supposed to know the Law and be teachers of the Law; The Pharisees kept the Law 'religiously', even adding to it such ordinances as they 'thought' the Law intended; putting an unbearable burden on themselves and the people they expected to follow them in their demanding ways and doctrines.

2,000 years later, in most of the western world, the so called educated nations, adultery is not a crime neither is it uncommon. Marriage, a legal and binding commitment for life is becoming a rarity with one in three couples marrying and the divorce rate among them over 60%. Many Christian 'churches' allow divorce and remarriage; many also allow changes in the vows to permit separation or divorce without the parties breaking their word. The word 'love' is no longer the word of the Bible, it is now the word of the poets and has a meaning more to do with sex and emotions and has no relevance in the vocabulary of the Christian Church as used in the Gospel of John; **for so LOVED the world.**

The Scribes were credited with knowing the Law; the legalities of the Law as Moses gave it to the Israelites. The Pharisees were those who were diligent in doing all that the Law required, going so far as to interpret the Word with legal precision so to avoid any semblance of breaking or disobeying the Word of God. These zealots had made a set of rules to cover all aspects of life, placing a burden on themselves and others that was impossible to bear. The Woman was clearly wrong in an illicit relationship; the sin was compounded by the Scribes and Pharisees making a public display of the sin and their supposed righteousness. Only the Lord knows the Husband and the Adulterer, where they were and what they thought and did.

It seems to me the Scribes and Pharisees share in the sin of the adulteress by publishing the event; they published abroad what was done by the man and woman in secret, trying to put the Lord in a difficult position. They argued the Law says; the Lord is silent but must maintain a righteous attitude and activity. His action in writing on the ground, in the dust is thought provoking. Did the Lord write the names of the accusers; did He write the Commandments that were broken by the accusers of the Woman? Is the Lord fulfilling the prophesy recorded in Jeremiah 17<sup>13</sup> **O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.** We are sure that each accuser went out from the presence of the Lord convinced of His divine nature; knowing they could not abide in His company as they were.

**7. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.**

**8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.**

**9. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.**

**They continued asking Him,** is not this always the case? The sinner makes an accusation to hide behind the sin of the accused. Jesus would not allow this to happen, He immediately puts the onus on the accusers by pointing out the obvious. Are any of you pure in the sight of God? Can any of you claim to be free from sin? If one of you is without sin let him be the first to throw a stone at this woman.

**Again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground; convicted by their own conscience, they went out one by one, beginning at the eldest.** Were their names recorded on the ground in order to show the people that the Lord knew the hearts and intent of the accusers? Let us be sure when we come to the Lord we are without sin. We so easily recognise the sin in others, the sin we are familiar with through participation in the same. It is imperative we seek cleansing from the Lord, and the necessary grace to live with the saints and in the world, with the understanding we are also prone to sin, especially the sin of pride.

We can only stand with the Lord on one condition; cleansed by the Blood of His sacrifice of Himself on Calvary and in the power of His resurrection.

The accusers **went out one by one, beginning at the eldest**, being conscious of more sins, and therefore feeling more disreputable in the presence of the Lord, so desiring to leave the Lord Jesus before their discomfort was noticed or remarked upon. Eldest refers not to age, but to honour, those who were considered higher in prestige, the Sanhedrin and the Rabbis and the leading Pharisees leave first followed by the lowlier. The people leaving showed they were conscious of breaking the Law of God; it also revealed that the moral state of the public and their leaders was corrupt, and justified what Jesus said as recorded in Matthew 16<sup>4</sup>; **that it was an adulterous and wicked generation.**

**Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst** of the crowd the scribes and Pharisees had tried to impress with their self-righteousness, or bamboozle with their question; the crowd they hoped would back them up in trying to trap the Lord Jesus with their deceitful subterfuge. But **the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart**, 1Samuel 16<sup>7</sup>. The accusers are now departed for they have been made cognisant with their own motives and their deceitful hearts. A sinner alone with the Lord Jesus Christ is in the best place. It is there the sinner can find peace and freedom from the accusations of man and enter into a new relationship with God. It is not that the accusations of man are not true, rather that man is naturally sinful and self righteous and we naturally have no true basis on which we may judge another, furthermore judgement without condemnation, punishment, forgiveness or understanding is beyond us for we are all condemned by our own sinfulness; at the least by our sinful nature even when we do not practice the sin of the majority.

**10. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?**

**11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.**

While the accusers of the woman are there the Lord Jesus Christ takes the humble place. Jesus stoops down, teaching us that it is better not to enter into a discussion with those whose intention is to blatantly destroy the lives of others or publish abroad the sin of others, nor indeed with those who would question the Truth when not motivated by a desire to know. Pride has brought the critics to the Lord, the humble nature of the Lord and the writing on the ground silences all the accusers; and their consciences cause them to depart from Him who has shown them their hearts.

Jesus saw **none but the woman** for His focus was on her salvation. Each individual who comes to the Lord Jesus Christ has His undivided attention. All the accusers from without have departed, it is enough for our own conscience to condemn us. Jesus knows this and tells us to note His power to forgive sin and empower the sinner to put the sin behind; to leave it in the past for it has been dealt with.

My sin, O the bliss of this glorious thought,

My sin, not in part but the whole,

Is nailed to His Cross and I bear it no more

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul.

**Go, and sin no more** is the instruction from the Lord Jesus Christ to each of us when He has dealt with our sin. The Lord does not leave us to our own devices nor expect us to continue without help so He gives to each of us His Holy Spirit to teach us and to guide us, to point out the error in our lives and to instruct us in the way we should go. We have the Holy Spirit within and the Bible without, believers around us so all the resources for a Christian are readily available for us to live a life pleasing to the Lord. Each of those resources comes to us as a grace gift from God through the prayer of faith.

**Neither do I condemn thee** says the Lord Jesus Christ to the woman who is without doubt guilty. But Christ Jesus came into the world to save, not to condemn; which of us could claim to be without guilt? The Lord Jesus, when He redeems a man or woman who calls upon Him in faith and repents of the sin which alienated him from God, sees the person without sin. Jesus took the sin and the penalty for sin upon Him when He gave Himself as a sacrifice for sin. What a blessing this is for the 'new-born' child of God; a conscience void of guilt, a divine teacher within and an instruction manual written at the direction of God.



12. Then spoke Jesus again 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 record of thyself; thy record is not true.
14. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.
15. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.
16. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.
17. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.
18. I am one that bears witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.
19. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.
20. These words spoke Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

**I am the light of the world;** the fountainhead of all intellectual light and spiritual understanding proceed from me; without me all is darkness and death. The Rabbis of old designated God the light of the world. The Israelites said to God, *O Lord of the universe, thou commanded us to light lamps to thee, yet thou art THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD: and with thee the light dwelleth.* The Lord Jesus Christ takes to Himself the well known character and title of God and by doing so offends the Rabbis and Pharisees.

The **Light of the world** can say and ensure His people **shall not walk in darkness.** His followers shall be saved from ignorance, infidelity, and sin as they live by faith. The Lord has said, If you believe on My name and you follow Me, become My disciple you will have my Spirit to bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God. You will have the light of the glorious gospel of Christ shine in unto you. The Sun of righteousness Jesus, Malachi 4<sup>2</sup>, is the fountain of all spiritual life and the source of light to enlighten the soul; the source of eternal life. His light brings life with it, and they who walk in His light living in His life **shall have the light of life.**

Phineas Fletcher when speaking of the conversion of a soul to God says:-

*"New LIGHT new LOVE, new LOVE new LIFE hath bred;  
A LIFE that lives by LOVE, and loves by LIGHT:  
A LOVE to Him, to whom all LOVES are wed;  
A LIGHT, to whom the sun is darkest night:  
Eye's LIGHT, heart's LOVE, soul's only LIFE He is:  
LIFE, soul, love, heart, LIGHT, eye, and all are His:  
He eye, LIGHT, heart, LOVE, soul; He all my joy and bliss."*

I think the time has come for all believers to take their eyes off the works they are doing, no matter how good those works are, or how successful they appear and turn back to the Lord Jesus Christ. Without the Lord Jesus Christ as the primary focus of our aim and activity we miss the mark; fail to achieve the standard, miss out on the most important aspect of our redeemed life – knowing God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. We can get caught up in the legitimate work of a Christian and find the demands of the work detract from our time with the Lord. We don't notice how impoverished we are while working hard to please God. Surely God is most pleased when we take time away from all aspects of our life and work and leisure and spend time with Him.

**13. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.** Such is the corrupt nature of these Pharisees they cannot accept the truth when it is presented to them. Christ being truly God, who cannot lie, His testimony of Himself is above reproach and ought not need more proof than has been presented in the miracles and speech of the Saviour to this time.

**14. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.** Jesus answered this objection by saying His testimony ought to be received; that He had the evidence in Himself revealed by His works and declaration and the testimony of His Father given at His baptism. In modern courts of law a man may testify under oath but the word of man is not accepted uncorroborated.

**I know whence I came, and whither I go;** I know by whose authority I act; I know who sent me, I am fully acquainted with the desires of my Father. You cannot know this unless I bear witness to you.

Jesus came not of himself, John 6<sup>38</sup>; He came into the world not to do His own will, but the will of His Father. He came as a witness of those things which He had seen and known, John 3<sup>11</sup>. No man could judge Jesus in

those things, no other since Adam had known or seen them. Christ Jesus was the man from heaven; He knew His Father's will, in fact came into the world to do the will of His Father. He had brought into being the world, and knew the counsels of His Father; Jesus was at one with His Father so His testimony was worthy to be accepted. The scribes and Pharisees had not seen and known these things, they were not qualified to judge. Jesus gave His credentials as God's appointed both by the nature of His doctrine and His miracles.

**15. Ye judge after the flesh;** These words from the Lord are so pointed, we all judge after the flesh; what other criteria have we? **After the flesh** or according to appearances; according to your carnal and corrupt understanding taught you by those who have lost sight of the God who saved and redeemed them from all their enemies in the past; not according to the spiritual nature of the doctrines. By your preconceived opinions and prejudices you are determined not to believe that I am the Messiah.

All the decisions we make and all the money we spend and all the relationships we form are for personal benefit in some way. Seldom does one harm himself for the advantage of another intentionally. The Lord Jesus telling the Pharisees this truth did not stop them from pursuing that line of interrogation and criticism. He could honestly say **I judge no man**. Jesus judged no man; that is as they judged, according to outward show.

**I judge no man** at present. My coming into the world and the work I have to do is not condemnatory of any man. My work now is to teach and my present office is that of a prophet, I am not here as a judge. If you will heed my words and lifestyle you will know what I say is truth. My coming now is in obedience to my Father and to do His will by being the perfect sacrifice for sin. My next coming to the world, subsequent to the Rapture, will be to judge and condemn it; at this time you have no understanding of the truth concerning the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

**16. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.** If I should express my judgment of men or things, for it is not forbidden, nor am I restrained by any fear of error; my judgment is true, is worthy to be regarded. **I am not alone**; I am in full agreement with the Father who has sent me. His judgment you cannot question and my judgment is in total accord with His. Jesus was commissioned by His Father, and His judgment coincided with all that God had purposed or revealed. This was clearly shown by the evidence that Jesus demonstrated and displayed in His words and works; unambiguous evidence that the Father had sent His Son into the world.

**17. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.**

**18. I am one that bears witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.**

**19. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.** Deuteronomy 17<sup>6</sup> and 19<sup>15</sup> related to cases in which the life of an individual was involved. Jesus says that if, in such a case, the testimony of two men were sufficient to establish a fact, His own testimony and that of His Father ought to be sufficient evidence in the case of doctrine related to the Law. If two men could confirm a point of question, the evidence of Jesus and of God ought to be sufficient, worthy of belief. If the testimony of two distinct persons, that are men, who may deceive or be deceived, is conclusive, much more ought the testimony of the Son of God concerning himself, backed with the testimony of his Father concerning Him, be accepted as true.

**I am one that bears witness of myself, and the Father that sent me bears witness of me.** Two distinct witnesses are here presented to us. In human courts, where two witnesses are required, the criminal or accused is not admitted as a witness for himself; yet in this divine subject and account which can be proved only by a divine testimony, God must be allowed as a second witness. If the formality of two or three witnesses be insisted on, then no other than the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit must be accepted. Since the testimony of two distinct persons that are men, and therefore may deceive or be deceived, is deemed conclusive, then the testimony of the Son of God concerning himself, and the testimony of His Father concerning His Son is credible.

This proves that the Father and the Son are two distinct persons, for their testimonies are here spoken of as the testimonies of two persons. It also confirms that these two are one, not only one in their testimony, but in their desires and execution of them.

The Son is one Person, and the Father is another; not however two Beings, but the Father and the Son are the only true God. Christ here speaks of himself and the Father as witnesses to the world, and these witnesses to the world in this current age will be witnesses against those that continue in unbelief. The word of these two witnesses will judge men, all men, one day; some will be condemned and others, who have believed will be accepted into the kingdom of God.

**19. Where is thy Father?** This question was asked in derision. Jesus had told the inquisitors that by his Father he meant God, John 5<sup>1</sup> - 6<sup>71</sup>. They professed to be ignorant of this, and probably looked round at the people for His Father, that Jesus might produce him as a witness. Jesus replied if you had listened to my instructions, and

had received me as the Messiah, you would also have known the truth and the author of truth. Jesus gave no heed to their quibbling and misunderstanding; He was not irritated by their contempt, rather gave them an answer worthy of the Son of God.

We should meet the mocking of sinners in the same manner. We should not render railing for railing, but **in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth,** 2Timothy 2<sup>25</sup>.

The only way to know God is to know Jesus Christ. **No man hath seen God at any time. The only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,** John 1<sup>18</sup>. No sinner can have a just or correct view of God until such a time as he repents and believes in Jesus Christ. 2Corinthians 4<sup>6</sup>, **For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.** The reason why men are ignorant of God is because they do not know Jesus Christ. In knowing Him we know the Father, for He is the express image of His Father, John 14<sup>9</sup>, he that knows Christ knows the Father.

**20. These words spoke Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.** The treasury was in what was called the court of the women; it is thought there were thirteen chests in it; in the thirteenth only the women were permitted to put their offerings. Probably the other twelve were placed there in reference to the twelve tribes; each perhaps inscribed with the name of one of Jacob's twelve sons.

It seems that our Lord sometimes sat in this court to teach the people. The time was not yet come in which He had determined to give himself up into the hands of those who would crucify Him.

**21. Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.**

**22. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because 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 if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.**

**25. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even *the same* that I said unto you from the beginning.**

**26. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.**

**27. They understood not that he spoke to them of the Father.**

**28. Then said Jesus unto them, 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 my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.**

**29. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.**

**30. As he spoke these words, many believed on him.**

**21. Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.** The word "again" looks back to John 7<sup>33, 34</sup>, where on a previous occasion Jesus made a similar statement. **I go my way** meaning I shall shortly leave you. It was a solemn word of warning. Christ is addressing these Pharisees as the representatives of the nation, and saw the trials the nation would go through having rejected the salvation of the Lord. In just a few years Israel would suffer as never before; when that time came they would seek divine help, help from the promised Messiah, but it would be in vain. Having despised the Saviour they would **die in their sins**. Having rejected the Son of God it was impossible for them to come to the place where the Lord would be.

**Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins.** These solemn words have a present application; that the Saviour may be sought, but sought for in vain. A man may be sorry he has done wrong in a variety of ways and suffer remorse; a man may have religious feelings about Christ, even feel shame at the thought of the crucifixion, and yet have no saving faith in Him. Sickness, disease the fear of death, a financial crises discomfort these frequently cause thoughts to leave the present and contemplate the future. The future is bleak without Christ the future is a fearful prospect without Christ.

**Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins.** Many come forward to the front, influenced or beguiled by the speaker at modern evangelistic meetings, seeking Christ. Many of them are in earnest; the 'preacher' may sway the 'penitent' and cause them to consider the end result; but unless the preacher points the penitent to the Lord

Jesus Christ there is no hope engendered in the sinner. Jeremiah 29<sup>13</sup> says, **Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.**

**Will he kill himself?** The Pharisees reply showed their complete lack of understanding. With scorn they reply for they know their position is weak and their arguments are to no avail. This is frequently the response of one without a valid argument; such a one will try to ridicule his opponent. **Will he kill himself?** It is difficult to know whether this question was asked from ignorance or malice. Killing ones self, suicide, was regarded then, as it is now, one of the greatest crimes; and it is not improbable that they asked this question with contempt, not knowing or ignorant of the truth Jesus was the life giver. If this was their meaning, we see the grace and patience of Jesus in enduring the contradiction of sinners; and as He bore the contempt of mockers and the malicious intent without responding in kind, so should we.

**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.** Christ points out the reason why they do not understand His words and received not His witness. There was an infinite gulf separating the Christ of God from the sinners confronting Him; they were from beneath, He was from above. They belonged to the world, originally created from the dust of the earth. **The first man is of the earth, earthy:** 1Corinthians 15<sup>47</sup>. Jesus was not of the world, **the second man is the Lord from heaven,** 1Corinthians 15<sup>47</sup>. Friendship with the world is enmity against God, and until the enmity is removed it is impossible for we, who are not only in the world, but of it, to enter heaven, the home of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**24. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.** The one who persists in his rejection of the Christ of God will die in his sins, unpardoned, unfit for heaven, unprepared to meet God. Without doubt the vast majority pass out of this world into a hopeless eternity. The example of the Jesus Christ should teach us to be forthright in our denunciation of sin and the end result of one who continues in sin. Jesus did not hesitate to proclaim this truth, this awful truth, nor should we baulk at the likelihood of offending an unbeliever.

In my judgment this is the one truth which above all others needs to be proclaimed loud and clear today. Men will not turn to Christ until they recognise their imminent danger of an eternity without Christ and the wrath of God to come upon all who reject the claims God makes on them.

For if ye believe not that **I am**. In this simple phrase Jesus claims to be the eternal God by owning the name and title of God. '**I am**' the name of God revealed to Moses when he was at the bush that burned without being consumed is a divine title that fits none other than God alone. Therefore Jesus states He is God, that He and the Father are one. They are not only one in being but also one in essence and one in purpose.

**Ye shall die in your sins.** This is one of many verses which expose the modern error concerning the propitiatory work of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are some who teach that on the Cross Christ bore all the sins of all men; this is not true. On the Cross the Lord Jesus Christ bore the penalty for sin, and all who believe He was the Sacrifice God provided find that He met all God's requirements for them to obtain righteousness. Some insist that the entire question of sin was dealt with and settled at Calvary, this also is error. Christ bore all the sins of believers, but for the sins of unbelievers no propitiatory sacrifice has been made. One of the many proofs of this is taught us by John 8<sup>24</sup>. **Ye shall die in your sins** could never have been said if the Lord Jesus removed all the sins of all people from before God. This applies to all people of all religions; all people from all walks of life, all people from all nations and all languages; no religion can give to the practiser of that religion salvation; neither can any amount of good works, nor can salvation be purchased at any price; **Salvation is of the Lord,** Jonah 2<sup>9</sup>. God demanded a price and only the Lord Jesus Christ could pay that price for sin had excluded all others; He alone was without sin.

**25. Who art thou?** This highlights the indignation of the Pharisees, as if they had said who are you to threaten us in this manner? **Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.** Rather, just what I have already told you, that I am the light of the world, the Christ, the Saviour of mankind.

The Jews hearing our Saviour disapproving them asked who He was. Jesus replies, that He was the same from the beginning, even the Christ; and that they were the same, they were enemies and opposed the truth. The time was approaching when they would be convinced who He was. They would know when they had lifted Him up upon His cross, when He was raised from among the dead, ascended into heaven. The sufferings of Christ were clear and convincing demonstrations, both to who He was, and what He was; the Substitute and the Saviour; the Son of God and the Son of man. The darkening of the sun, the quaking of the earth, the rending of the rocks, the opening of the graves, following His miracles and words; were convincing proofs of His deity, the observers would say, **Verily, this was the Son of God.**

There is a fundamental difference between 'knowing' and 'believing'. There are many scientific facts that have no bearing on our lives until they are appropriately applied. What I know will not change my eternal destiny,

what I believe may. Some of these Jews came to the conclusion Jesus spoke the truth and many believed on Him, v30.

**26. I have many things to say and to judge of you.** There are many things to speak and reasons I could give to condemn and my judgement and condemnation would be just, you but I refrain. I could expose all your iniquity, your pride, your hypocrisy and the error in your religious practises, and your malice against the truth. Your obstinate unrelenting unbelief is the reason why I say **you will die in your sins**.

I have indeed many things I could say blaming or condemning you. I have already said many such things, and there are many more that I might say; but I speak only those things which God has commanded. I speak not of myself I come to do my Father's will and to say what He wants said; He is worthy to be heard and His word is faithful and true. If my judgment seems rash or harsh, it is as commanded by my Father, God and is without doubt just and true.

**27. They understood not that he spoke to them of the Father.** As it was with the Lord Jesus Christ, the hearers not knowing or understanding Him, so it is when we preach those things concerning Christ. The world in general does not understand we have a higher purpose in mind when we speak to the Lord or when we speak for the Lord. Until the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of the 'blind' the Lord is not 'seen'. The Lord Jesus Christ had no selfish motive, no private aim; He desired the best possible for those He spoke to. Jesus was to reveal to the world those things which He had heard of the Father. When we see the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God then we are truly conscious of the Father and the relationship we have with Him.

**28. 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 my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.** Lifted up, raised on a pole, placed on high, so that it might be seen by the people is the thought behind these words. The expression refers to the Israelites in the wilderness when Moses was commanded to make a serpent and raise it on a pole; all who looked in faith to the Brazen Serpent were spared from death by snake bite. Even if the snake had injected its poison the infected Israelite could not die after looking upon the Brazen Serpent. His *lifting up* referred to the manner of death the Saviour was approaching, death by crucifixion, John 12<sup>32, 33</sup>. Now all who look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the perfect sacrifice for sin are saved from 'death', eternal damnation, because Jesus has satisfied all the claims of a just and holy God.

**Then shall ye know that 'I am'** suggests that the crucifixion would be followed by such manifestations of His Divinity that He would be fully vindicated, and many would be convinced that He was indeed the Messiah, and that He had done and said only what He had been commissioned to do and say by His Father. This word of the Lord Jesus Christ was verified on the day of Pentecost. Thousands who had cried, *crucify him*, came to believe on Him as *both Lord and Christ*, then filled by the Holy Spirit joined in the work of building the Church.

**29. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. 30. As he spoke these words, many believed on him.** Jesus said He that sent and commissioned me for this great and specific work of redemption is always with me for I do only what He desires; my will is to please Him in all things and to complete the work He has initiated for the salvation of man. The work of redemption in the hands of Jesus Christ, was a work well-pleasing to God the Father; the work itself was pleasing to Him; and the manner of doing the work was pleasing to the Father; and He who did the work was the delight of His Father. The reason why it was pleasing to God was because Jesus did only what was in conformity to his Father's will. Jesus kept to His Father's commission, and executed His Father's commands, only and always doing those things that pleased Him.

As the Father and Jesus Christ His Son were inseparable, both one in the unity of divinity; so the Father was always with His Son, both to support and uphold Him, and reward Him when the work was completed. The Father raised Jesus from among the dead and set Him at His own right hand. The situation now is that there is a Man in the glory, a Man to represent all who trust Him for their salvation. **The Father has not left me alone**, said Jesus, in the doing of His will, my being obedient unto death. In fact death and the grave hold no fear for me; my food is to do the will of Him that sent me; even if it means suffering and death.

Each of us who desire to know the presence of God in all conditions, particularly in times of stress, sufferings and trouble; must make it our aim to please God, and to observe His will in all things. Then God will be with us to guide, strengthen and enlighten us with His Word and the comfort of the Holy Spirit and the fellowship of His people.

When the words of the Lord Jesus Christ are heard then there is the chance for an unbeliever in hearing, to believe and be saved. Hearing the words of the Lord Jesus Christ is food for the believer and the sustenance a believer needs on the pathway God has allotted to him.

31. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;
32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
33. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?
34. Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.
35. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.
36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.
37. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.
38. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.
39. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. 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 have heard of God: this did not Abraham.
41. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be 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 proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I 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 ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode 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 of it. 45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.
46. Which of you convinces me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?
47. He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

31. If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; or in this doctrine of mine or the teaching I am presenting to you. It is not enough to receive God's truth; we must retain and walk in it. And it is only when we receive the truth, love it, keep it, and walk in it, that we are the genuine Disciples of Christ.

If you continue to obey my commandments and to receive my doctrines then are you my disciples; this is the true test of Christian character. John 14<sup>21</sup>, **He that hath my commandments and keeps them, he it is that loveth me.** Jesus cautions these new believers about being over confident, the initial joy of salvation may cause us *to mount up with wings as eagles*, but we should settle down to walk with the Lord. These new believers would soon have their faith tested; Jesus assures them that if their faith brings them through the test it should produce obedience to His commandments and a holy life.

We may say to all new converts, be confident in the Lord and His promises not in man or the ways of man. Our faith when tried will produce a holy life, honouring to God and it will develop Christ-likeness as we stay close to the Word he has preserved for us and speak often with the Lord who has redeemed us.

32. **And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.** The truth here means faith in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The doctrines of this pure faith shall make you free; it will free you from the slavery of an evil mind, selfish passions, and corrupt predisposition. The condition of each sinner, religious or irreligious is that of a captive of Satan and evil, a slave to sin. The slave is one who serves and obeys the dictates of an evil heart, Romans 6<sup>16, 17</sup>; **ye were the servants of sin.** The effect of the gospel is to break this bondage to sin and to set the sinner free by making the sinner a saint. This is possible through the Lord Jesus Christ **who His own self bore our sin in His own body on the tree.** We learn from this that Christianity is not slavery or oppression; it is true freedom.

*“He is the freeman whom the truth makes free, and all are slaves beside.”* Cowper.

The service of God is freedom from the dictates of man, freedom from the dominance of sin, freedom from the decrees of passion and inordinate desires. It is a cheerful and delightful surrender of our will and ways to Him *whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light.*

33. We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

34. Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. These carnal Jews understand what the Lord Jesus said with a carnal understanding; after the flesh. When Jesus spoke to them of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, John 6, they understood it of His natural body. We are the children or descendants of Abraham they assert; Abraham was not a slave, and they claimed they were his

real descendants, inheriting his freedom as well as his faithful beliefs. They meant that they were the direct descendants of Abraham by Isaac, his heir. The proud boast of these Jews was utterly unfounded; nothing could have been further from the truth. The first view which Scripture gives us of Abraham's seed after they became a nation is in bondage Exodus 2. In the book of Judges we read of God delivering Israel into the hands of the Canaanites. The seventy-year captivity in Babylon is not remembered by these Jews and even at the time they spoke the Romans were their masters.

Today many talk loud and long about the freedom of the natural man, and hotly deny that man is a slave to sin. Not surprising the Jews made this false claim; they believed their religion freed them from the curse and bondage of the Law. Equally ignorant are thousands in Christendom; deliverance from the Law, liberation from bad habits they have heard about, but spiritual freedom they do not or will not countenance while they remain in ignorance and hear the claims of do-gooders that man is inherently good. They remain wilfully ignorant about the universal bondage of sin. There is not a man upon earth that lives, and sins not; yet everyone that sins is not a servant of sin, for God has executed His plan to redeem all who believe Jesus is the Saviour. Jesus classes all who sin as the servants of sin, slaves to the lusts of the flesh. They are servants of sin, imprisoned under the guilt of sin,

When Jesus speaks to them here of a spiritual freedom from sin, they understand it of a civil freedom from servile bondage and subjection. They claimed freedom from bondage was their right as descendants of Abraham and asserted his descendants had never been in bondage to any man. This was in total disregard of their history; their ancestors had been in bondage to the Egyptians and the Babylonians, and currently were in bondage to the Romans.

This was not the bondage that Christ Jesus meant; He was speaking of a spiritual slavery and the dominion of sin and power of Satan. He that commits sin is the servant of sin; whosoever habitually, and wilfully, deliberately and constantly, continues in sinful ways is the servant of sin. Every sinner is a slave to his sinful nature therefore is in slavery. It is not sinning that is the cause of separation from God; it is that each of us has failed to attain the standard God has set, the standard we see when we consider the Christ of God. And this is the case with every man until the Son makes him free; then, and only then, is he free indeed.

Continuance in Christ and in His doctrine sets the soul at liberty from bondage, delivers one from slavery, from servitude, the natural and sinful state of all unrepentant sinners. From being slaves to sin, to becoming Christ's freeman is freedom from the bondage of the Law and freedom to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. He, the Lord Jesus Christ, kept the Law perfectly and yet died under the Law for us who broke the Law and deserved the punishment, death; therefore when Christ makes us free we are free indeed.

In saying whosoever commits sin is the bondsman to sin Christ was intimating to these Jews that they were not an exception to the rule, even though they belonged to the seed of Abraham. Christ was speaking that which is true of every man in his natural condition. **Whosoever committeth sin** refers to the regular practice, the habitual course of a person's life. This one thing distinguishes the Christian from the non-Christian. The Christian sins and sins daily in a variety of ways; but unbelievers do nothing but sin. The Christian sins, but he also repents and finds forgiveness with the Lord; he does good works, and displays the fruit of the Spirit in some measure. But the life of the unregenerate man is one unbroken course of sin. Sin is not necessarily criminal activity, though that may be the case, sin is thought, word or deed contrary to God's desire for us; sin is not giving God the rightful place in our lives. Having Adam's nature makes us a sinner, man is a sinner by practice, and cannot be otherwise until he enters upon a new life with a new spirit. Because the sinner has no living spiritual nature, dead in sin; because the imaginations and thoughts of man are only evil continually, because he lives totally for himself, every action is polluted, therefore not acceptable to a holy God.

God's thoughts are different from ours; the man in the world imagines that to become a Christian means to forego his freedom. He thinks Christianity is a lot of restrictions which curtail his liberty. These suppositions are evidence that the god of this world, Satan, has blinded his mind 2Corinthians 4<sup>4</sup>.

It is the unbeliever, not the one in Christ, the believer, who is in bondage. The unsaved are on a downward course, unavoidably, because of their nature, and the very freedom which the sinner supposes he is exercising in the indulgence of his evil propensities is only proof that he is the slave of sin. The love of self, love of the world, love of money, love of pleasure, are the dictators which rule over all who are out of Christ, unsaved.

**35. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.**

**36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.** The servant or as it is more correctly translated, *bond-slave* is the same as in the previous verse, the one who makes a constant practice of sinning. Such a one cannot abide in the house as a member of the family. The *house* signifies family, as in the House of Jacob, the House of Israel, the House of God, Hebrews 3<sup>5,6</sup>. The Lord Jesus was simply stating a well-known fact; a slave has only a temporary place in a family as a servant and not a member. The Jews insisted that they

were Abraham's seed 32, that they belonged to the family as descended from Abraham and as those descendants who had received the covenants and promises. The Lord says the natural descendants of Abraham do not inherit the blessings which belong to his spiritual children. While they remained the bond-slaves of sin the natural children of Abraham would be cut off even from the temporary external privilege which they currently claimed for themselves.

**But the Son abideth ever.** The slave's place was uncertain, and temporary, but the Son's place in the family is permanent. The word **abideth** here suggests continuing fellowship, unity. Though this statement expresses a general principle, something that is true of every member of God's family; the direct reference is clearly to Christ Jesus Himself, as the next verse makes plain, for **the Son** of verse 36 is clearly confined to the Lord Jesus.

**If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. The Son** is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is able to make free the bond-slaves of sin because He is the Son. The Son as one with the Father, in the family, is one in purpose and power with the Father; He is in perfect fellowship with Him, and therefore He is fully competent to liberate those under the tyranny of sin and the dominion of Satan. To free His people from the bondage of sin was the primary objective in the manifestation of God in the flesh. Among the first recorded words of Christ was the statement that the Spirit of the Lord had anointed Him to preach **deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that are bruised**, Luke 4<sup>18</sup>. Men are under the influence of sin, they prefer, even love darkness rather than light, they have to be made free. Freedom, salvation, freedom from the curse and penalty of sin comes with repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour.

**Ye shall be free indeed**, free from what? Christian liberty, spiritual liberty, is to be delivered from the wrath of God, the condemnation of sin, the penalty required by the law of God, Isaiah 42<sup>7</sup>; 60<sup>1</sup>; Romans 8<sup>1</sup>. Christian liberty is deliverance from the power of Satan, Acts 26<sup>18</sup>; Colossians 1<sup>13</sup>; Hebrews 2<sup>14, 15</sup>. Christian liberty is deliverance from the bondage of sin, Romans 6<sup>14, 18</sup>. Christian liberty is deliverance from the authority of man where that conflicts with the Law of God, Galatians 4<sup>8, 9</sup>; 5<sup>1</sup>; Colossians 2<sup>20-22</sup>.

Christians are delivered that they may be *free* to serve God. The believer is the Lord's freeman; he has chosen submission to the authority of Jesus Christ as Lord. For the child of God, Christian freedom, spiritual freedom is being empowered to think and do as one ought. The Christian is not free to do as he pleases; he is freed from the shackles that tied him to the lusts of the flesh so that he may follow the path of righteousness as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. The desires of a child of God are no longer centred on self; the Christians desires are centred on pleasing God; he is freed to do so.

**37. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.**

**38. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.**

**39. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. 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 have heard of God: this did not Abraham.** I admit that you are the descendants of Abraham. Jesus did not call that in question, but He points out to them that they might be Abraham's descendants yet still lack his spirit. Ye seek to kill me because my word, my doctrine; the principles of truth I espouse, you hate and you therefore seek to kill me.

**My word hath no place in you**, you do not embrace my doctrine, and it has no influence over you. They were so filled with pride as to their natural heritage, and prejudiced by the teachings of the Rabbis, and false ideas as to what God required, that they would not receive His truth; and as they had not His truth, and could not bear the guilt when the truth was made evident to them they sought to kill Jesus.

The Jews boasting again that they were Abraham's seed, the Lord Jesus tells them, He knew they were Abraham's natural children according to the flesh: but not his seed according to the Spirit. This He proves, by pointing out they did not have the faith of Abraham, Abraham believed God.

How prone we are to glory in our possessions and position in society and in the church we attend or the denomination we favour, and to rely upon them. It is very dangerous and spiritually unsafe to pride ourselves in, and depend upon any external privileges. Being born to a member of the Christian church, descending from pious parents is not the way to enter the Kingdom of God, to become a child of God.

God is our Father only on condition we are adopted into His family, which is when we accept the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God and our personal Saviour.

**38. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.**

Jesus said 'I speak', 'you do'. Jesus said much to indicate clearly His divine origin and purpose, He did many works to demonstrate His divinity and His speech was backed up in all He did. This emphasises the difference between Him and the nation from which His critics come. The people were doing as they were taught, not that



it was right or wrong; it was legalistic and left spirituality out of the equation. Religion has this propensity; the teachers and leaders in a religion have followers believe and practice as they teach and do, speech and action to suit their doctrines. Jesus spoke the truth, He knew nothing more than the truth; His actions were born in truth and his words expressed the truth.

Jesus saw the Father, for he was the WORD that was with God from eternity. The Jews did not see, they only felt and heard, and followed their father the devil. It is the interest of Satan to keep himself in the background, out of sight, and to let others claim the dubious honours for the work he does through them.

The contrast between the Lord Jesus Christ and the people He came to save is manifest in the activity they engage in. The Jews followed their leaders in a subservient way, agreeing with them without reference to the Word of God or to those who clearly had an understanding of God and His Word. They were in the most part led by those with power or prestige. For many generations the leaders had been away from the truth of the Word of God and taught as they thought best for them individually, as priesthood, and as those who were legalistic, rather than what was right in the sight of the Lord.

The reason why we have so many Christian denominations today stemming from the same source is that Satan has misled, the imaginations of the heart have misled, pride has misled, forceful leaders have misled. Convincing critics have supposed error in the mainline church and moved aside with their followers and formed another sect. This has often occurred since the inception of the Church and has happened so often we now have more than 400 hundred so called Christian denominations; some that will not even communicate with others. The Church has been divided so often it is difficult to find a group of 'believers' that maintain the Bible is the Word of God and is all we need for faith and practice. Adding to this there are so many translations of the Word of God with subtleties of phrases and meanings that have distorted the truth, creating many arguments to bolster the false teachers.

Here are two fathers spoken of, according to the two families into which the descendants of Adam are divided. Adam through Abraham and in the flesh the Jews; Adam through Abraham and in the spirit of faith the Christian, these two are contrary the one to the other. The Jew is for religious adherence to the Law, the Christian is for religious adherence to the spirit of the Law as Christ Jesus taught it and gave us an example.

**Abraham is our father** claim these Jews, we are descended from Abraham. This the Jews boasted of for they were descended from this eminent man in the flesh. We acknowledge no other father of our race than Abraham, and to charge us with being the offspring of another is slander, it is a lie.

Jesus replied **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 have heard of God: this did not Abraham.**

**41. Ye do the deeds of your father.** As the son has the nature of his father in him, and naturally imitates him, so the Lord replies if ye were the children of Abraham, ye would imitate him in his faith, and obedience, but this you fail to do, you seek to kill me; you are watching for an opportunity to destroy me, merely because I tell you the truth. Abraham believed God, he never had a murderous nature as you are now exhibiting, and therefore you have no spiritual relationship to him.

There are two things specified here in which these Jews differed from Abraham, first in seeking to kill Jesus, possessing a murderous and intent, verse 37. Also in rejecting the truth as God had revealed it. Abraham was an example in love to man as well as love and obedience to God. He set the captives free Genesis 14<sup>14-16</sup>; he entertained strangers Genesis 18<sup>1-8</sup>; God revealed to Abraham His purpose, difficult to comprehend and inexplicable as it was to Abraham, Genesis 12<sup>1-4</sup>; 15<sup>4-6</sup>; 22<sup>1-24</sup>. As the Jews sought to kill Jesus instead of treating him as Abraham treated the Visitor's, they showed they had not the spirit of Abraham.

**44. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode 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 of it.**

**45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.**

Devil; this word originally means an adversary, or an accuser. It is given in the Scriptures to the leader of evil angels, a being characterised as full of subtlety, envy, and is revealed to man as an angel of light, a deceiver and a hater of mankind. He is known, also by the name of Satan, Job 1<sup>6-12</sup>, Matthew 12<sup>26</sup>, Beelzebub, Matthew 12<sup>24</sup>; the old Serpent Revelation 12<sup>9</sup>; and the prince of the power of the air, Ephesians 2<sup>2</sup>. The name is sometimes given to men and women, 2Timothy 3:<sup>3</sup>, truce-breakers, slanderers, 1Timothy 3<sup>2</sup>, so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, in the original, devils.

**Ye are of your father the Devil** is true of every unregenerate soul. Depending on self, money, and heritage rather than on God, denying His sovereignty, loving darkness rather than light, men are an easy prey to the to the god of this world; he blinds their minds; he dictates their manner of life, and works in them **both to will**

**and to do** of his evil pleasure, Ephesians 2<sup>2</sup>. Sinners cannot blame God for their thoughts and behaviour. Christ here declares, **the lusts of your father you will do**, or they desire to do, which is the correct meaning, they were cheerful servants; voluntary slaves to sin and only the light of the gospel of the glory of God can dispel that darkness.

The Devil was a murderer from the beginning; in the first records of him he is represented as the deceiver. This refers to the deception of Adam and Eve and their submission to desires of the flesh. Death was denounced against sin, sin was not doing as God desired and had communicated to Adam and Eve, Genesis 2<sup>17</sup>. The devil deceived our first parents, and they became subject to death, Genesis 3<sup>1-24</sup>. Satan was the deceiver, death followed sin so he may be said to have been a murderer in that act, or from the beginning. **And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world**, is the record of his end.

Satan has continued through all ages to deceive, and is the cause (though he cannot be blamed) of spiritual and eternal death upon all who refuse the deliverance offered to the sinner by the Lord Jesus Christ. His work has been to destroy, and in the deceit of man leading to death he is said to have murdered. As the Jews endeavoured to kill the Saviour, they showed they had the same spirit of evil working in them.

He **abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him**. This is the word of the Lord concerning Satan; he was once in a state of happiness and contentment, but fell from it; and turning from all good he now will not allow others to enjoy what he has lost. By his lies he deceived Eve, and brought her, her husband, and through them, all of Adam and Eve's descendants into his own condemnation.

Cain by killing his brother, because the evil deed was the child of the thought given by the devil, the devil is called the murderer. We should take care to guard ourselves and all who are in our care against the wiles of the devil; he is a murderer, and aims to bring all to death before they know the salvation of the Lord. Jesus said these Jews were followers of the devil, and were murderers, like him. The Jews were ready and keen to betray the Lord Jesus. These Jews were the seed of the serpent that was to bruise the heel of the seed of the woman.

Satan was a liar. A lie is opposed to truth 1John 2<sup>21</sup>, and accordingly the devil is here described as an enemy to truth, and therefore to Christ. By **the truth** here we may understand the revealed will of God concerning the salvation of man by Jesus Christ, the truth which the Lord Jesus Christ was now preaching, and which the Jews opposed. There is no truth in the devil, his interest in mankind is supported by lies and there is no truth in him, not in anything he says or does.

It is said that he is a liar; his oracles were lies, his prophets lying prophets, and the images which people worshipped were the offspring of teachers of lies. All his temptations are propagated and supported by lies, calling evil good and good evil, he knows they are lies, and recommends them with the sole intention of deceiving and destroying all who believe the lie. When he speaks a lie he speaks of his own self and nature, not of God; his Creator never put deceit or lying into any of His creation. When men utter a lie they do so having moved away from the truth. The devil is the father of every lie; not only of the lies which he suggests, but of those which any man speaks; the devil is the author and founder of all lies.

**45. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.** Man is now reaping what was sown by Adam at the beginning. Our first parents believed the lie of the Devil having refused to obey God, ever since then man has believed lies and acted in error. Man gives credibility to the most bizarre and ludicrous inanities, but will not accept the truth however it is presented. Some believe that there are no such things as sin and death; some believe mankind is evolved from apes. Others believe that death ends all, thinking they are without a soul.

Many religions teach heaven can be attained by 'good works' or with their own works; not considering the standard or who sets the standard.

God says all are lost, dead in trespasses and sins; that eternal life is a gift, and eternal torment is the prescribed end of all who refuse that gift. Why is it men refuse to believe? They will not believe God because they are taught by renowned unbelievers and shown examples that cater to the flesh; they learn to love that which is false. **They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies** Psalm 58<sup>3</sup>; they **delight in lies** Psalm 62<sup>4</sup>; therefore Christ is still saying to men through those who preach the Gospel, **because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not**. Not that the truth is hard to believe but that the ways of sin appear to have a present benefit, which to the unbeliever is more attractive.

**46. Which of you convinces (convicts) me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?** The charge Jesus had just made against His accusers was direct and pertinent, yet He openly challenges them to contest it. Which of you can honestly say I have sinned? If there is no evidence against me why do ye not believe me?

**47. He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God** Every child of God is in-dwelt by the Holy Spirit, and receives with reverence, the words of his heavenly Father. The

Holy Spirit confirms to the hearer the Word of God, whoever brings that word. The reason you do not receive My words is because you are not His children. **He that is of God** is the same as *he that has been born of God*, he that is in the family of God.

**48. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon?** Jesus had declared that they were not the true children of Abraham 39; and He had affirmed that the Devil was their father 44; they reply **Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon**. By a Samaritan they meant one who was an enemy to their national faith; by **thou hast a demon** they implied Jesus was obsessed by a proud and lying spirit. The Jews being enraged at this reproof protest against Him and attack His person, charging him with being a Samaritan, possessed with an evil spirit. Jesus meekly replies that he did not deal with the devil; but was honouring his Father in what he did, and said; and therefore his Father would take care of His honour, and judge between Him and them. **Thou art a Samaritan** was a term of contempt and reproach. It was the same as charging the Lord with heresy or of being divisive, because the Samaritans were regarded as such.

**49. Jesus answered, I have not a demon; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.** It was to reproach the Jews Jesus makes a blank denial, then adds, **but I honour my Father**. One who is controlled by the Devil is a liar, but Christ had told them the truth. One, who is prompted by the Devil flatters men, seeks to ingratiate himself but Christ depicts fallen human nature in terms that were general yet personally applicable. One who is motivated by the Devil is puffed up with pride, but Christ sought only the honour of His Father.

**50. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.** If I sought the favour of man, I would not have told you the truth. Had my own glory been my objective, I would have exercised my divine power. My not having your approbation does not dishearten me. **There is One who seeks My glory**; the same One who will look after my reputation. He who seeks to glorify me judges and His judgement is true.

Jesus was doing His Father's will; they were treating Him with insults, scorn, and contempt. The Father was seeking the honour of His faithful Servant, His beloved Son.

**51. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.** Christ had just pointed out the end result of rejecting Him and His Word; God would judge them, judge righteously. Christ now says, **if a man keeps my saying, he shall never see death!** This blessed promise is for His own, for those who keep His Word. This does not remove responsibility from us; the promise is only to the one who keeps Christ's Word. To keep the Word is to hide it in the heart, Psalm 119<sup>11</sup>; to remember it, 1Corinthians 15<sup>3</sup>. It is to let the Word of God legislate and rule, Revelation 3<sup>8</sup>. Death is eternal separation from God. Jesus means freedom from eternal separation from God. It was not exemption from mortal death, but freedom from eternal destruction, which the Lord promised to them that keep His saying.

The misunderstanding of Christ's doctrine, and taking it in a carnal sense, has given occasion for the petty squabbles and false doctrines that have arisen over the years. Christ did not make this promise of delivering his followers from physical death, but that God, whom these Jews called their father, had given to Jesus power to make good whatever He promised to them that keep His words. As Moses promised a long life, with temporal blessings, to those who would keep his statutes and ordinances, so Jesus promises all who keep His doctrine shall not only have a long life, but shall never see death; shall never experience death of the soul, but shall live eternally with Him in glory.

**52. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?** What a striking example this was of what the Lord said in verse 43. They understood not His speech and heard not His words. Devoid of spiritual discernment, the awful condition of the natural man, proves the things of God are foolishness to him, 1Corinthians 2<sup>14</sup>. No matter how simply and plainly the truths of Scripture are expounded, the unregenerate are unable to understand them until the Holy Spirit interprets the Word to them.

**54. Jesus answered, if I honour myself, my honour is nothing; it is my Father that honours me; of whom ye say, that he is your God** To honour is to do or speak that which shall cause the hearer to hold in high regard the person spoken of. The Father's esteem for the Son is evident by His love and admiration for Him, as well as His desire to make Jesus loved and admired of others. God honoured Jesus at His birth, with the angelic host, and honoured Him in death, by not suffering His body to see corruption and raising Him from among the dead. When every knee shall be made to bow before Him and every tongue confess that He is Lord that is the ultimate glory afforded to Jesus. The Lamb is worthy to receive all honour and glory.

**55. Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.** The One who they supposedly honoured they knew not, despite their profession to be His children. If Jesus were to deny the knowledge He had of the Father, then He

would be as false as they were; but Jesus would not deny Him; He would continue to give evidence of His knowledge of the Father by keeping His Word.

For Jesus that Word meant to finish the work which had been given Him to do, to become obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

If I honour myself, my honour is nothing; it is my Father that honours me.

**56. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.** Literally the Greek reads, *Abraham, your father, was transported with an exultant desire that he should see My day, and he saw it and rejoiced.* This rendering suggests Abraham looked forward with joy to see his desires met, and exulted in a sight of it. The **day** is the entire Christian dispensation, embraces the two advents. Probably what Abraham saw by faith and rejoiced in was the humiliation of Christ, His death, the Church and the glory of Christ reigning as King. Abraham saw the day of Christ by **faith** in the promises of God, Hebrews 11<sup>13</sup>. Abraham saw the day of Christ in **type**, in offering Isaac on the altar and in receiving him back in figure from the dead, he saw beforehand the Saviour's death and resurrection.

**Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.** This remark of the Lord Jesus Christ is part of His answer to their last question in verse 53, **whom makest thou thyself?** These Jews would not rejoice at the appearing of Christ, they were in no sense like Abraham. **My day** is the day of the Messiah; the word day is used to denote the time, the appearance, the advent, and the manner of life of the Messiah and what directly relates to Him in the future, not limited to 24 hours. **As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man,** Luke 17<sup>26</sup>. The Day of Judgment is also called the day of the Son of man, because it will be a remarkable time of His manifestation. It is called His day because He will have the most prominent role, His person and His work will characterise the times.

**57. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?** Christ had not spoken of seeing Abraham, but of Abraham seeing *His day*. There is a vast difference between these two things, but the Jews were incapable of understanding the Lord because of preconceived ideas and false teaching.

**58. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.** Here is a clear and unequivocal statement that He is none other than the Eternal One. The people listening understood Jesus for **they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.**

**59. Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.** The main purpose of the writer of this portion of God's word is to present Christ as the **Light** (verse 12) and to show us what that **Light** shines on. Only as the Light shines in the darkness is the sin of man exposed and the sinner see himself as one who has departed from the commandments of God. Jesus shows the vanity of following the ways of man even though they are religious to the point of keeping the Law. The ordinances of man, the ways of man, the precepts of man all fail to bring man into a relationship with God.

F.B. Meyer writes *the religious professor presents before us a fair appearance. His evident sincerity, his punctiliousness, his unquestionable zeal, his warm devotion, his fidelity to the cause he has espoused, are frequently a mask which no human eye can penetrate. It is not until such professors are exposed to the searching light of God that their real characters are laid bare.*

## Chapter 9

This chapter gives an account of the man who was born blind, 1-5 whom Christ heals him, 6, 7.

The man is questioned by those who knew him as the beggar, 8-12.

He is brought to the Pharisees, who question him further, 13-17, and then the Pharisees question his parents, 18-23. Again the healed man is cross-examined, who, vindicates and proves correct the conduct of Christ, is excommunicated by them, 24-34.

Jesus, hearing of the conduct of the Pharisees, finds the man, and reveals himself to him, 35-38. Jesus does not condone their behaviour, rather passes sentence on the inflexibility and blindness of the Pharisees, 39-41.

**1. And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.**

**2. and his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?**

**3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.**

**4. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.**

**5. As long as 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 he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

7. And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

8. The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

9. Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

10. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

11. He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

12. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

13. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

14. And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

16. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

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

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

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

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

21. But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

22. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

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

24. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

25. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

26. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

27. He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

28. Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

29. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

30. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

31. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

32. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

33. If this man were not of 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.

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

36. He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

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

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

39. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

40. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

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

1-5. This chapter gives an account of the man who was born blind;  
6, 7. Whom Christ heals,  
8-12. The man is questioned by those who knew him as the beggar,  
13-17, He is brought to the Pharisees, who question him further,  
18-23. and then the Pharisees question his parents,  
24-34. Again the healed man is cross-examined, who, vindicates and proves correct the conduct of Christ, he is excommunicated by the leaders of the synagogue,  
35-38. Jesus, hearing of the conduct of the Pharisees, finds the man, and reveals Himself to him; Jesus does not condone the behaviour of the Pharisees  
39-41, Jesus passes sentence on the inflexibility and blindness of them.

In John 8<sup>12</sup> we behold Christ as **the light** shining in darkness, in John 9 He dispels the darkness of the man born blind. In John 8 the Light is rejected for in general man loves darkness rather than light, in John 9 He is received and worshipped and a man has the 'light of life' as he receives his sight.

**1. And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.** As Jesus walked He saw a man lying, possibly by the highway, who was born blind. The Lord clearly saw all the others as He walked but in this man He saw what was invisible to all others. The Lord Jesus sees him as an opportunity to display His divine power for the Lord sees a special need and faith. The Lord sees in this man faith working. This blind beggar is as we all are before receiving sight, spiritual sight; the sight that sees the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. They that are blinded by accident or ill health may be cured by science and the skill of man; but to cure one born blind requires the miraculous power of God. Diseases which are incurable by nature and man's ingenuity will succumb to the power invested in the Son of God.

Where the Lord Jesus is now, seated at the right hand of God, allows Him to see the need of all. He not only sees the need but the means to meet the needs of all are available to Him and are inherent in Him. It remains with us to give the glory to the Lord for what He does and not claim the glory for ourselves or boast if the Lord deigns to use us.

**He saw a man which was blind from his birth.** *Bishop Ryle called attention to the significant fact that the Gospels record more cases of blindness healed than that of any other one affliction. There was one deaf and dumb healed, one sick of the palsy, one sick of a fever, two instances of lepers being healed, three dead raised, but five of the blind!* This stresses the fact that man is in spiritual darkness. This man was a beggar, v8 another aspect which accurately describes our natural state. The sinner is a beggar, owning nothing, dependent on charity.

**2. His disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?** All bodily afflictions and calamities do come upon us as a result of sin, Original Sin; yet they are not always to punish the sin of the suffering person. The sin of Adam is visited upon the whole human race. The results of a man's sin are often visited upon his children, particularly sexual immorality; and the parents set a standard for the children which they are inclined to follow. It is supposed by these disciples that as some afflictions come upon men for personal sins, others come upon them for parental sins, and that children may suffer for their parents' sins.

These disciples are suggesting the only reason for a person's sufferings or illness or physical disability is sin, and the illness of a child, baby, or infant is the result of a parent's sin. Though sin is often the cause of suffering it is not always the sinner that suffers in the flesh. The Pharisees and the disciples here seemed to believe the sin of this man's parents were the reason for their child to be born with an affliction.

It is not unknown for the children of God to be misled. It is not uncommon for Christians in this modern world to be misled by false doctrines and ways that cater to the flesh. This should teach us to rely on the Word of God and to check all we are taught by the Word of God and prayer. The best of men may be misled by a commonly held error and the safest course for us to follow is to subject all we are taught and the examples we see or are given, to the Word of God and prayer.

**3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.** Christ as the *Light of the world* reveals not only the state of Israel, but the hearts of the general populous. In chapter 8 He confirmed His power to free the slaves of sin 32; His hearers denied that they were in bondage. He spoke the words of His Father 38; the people neither understood nor believed Him and He

told them they were of their father the Devil and that by choice 44. Jesus declared He was the One Abraham rejoiced to see, 56 and they scoffed at Him. He told them He was the eternal **I am** 58, and they picked up stones to throw at Him. This gives to us a vivid and accurate picture of the character of the natural man. The sinner is at enmity with God, and hates the Christ of God. He may be very religious, and may appear to be quite devout. But when the light of God is turned upon him self-righteousness is exposed and is seen to be depravity. The road to a lost eternity has a clean side and a dirty side and only goes in one direction; it is one road to hell.

**The works of God** that Jesus was to do are manifested in the salvation of the sinner and following that the change in the saved person who now gives praise to God for His wonderful salvation and the revelation of His Son as the Saviour. The Lord Jesus did not relate this man's blindness to his or his parent's sin; the Son of God's own glory in this miraculous cure was the objective. Christ does not deny the sin of this man, or the sin of his parents; neither the one nor the other was the cause of the blindness. The power and mercy of God were manifest in restoring this man's sight, therefore was he born blind.

The cause of the blindness was the sin of Adam but the reason for the blindness was that God should be glorified in the miraculous cure.

**But that the works of God should be made manifest in him** answers the Lord to their query. Surely this word of the Lord Jesus Christ contains a message of consolation to any of the saints who are now afflicted with an ailment. We may be assured God has a wise purpose to be fulfilled by our affliction, and that He will be glorified as we acknowledge He is sovereign. At least thirty years, v23 passed before God revealed why this man had been born blind. What purpose God is working out when we go through various trials and how His goal will be reached, are not our concern. Our responsibility is to meekly submit to His sovereign will, 1Samuel 3<sup>18</sup>, **it is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth him good**. Whatever is for God's glory in us, will surely bring be a blessing to us.

It was in respect of the blindness that Jesus said, **neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents**. There is no one without sin, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Very often the children follow in the steps and ways of their parents. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children in most communities but that is not the way of God. It was not a direct result of sin in any of the involved parties that this man was born blind.

**What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?**, Ezekiel 18<sup>2</sup>. **The soul that sins, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him**, Ezekiel 18<sup>20</sup>. God is not unjust to punish an innocent for the sin of the guilty.

**4. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.** Though I know curing this man will arouse the Jewish rulers, I must complete the work my Father has sent me to do says the Lord Jesus. This deed is a token to show I am not confined to the sphere of man, rather I have at my command all the resources of divinity to do the work my Father and I planned before the foundation of the world. Healing this man is a small sign of the work for which I came into the world and while it is day, while my life on earth continues it is my priority to complete the work.

It was about six months after this the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. Every Christian has a work to do in the world, in their local world, a great work assigned by God, indicated to each of us by the Lord Jesus Christ and motivated in us by the Spirit of God. The time allocated for doing the work is limited; we only have till the Lord returns to take the Church unto Himself. **While it is day**, before the Lord returns to call the Church to Him as His Bride and the working day is past. There will come after the day of grace a dark night in which the work of salvation cannot continue. **The night comes** as surely as we see each successive day, the time when the offer of salvation is no longer heard.

**5. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.** Jesus had said this before; John 8<sup>12</sup> and Christ would cure this blind man, the representative of a blind world, because He came to be the **light of the world**, not only to give light to darkened souls, but to give sight to blind minds so to cure that all who seek the Lord would see their need of a Saviour met. This gives us encouragement to come to Him that we may have Light to see our way around in a darkened world. To whom should we look but to Jesus who is the Light of the world. We benefit greatly from the light of the sun; we may surely find greater benefit in the Light of the Gospel of the Grace of God.

What Christ said of Himself, He said also of His disciples; you are *lights in the world*, so let your light shine in the darkness around you. Matthew 5<sup>16</sup> **Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven**. The light the Lord Jesus is referring to is the spiritual light kindled in those who believe Jesus is Lord.

**6. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,**

**7. And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.** It is certain this is not a medical procedure, it can never be supposed to have any medicinal value or the possibility of restoring sight to a man who was born blind. If this man's eye-lids only needed to be washed, it is impossible to suppose he had not washed his face in over thirty years.

The Jews believed that there was some virtue in spittle to cure the diseases of the eye; and even today it is recognised there is a value in spittle that may assist in cleaning and healing. Nevertheless it is inconceivable that the dust of the earth applied to the eyes could heal, rather than infect. God will do His own work in His own way and is not dependant on the medications of man to accomplish His cures. There is no medication invented or discovered by man that can deal with the disease of sin or cure the sinner afflicted with this awful malady called death, the result of sin. Two things concurred to affect the cure of this blind man, an act of divine power on Christ's part, and an act of faith and obedience on the man's part. The man was told to go and wash and he did so.

It is of more than of passing interest that the Lord formed man of the dust of the earth. Had Christ applied some medication to this man's eyes, then the praise would be ascribed to His medical ability as a healer and not to His divinity. With this miracle all the virtue is credited to the Lord Jesus Christ, not in the method or in the 'medication'. Jesus showed by this instruction to the blind man that the power of healing came from the One who anointed his eyes. He could not see Jesus and probably wondered at what was happening; the act of anointing his eyes and not knowing with what convinced the blind man obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus would bring about a change in his life for the better. The blind man went to the place appointed; maybe friends or family guided him. The important fact is he obeyed the Lord Jesus implicitly and was restored physically.

This is a clear example of the activity of faith. The blind man went, washed and was able to see where he had been and where he was going, he was now seeing for the first time his father and siblings; all the people who had supported him over the years of his disability and those whose hearts were hardened to him and his need.

Siloam, by interpretation means sent, from the Hebrew verb to send. Why Jesus sent him to wash in that pool is not known. The waters had no efficacy to give a blind man sight; it is probable that Jesus directed him to go there to test his obedience, and to see whether he would obey when he could not perceive a reason for the command. The blind man did not know it was the dust of the earth applied to his eyes. This instance shows us that we should obey the commands of God, however obscure they may appear. God always has a reason for directing us to follow a certain course of action. Our faith is tested and our willingness to obey the Lord is tried when we cannot see the reason behind His command or request. Obedience is the activity of faith, and faith believes God in all circumstances whether they are understandable or not.

**He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing;** The simple obedience of the blind beggar is inspiring. He did not seek to comprehend and ask questions, but straightway did what the Lord Jesus instructed. He obeyed Christ blindly. Having obeyed *blindly* he *saw* the result of obedience to the Word of God.

**8. The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?**

**9. Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.**

**10. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?**

**11. He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.**

**12. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.**

**8. That he was blind when he was a beggar** is in all probability the true reading. Beggars in all countries have a language peculiar to the place and nationality where they beg. The language of the Jewish beggars was: - "Deserve something by me," "Give me something that God may reward you." Another plea was: - "Look back and see what I have been; look upon me now, and see what I am." This latter was generally used when blindness happened later in life.

This once blind man, miraculously cured, returns with joy to his neighbourhood where he causes a stir among them that know him. They inquire being surprised at this man who they have seen for many years as blind, who they supported over the years as he sat and begged.

Who cured him, and where is He?

He assures them, he is the very person that was blind, now cured, and that he was by cured Jesus. The means used was clay and spittle so there was an immediate need to wash. Where the person is who worked this miracle I know not, but miracle it is and I am so pleased.



The miraculous cures of God are not only physical, they also affect the mind and manner and how others look upon us. We may ask ourselves if we are a true representation of the Lord Jesus Christ; that is what He wants. The Apostle Paul encouraged the early Christians to so live as to present the Lord Jesus as a very desirable Saviour and Guide. Jesus said **'let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'** Matthew 5<sup>16</sup>.

Others should be attracted to the Lord Jesus Christ as they see the joy we share as believers and the fellowship we have together without strife or the other difficulties which so often face a diverse group of people from many cultures and social streams.

Some said **this is he**; this miracle was not wrought in private. Those who knew this beggar before were divided in their opinion concerning him; they saw now a man who was clean and dressed tidily for he could now see what he was doing and wearing; some could not credit the change. Others said **he is like him**; this was a natural reaction; the restoration of his sight must have given cause to a noticeable change in his demeanour, posture and awareness.

A natural reaction from observers is 'how is this possible, how could this happen, what could bring about such a drastic change'?

The beggar has the only answer and if the hearers are not satisfied with the answer that will not change the fact. **A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.** It is unexpected that blind eyes should be opened, but stranger when we consider how they were opened. Answering the query the beggar gives them a straight forward account. A man that is called Jesus rubbed mud into my eyes and told me to wash; I did so and now I can see.

**Where is he?** Some asked this question out of curiosity; some to bamboozle the beggar, knowing he could not have seen Jesus therefore could not recognise Him or point Him out. A man that did such cures as these might be worth seeing and being associated with. Some asked this question out of good-will. **Where is he**, that we may be acquainted with him? Where is he that we may benefit in some way? Others were disbelieving, not willing to accept that something out of the ordinary could happen in the staid religious community ruled by strict rabbinical rules. I know not is the reply. As soon as Christ had sent the beggar to the pool of Siloam He withdrew and did not stay to receive the acclaim of the people or the gratitude of the beggar. The Lord here teaches us to take more pleasure in doing good deeds than in receiving the praise of man. The man, the beggar, had never *seen* Jesus, for by the time taken to go to the pool of Siloam and back the Lord had moved on.

The Lord Jesus has worked a miracle in the lives of believers; He is not physically present to receive our praise. Unlike the beggar we never saw the Lord in the flesh after we were redeemed, but the eye of faith sees more clearly the present and the future. When we are questioned about what we 'see' and testify to the reality of the salvation we enjoy, the knowledge of sins forgiven and of a relationship with God; when we are asked **where is he?** We can reply with certainty. He is seated at the right hand of His Father in heaven; He is present with me every moment of my life; He indwells every one He has redeemed. He can also save all who come to Him in faith and each saved one will know the reality of a personal living Saviour.

**13. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.**

**14. And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.**

**15. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.**

**16. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.**

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

**They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.** This was a more severe trial for the beggar than what he was subjected to at the hands of his neighbours. It was a real test of his faith. The opposition of the Pharisees against the Lord Jesus, and their desire to bring Him down were well known as was their determination to put out of the synagogue any one who confessed Jesus as the Christ, v22. Facing these religious fanatics was an ordeal that is being repeated today, and many Christians are suffering at the hands of those opposed to the Gospel of the Grace of God. The ones who ill treat young believers are not so much agnostics and atheists, but they who are loudest in their religious professions. These Pharisees have many descendants and they occupy the same positions of religious leadership as their predecessors. The writer, as a new believer, was told he was on the way to hell because he did not have the Holy Spirit, as he did not speak in tongues.

14. **It was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.** The Lord teaches us that the words of the fourth commandment, **in it [the Sabbath] thou shalt not do any work**, are not to be taken absolutely literally, without consideration of the larger plan of God and the welfare of His people. By His own example He has shown us that works of necessity and works of mercy are permissible. It was the Sabbath day and we observe the Lord was occupied in the ministry God sent Him into the world to do; a ministry exercised in meeting the specific need of one blind beggar.

**Again the Pharisees also asked him;** the answer remained the same. Now the Pharisees are really upset because they consider the work of God must be limited to a time and place, inferring it is sin to do a good work in God's way on a day not specifically set aside as appropriate. **Because he keepeth not the Sabbath day;** they assumed that their views of the Sabbath were correct, and by their criteria they judged others. It did not occur to them to query the interpretation they put on the Law might be in error. We often assume our own interpretation of the Scriptures to be correct and then judge and maybe condemn others who do not agree with us. It is vitally important we are in complete agreement with the Word of God, that we put forth as the truth only what is fully substantiated by the Word of God.

The Law was a legal requirement; the Gospel calls for a loving response. The Law said *do this and thou shalt live*, Grace tells us the Lord Jesus Christ did all the Law demanded so we are freed from that obligation and can respond in faith and love to the Lord.

A sinner; a deceiver; a fraud is what they concluded Jesus was and that God would not give miraculous powers to such a one. The miracle could not be denied, or explained. Had it been possible, they would have done so; but the reality and power of the miracle had already made an impression with many. Those opposed to the truth could not deny the reality of a man's sight restored. The fact of the miracle was not questioned, they had every opportunity to examine the evidence; and if they could have denied the reality of the miracle they would have done so in no uncertain terms.

17. **What sayest thou of him?** What do you say concerning this man who has restored your sight? **He is a prophet** replies the beggar; I think that the power to work such a miracle proves that the man who has instructed me and has initiated this cure is sent from God. Though this has been done on the Sabbath does not alter the truth rather proves that He must have been sent by God. Such a power could never proceed from a mere man.

This confession made by the man who was healed, when he knew the leaders of religion were opposed to Jesus is instructive for today. We should never be ashamed to acknowledge the blessings we have received from the Lord Jesus Christ, and to express our belief in His power to save and keep all who trust in Him. There may be, and sometimes is, more true knowledge of Jesus Christ in one poor saint, than in a bible school run on an intellectual basis. This blind man saw Christ to be a prophet, when the Sanhedrin saw nothing in Jesus but pretence. This man is not of God, says the council; assuredly. **He is a prophet**, says the man who now sees without the blinkers of religion.

The works of Jesus proved He came from God; despite the Rabbis teachings and Pharisees opposition and distortion of the Old Testament truth, the Sanhedrin and the reasoning of the rulers. We should yield our private opinions of the Christian religion to the teachings of God, the Word of God, and believe that He can open the eyes of the blind, give life to the dead, and empower and keep those who would do His will. We may not see the same miraculous power exhibited today but that does not argue that the Lord did not do miracles when He was living among men.

Surely a great miracle was performed when He redeemed me and set me free from a guilty conscience and put new desires in me and gave me a new song. When He restored me to fellowship with His Father; when He opened my mind to grasp a little of the Eternal God living and working among men, when He made the Bible a real testimony of His divinity, when He sent the Holy Spirit, I knew Jesus was the Man God sent into the world to redeem; that Jesus was go manifest in the flesh.

**But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind**, so often is it so. Our testimony is not accepted without verification. A changed lifestyle, new desires, some habits transformed, new friendships, different activities all help to confirm that the Lord Jesus Christ has done an incredible work in our lives. These unbelievers ask the parents of the healed man whether it is their son; the Jews seek assurance it is indeed the son of this couple that now sees with his own eyes what has been apparent to them all.

The Pharisees proposed three questions to the parents, hoping to prove the healed man was deceitful. Is this man your son? Was he born blind? How did he receive his sight? Notice how difficult it is to convince a sinner of the truth; even with incontrovertible evidence. There was no evidence to cause rejection of the truth; we see the same problem in this day and age; evidence of the truth is rejected without any contradictory word. There

was no witness inconsistent to the evidence of the healed man or his parents. Is it not the case today, where man would rather believe a lie than have the truth change their lives and thought patterns?

His parents answer saying the man who now sees is their son; that he was born blind; but how his cure was accomplished they cannot say as they are not first hand witnesses. Possibly they feared being put out of the Synagogue for that was the sentence of the rulers on any who confessed Jesus was the Christ. **That whoso confesses Christ, shall be put out of the synagogue, 22**

The fear of man must not discourage us from confessing the truth when opportunity arises. The parents of the blind man were intimidated by the religious leaders; for fear they would not confess Christ. They put the onus on their questioners' to ask the man personally; they rightly say he is old enough to speak for himself; he was blind not dumb.

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

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

**21. But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.** Yes he is our son, there is no mistaken identity, and we have no hesitation in recognising and owning this man as our son. We did not see what Jesus did so our testimony is not acceptable; nevertheless we see a miracle has occurred which amazes us and for which we have no answer to your queries. He is of sufficient age to testify as he is well over the legal age of thirteen years. He was never dumb so he can answer all the questions directed to him.

**22. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.**

**23. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.** His parents represent many religious professors in many Christian denominations who surround us today. Intelligent men and women are in bondage to religious leaders and authorities. **The fear of man bringeth a snare.** The fear of God, fear of displeasing God negates the fear of man; they who are fearless before men are those who truly fear displeasing the Lord. The Jews had agreed already, that if any man confessed that Jesus was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue, 22. They had made up their minds and would not accept any evidence; no testimony would have acceptance with them. These Pharisees did what many are doing today, refusing to listen to or search out the truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. If or when a man is honest and open-minded there is hope for him, his background, upbringing or religious instruction in sects or cults give way to honest searching for the truth.

When a man has deliberately turned his back upon the truth, and refuses to be influenced by any evidence, it is very rare that such a one is ever brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

His parents said, 23, **He is of age; ask him.** We cannot expect our testimony to the Lordship of Christ to be spoken for us by a third party. This man may well have expected his parents to be thankful their son's eyes were opened, they knew God had wrought a miracle of mercy on their son, but little help did he receive from them. The onus was put squarely on the man who was blessed with the miracle of sight to testify to the one who blessed him in this way.

The new Christian might well expect his family members to appreciate and rejoice over the change they see in him; but often they are quite indifferent and sometimes antagonistic when they are strangers to the Grace of God. If Christians look for help from unsaved man they will in most cases be disappointed. Any situation or circumstance that really casts us upon God is a blessing, even though it seems a disaster at the time. When we are cast upon the Lord we will be sustained, held up and equipped by the Lord for the ministry He has for us.

**25. Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.** Though as the blind man he had never seen Jesus, he had felt His grace, experienced His power. Now being questioned by antagonists he falls back on the incontrovertible evidence, **I was blind, now I see.** A changed life, different desires, new activities, 'friends' estranged, are all evidences of a new life even as blindness gives way to sight at the command of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The question of the Jews was related to discrediting the Lord Jesus Christ whereas the answer of the man who received the blessing of the Lord was to give Him the credit for the miracle of sight. Your charge against the person of Christ is not relevant to the point. You are examining me in connection with what Christ has done for me; giving me sight therefore I refuse to discuss His person. This declaration may be made by every sinner when the Grace of God is experienced in salvation. We may not be able to meet the all the arguments of others, may not be able to explain the details of saving grace and power, but we can say *I was a sinner, but now the love of God has wrought my salvation; I was in darkness, yes blind, but I now have the light of life.* We should not be ashamed of the fact that we are made to see by faith the Son of God as our Saviour. No arguments from

the intelligentsia, religious or otherwise should stop us from asserting our stand on the truth that Jesus Christ is God and our Saviour.

Sinners, the unsaved are perpetually shifting the real point of inquiry; they do not search out the facts. Having assumed that a thing cannot be true, or having been taught and believing an error they argue as if that was the basic truth. The right way for an unbeliever to arrive at the truth is first to inquire into the facts then make a decision based on the facts. The faith he does not yet accept, and the truth he seeks is revealed in the Word of God, the factual account of the person and works of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**How opened he thine eyes?** The reason why they asked this same question so often was doubtless to find some contradiction; to intimidate him, or unbalance him so that he could be tricked into denying what he had previously affirmed. God gave to this man grace and wisdom enabling him to make a bold assertion of the truth, and to confound his questioners. This illustrates again how unbelief is occupied with the how it was done rather than with the result. The one thing that matters to you and me is whether or not the Lord has opened the sin-blinded eyes of our hearts. Whether we were saved in the home or in a church meeting, whether walking or at rest is a detail of little importance. Faith is not concerned with how I received the gift of God; faith is vitally concerned with what I believe about the Son of God. But the unbelief of the Sanhedrin and the unbelievers of today are occupied with the how rather than with whom.

**27. He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?**

**28. Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.**

**29. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.** Did ye not hear my assertion earlier? Why do you want to hear it again? Is it because you wish to become His disciples? The poor man continued steady in his testimony; by putting the onus on them to decide who this man was who had effected the miraculous cure.

The Lord has used many in the past to bring His message of salvation to a sinful and lost people of many lands and cultures. In most cases the peoples would rather stick to what they know, idolatry, witchcraft, wealth or self-effort in the form of 'I do nothing to harm another person. These religious people are those that follow Moses blindly, failing to see the God who spoke to Moses was speaking to them through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is bad to reject a person and his testimony simply because it is new; it is also foolish to reject a witness without checking the claims and evidence. **We are Moses' disciples** claim these religious zealots. We acknowledge the authority of the Law of Moses, which Law, they say, was broken by Jesus giving sight to this blind man on the Sabbath day. His defence of Jesus showed to them he was willing to follow the one who cured him of his blindness, that cure was convincing evidence of the bona fides of the Healer. They now attempt to show following the Jesus is contrary to Moses and his Law. Moses had given the law including the restrictions of the Sabbath; Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath contrary to the Law of Moses as they interpreted it. They therefore accused Jesus of being a Law breaker and a despiser of the Law of Moses, and His followers of the same disregard of the Law given to Moses.

**30. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.**

**31. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.**

**32. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.**

**33. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.** The cured man states categorically that no deceiver or false teacher is heard of God, or enabled by God to work miracles. Only faithful servants, they who do the will of God, are able to do the work of God, to perform miracles as you now see has been wrought on me. **We know that God heareth not sinners;** such as continue in sin regardless of the consequences; God will not hear such, or answer their prayers except when the prayer is a request for deliverance from the power and penalty of sin. God does not hear sinners so long as they purpose to continue in sin, and refuse to hear the Gospel. This man now understands and states that no deceiver or false teacher is heard of God, or enabled by God to work miracles. Only faithful servants can do the will of God. **We know that God heareth not sinners;** such as take pleasure in sin, wilfully ignorant of the consequences, such as continue in sin, God will not answer their prayers.

**34. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.**

**35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?**

**36. He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?**

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

**38. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.** The judges of this man say; you have only been a vile sinner in some previous state, and your parents also have been unrepentant sinners; therefore you and they were punished by this blindness. You were altogether born in sins and are not fit to join with those who worship in the synagogue; you are no less than a sinful soul rejected by God and utterly unfit to have any communion with those who worship God.

**And they cast him out.** They immediately excommunicated him, driving him forcibly from their congregation, and banned his appearing in their company.

A simple soul guided by the Holy Spirit and continuing steadfast in the truth can confound the most eminent theologians. When these leaders among the Jews had no reason or argument to counter or disprove the evidence of this man who could now see clearly they silenced him by ostracising him. There have been many instances since then of believers being ostracised after having stood for the Faith without compromising. There have also been many followers of religious zealots in their crimes; even to putting to death those who refused to renounce their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

False religions, pseudo Christians, supported by the state, have for many years tried to silence those whose truth finally conquered the opposition.

The Lord is diligent in seeking and finding outcasts, especially those who have a background in the Christian faith. Unfortunately hearts are hardened against the truth where they have often been reproved but that is no hindrance to the work of the Holy Spirit when He opens the mind to the awful sinfulness of the heart. Satan goes about as a roaring lion seeking who he may devour, at the same time the Lord is nigh unto all who call upon Him. The battle rages even though the Lord Jesus has defeated the arch enemy. The Lord Jesus Christ speaks through His Word, His ministers, conscience and creation so there is no excuse for one to die in his sin and enter eternity damned. The Lord asks a pertinent question of the man He sought and found, **Dost thou believe on the Son of God?**

**36. Who is he?** It is probable that the man did not know Jesus as the same man who had healed him. He had not yet seen Jesus but he was prepared to acknowledge Jesus when he did see Him. He inquired who the person was, that he might see him and thank Him for the blessing he now enjoyed. This word, Lord, as in many other instances in the New Testament, means Sir. It is clear that the man did not know that it was the Lord Jesus speaking to him, and he replied respectfully, and asked him to point out to him the Son of God.

Prior to this question he had understood little of the true character of Jesus. He clearly believed that He had power to heal him, and he inferred that Jesus must be a prophet, 17. He believed according to the little light he had and the experience of sight he now enjoyed, and showed he was prepared to believe all that Jesus said. This is the nature of saving faith. It believes all God has made known, and is prepared to receive all that He will teach through His Word.

The phrase *Son of God* as used here is the same as *the Messiah*. The miracle which Christ wrought upon the blind man, did not work faith in him, and convert him, till Christ revealed himself, and enabled the man to 'see', to discern the truth of what had happened. Miracles confirm faith, but miracles alone are not the basis for saving faith. The blind man had experienced a miracle wrought upon him, yet remained an unbeliever till Christ said, **I am he**, and he believed. This man eagerly received the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, as soon as Jesus made it clear who He was. The beggar instantly said, **Lord, I believe;** and worships Him as God; as God manifest in the flesh.

**Worshipped Him**, from this text it is not possible to determine what form the worship took. We can be sure it was not singing in a congregation nor was it being led in prayer by a third party. This man had begun a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and his heart and mind were in an attitude of worship; amazement and awe at the marvellous, miraculous cure the Lord Jesus had wrought. Let us be wary of the emotional enthusiasm encouraged by many leaders in the churches. When we first knew the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour it was a heart response, emotion and intellect follow later, they are more related to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in us and the work the Lord Jesus Christ would have us doing to make His salvation known to others.

**39. For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.** It is important to note judgement is not condemnation, judgement is determining the effect of the actions and ascertaining right or wrong to the cause and effect. The objective of the Lord Jesus Christ coming into the world was salvation; the moral effect of His spotless life was judgment, compared to Him no one is fit to be in the presence of God. Jesus judged no one, and yet all were and are judged by the standard of perfection He established. **I am come** to make clear the condition of men; to show them their duty toward God and the danger of living without reference to Him. My coming will have this effect, some will be saved in believing I am the Son of God, and some condemned, refusing to believe. The Saviour does not state

this was the design of His coming into the world, but that such would be the effect or result. He came to declare the truth, and says in another place, **I came not to send peace, but a sword**, declaring that will be the effect of my coming into this world.

Jesus used this practical illustration, as He often did, meaning it to be taken in a spiritual sense. He refers to those who are blinded by sin; whose minds have been darkened, but who are desirous of seeing.

**They which see**; they who suppose they see; who are proud, self-confident, refusing to believe the evidence set before them concerning the person of Christ, the Pharisees, might be made blind. Such would be the effect of His practical ministry and preaching. It would infuriate them and frustrate them, and their pride and opposition to the Lord Jesus Christ would harden their hearts, and confirm them in their errors. The truth leads to salvation or hardens the heart; where the Truth does not convert, it confirms one in blindness and condemns.

**Might be made blind**; it is Satan that blinds the hearts and minds of all that perish. Refusing to believe is the consequence of listening to self or Satan. God gives light; it is the light of the gospel of the glory of God that shines in the heart of a believer. 'Seeing' the truth is having the true light shine in our hearts; a revelation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Saviour.

**40. Some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?**

**41. Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.** The Lord Jesus will say shortly, **If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father.** The direct meaning of these words of Christ to the Pharisees is; If you were conscious of your blindness and really wanted enlightenment, salvation would be yours. Because of your pride, because you refuse to acknowledge your sinful condition, your guilt remains. The blind man given sight by the Lord illustrates those who accept God's judgment of man's hopeless sinful condition. The self-righteous Pharisees in refusing to agree with the Lord and His judgements were condemned already and continued in their blindness, their sinful ways; without hope for they had refused the lifeline offered to them.

## Chapter 10

**1. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, 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 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. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, 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 spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.**

**7. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.**

**8. All that ever 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 out, and find pasture.**

**10. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.**

**11. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.**

**12. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.**

**13. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.**

**14. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.**

**15. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I 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, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.**

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

**18. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.**

**19. There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.**

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

**21. Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?**

This chapter continues the discourse to the Pharisees begun in 9<sup>39</sup>. Here Jesus is represented as the Good Shepherd who offers up His own life to save the lives of His sheep. In these allegories of the fold and the Good Shepherd we must go beyond the literal meaning and seek the spiritual truths taught. We learn that this is a parable, a representation of heavenly things through the medium of earthly things. Christ, having declared himself to be the light of the world, which should blind some while it gave light to others shows He will form His Church of Jews and Gentiles. The similitude of a shepherd and his flock shows that He would admit none but those who heard His voice and followed Him. The unbelieving and presumptuous Jews, who despised His doctrine, are classed the sheep which will not hear the voice of the shepherd. The proud and self-sufficient Pharisees are those who think they see clearly while they are blind to spiritual realities. The blind who do see the 'light' are the Gentiles and Jews who turn from their sins and believe in Jesus as the Son of God. The good Shepherd is the Lord Jesus Christ and the fold is of Israel, while other sheep are from among the Gentiles. The one flock is the Church which comprises all who believe Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and follow Him. Follow Him according to the directives given in the Book He has preserved for us, the Bible.

The light of the world, the good shepherd, and the door which leads into the sheepfold, are all to be understood as meaning the Lord Jesus Christ; the hireling shepherds, the wilfully blind; the murderers and robbers are the false Christs, false prophets, scribes, Pharisees, wicked hireling priests, and ungodly ministers of all sorts, whether among Jews or modern Christian groups, sects or churches.

**1. Verily, verily,** Amen, amen, it is true, it is true, a Hebraism for, this is a most important and interesting truth; a truth of the utmost concern to mankind. At all times our Lord speaks what is infallibly true; but when the Lord Jesus delivers any truths with this particularly earnest statement, it is either, because they are of greater importance; because the mind of man is more inclined to reject them; or because the small number of those who will believe and practise them make them appear less credible.

The *sheepfold* which the Lord refers to in that day in Israel was a public area to which all the local shepherds came at the close of the day. The pastoral areas of the land had wild beasts; sheep were an easy meal for them so there was in each village a large sheepfold, which was the common property of the local farmers. This sheepfold was a protected area with a wall around the enclosure three or four metres high, with only one entrance. At dusk a number of different shepherds would lead their flocks up to the door of the fold, through which the sheep passed, leaving them in the care of the porter, while they went home or sought lodging for the night. At the door, the porter lay on guard through the night, ready to protect the sheep against thieves and robbers who might scale the walls, or against wild animals the bleating of the sheep would alert the porter to potential danger. In the morning the shepherds returned to lead their flock out to pasture. The porter would allow each one to enter through the door, they called their own sheep by name, the sheep which belonged to him would respond to his voice, he would lead them out to pasture.

**He that entereth not by the door;** Christ assures us that He is the door, verse 7; whoever enters not by Jesus Christ into the fold, in this context, is no other than a thief and a robber. Whoever enters with a different motive does not enter by Jesus Christ. Ambition, greed, love of ease, power, a desire be above the *hoi polloi*, to promote the interests of one's family, or planning and hankering after a secure workplace ( in the Christian ministry) are all ways by which thieves and robbers enter into the Church. And whoever enters by any of these ways, or by paying for an office in the church, is termed by the Lord as a thief and/or robber. Acting through motives of self-interest, and with the desire of providing for oneself and one's family are innocent, in a secular business; but to enter into an office in the church with motives of this kind is a sinful act before God. These people, however good they appear, are described as thieves and robbers because they rob God of the glory and praise due to Him and Him alone, taking to themselves that which belongs to God exclusively. God alone appoints ministers in His church and the ministers are in the flock and from among the flock and have the gifts and abilities to shepherd the sheep and feed the sheep with food convenient for them.

Entering by the Door, for a lamb, is being redeemed, and for a shepherd is being brought into the ministry by the Holy Spirit. **By the door,** by the Lord Jesus Christ, v7, He is **the way, the truth, and the life,** 14<sup>6</sup>. As the only legitimate way of entering the fold was by the 'door', so the only way of entering the 'church', the flock of God, is by believing on Him, believing the Lord Jesus Christ is the Door into the Kingdom of God. Obeying Him is living the life He chooses and feeding on the food He provides and where applicable feeding the lambs with food to build them up, keeping the lambs safe in the fold in times of darkness and stress and protecting them from attacks by 'wolves in sheep's clothing', and where the Lord has appointed serving Him by caring for the flock.

**The same is a thief and a robber**, *the thief takes what is not lawfully his but the robber takes what is mine, sometimes with violence.* In the religious world the thief takes the glory and praise from the Lord for himself; look at my church and see what a great work I am doing. The robber takes from me the chance of eternal life by presenting himself as the one who has done the work; i.e. built the church, saved so many souls, collected so much money and so on. By listening to the robber the hearer is likely to give him what belongs only to the Lord Jesus Christ, the glory and praise.

The word for **thief** is *kleptes* and has reference to one who uses stealth; it is always used in that context. The word for **robbers** is *lestes*, and is wrongly translated thief in some instances; it has reference to one who uses violence. The distinction between these two words is closely preserved all through the New Testament with the one exception of verse 10, where it seems as though the Lord uses the word *kleptes* to combine the two different thoughts, for there the thief is said not only to steal, but also to kill and destroy.

The Lord Jesus was addressing the religious teachers, telling them the duties of leading and guarding the flock was by divine appointment. The Pharisees claimed to be pastors, but were not appointed by the Lord as rulers over His flock. They entered some other way. The true pastors in the church are those who enter into the work guided by the Lord and in the manner which He has appointed, exercising the gifts He has bestowed on them, gifts for use in the local church. The evangelist is included in a shepherd ministry in this way as he reaches out to the unsaved in communities where there may be no local church; the evangelist would then see the Lord working to establish a church and shepherd the lambs through his ministry until a church was established.

It is an interesting observation to see the shepherd, the pastor, had only a local flock for which he was responsible; there was no wider ministry embracing flocks in other towns or villages. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Chief Shepherd and He has the oversight over all the flock of God and each local flock through the appointed elders. They are told to oversee the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers.

**He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.** Christ does not refer to Himself here, for He is the 'way' or 'door' by which others enter the flock; He refers to all those who will be leading, and feeding the flock. By entering the fold in the prescribed manner the shepherd shows he is a true shepherd; one who cares for his flock, and does not come to kill and destroy; or, I would add, get fat at the expense of the sheep.

A good pastor, shepherd, has a lawful entrance into the ministry by the express call of Christ, through the Holy Spirit, and works for the glory of the Lord who has redeemed and equipped him. The motive is the good of His Church, the building up of the saints, guarding the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made him overseer, doing the will of God. The true shepherd will do as his Saviour has done and lay down his life if called to do so, sacrificing himself entirely to the service of his Lord and the benefit of the poorest, the least esteemed, of the flock over which he has been appointed.

**To him the porter openeth.** The porter is the doorkeeper. It seems that the more wealthy Jews who owned flocks employed some person to take charge of their flocks in a communal enclosure. At first all shepherds attended their flocks personally by day and by night where possible, and this continued to be commonly the practice, but not always.

**The sheep hear his voice**, the voice of the shepherd. A flock will tell the difference between the voice of one who is the true shepherd, their shepherd and the voices of others. The people of God, the flock, will be found listening to the instructions of those who are appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ, who teach His pure doctrines, and who show a genuine love for the church of God. It is a good test of those having the oversight of the flock when the least renowned in the congregation sees in the minister, in the preacher, in the teacher, the attitude and manner of the Lord Jesus Christ. When the flock notices the humble manner and the scriptural teaching, and the fervent spirit of the appointed shepherd they follow in the manner taught and feed on the food provided.

The primary responsibility of the shepherd, pastor, elder, is to lead the sheep in the paths of righteousness.

**He calleth his own sheep by name**, it was customary for shepherds to give particular names to their sheep, after some time the sheep and the lambs recognised the voice of the shepherd. It is the duty of pastors to build a personal acquaintance with the people in his care; to have an interest in them as individuals, and to minister to them personally in matters relating to the church and the gospel. I know a farmer, shepherd in Western Australia who, at the time had 1200 sheep, numbered, and his dogs could separate a particular sheep from the fold; they were guided by the shepherds voice and whistle, and direct the selected lamb to the shepherd for special care when needed.

**Leadeth them out**, the shepherd leads the sheep from the fold to pasture or to water. All the flock feed in the same place on the same food, receiving the same nourishment. Clearly the lambs do not need as much as the sheep but they do need the same food from the same source. A faithful pastor will provide suitable spiritual food for the flock in his care, feeding them with the life sustaining food; certainly not taking the sheep or lambs to rocky terrain where there is no sustenance. Psalm 23 gives a pertinent description of a Good Shepherd.



The qualities and duties of a good pastor are presented to us in this parable. The first is the shepherd has entered a ministry in the local church because the Lord Jesus Christ has impressed on him the need. The Holy Spirit teaches the pastor to aim for the good of the Church, the salvation of souls, encourage the flock to do the will of God, and the minister thus led is prepared to give himself entirely to the service of his Lord.

The Holy Spirit opens the way for the shepherd into the hearts of his hearers, and the shepherd becomes the instrument God uses for their salvation, the instructor, and example for them to follow; Colossians 4<sup>3</sup>; 2Corinthians 2<sup>12</sup>; 1Corinthians 16<sup>9</sup>; Revelation 3<sup>8</sup>.

A good shepherd speaks so as to instruct the people, the sheep hear the voice of the Lord. The shepherd leads the flock into green pastures, he has checked out the ground and surrounds for dangers and deems it safe for the flock to feed there. A good shepherd feeds himself before working with the sheep so there is no self interest but only a real concern for the welfare of the sheep. A pastor does not take the fat and the fleece, and leave an understudy to work in pastoral care. There is no hierarchy in the local church. The pastor, shepherd, accepts the responsibility given to him and preaches Christ Jesus the Lord simply and clearly. The elders teach, the exhorters' encourage, the evangelists' preach for each of the members in a church have a work given to them by the Lord, a work which they perform to the benefit of the church.

**He calleth his own sheep by name;** another evidence of a good pastor is that he is familiar with all those the Holy Spirit has placed in his care. He knows them by name; he sees the spiritual states of all those the Lord has placed in his care. He ministers to their spiritual needs as he ministers both to the church and the individuals that make up the flock. There is a general *call* which goes forth to all, for *many are called, though few are the chosen* Matthew 20<sup>16</sup>. To each potential lamb there comes a particular, personal, and a special call. This call is inward; it comes to the heart, and is ignored or rejected at the eternal detriment of the person called.

A true shepherd under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ is one who gains access to the sheep in the divinely appointed way. Unlike the Pharisees, he does not put himself into this office, but is called to it by God. He is, in the real meaning of the word, a shepherd of the sheep; he has their welfare at heart, and concerns himself with their spiritual interests. To such a one **the porter openeth:** the Holy Spirit sets before him an open door for ministry and service. The sheep hear his voice; the local church members recognize him as a God given appointee to the work of a shepherd. That portion of the flock over which God has made him overseer, are known to him as individuals with whom the Lord has had dealings. The shepherd **leadeth them out** into the green pastures of God's Word where they may find food for their souls and rest from efforts to gain heaven by good works. The shepherd **goeth before them**, he sets before the flock a godly example, asking them to do only what he is doing; he seeks to be **an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity** 1 Tim. 4<sup>12</sup>.

**And leadeth them out;** a good shepherd leads the flock, does not lord it over God's heritage; nor does he drive the sheep forward or by inducements urge them on; he by example and humility leads the flock. He leads them out of their old ways to Christ like ways, out of the inanity, distractions, and amusements of the world, into a life of Christian holiness. He leads having a heart full of the Word of God and love of Christ, into the kingdom and glory and service of his God and Saviour.

**A stranger will they not follow.** This was literally true of a flock, large or small. Accustomed to the voice and presence of their own shepherd, they would not respond to the command of a stranger nor follow a strange shepherd. It is also true spiritually, in the church you and I attend. Jesus indicates that the true people of God will not follow false teachers, those who are proud, haughty, conceited and self-seeking, as were the Pharisees. Many may follow those who have a public ministry with much advertisements telling of their coming with big venues to accommodate the crowds, but humble and devoted Christians seek those who have the spirit of their Master, the Great Shepherd of the sheep.

It is also true in reference to those who are pastors in the churches. They have an influence with the flock which no stranger or casual minister can have. The church members learn to put confidence in the pastors; the shepherds know the needs of the people, see the dangers fronting them, and apply the Word of God, the instructions to the present need. A stranger, however eloquent, pious, or learned, rarely in one visit can have the right impact on the congregation; those who have no permanent relationship with the church are prone to push one aspect of the truth. This may be seen with those who claim a healing ministry, others claiming specialised access to God by speaking in 'other tongues' or a variety of selective ministries.

The following extract from *The Land and the Book* (Thomson) will show how strikingly this whole passage agrees with what actually occurred in Israel at this time.

*"This is true to the letter. They are so tame and so trained that they follow their keeper with the utmost docility. He leads them forth from the fold, or from their houses in the villages, just where he pleases. As there are many flocks in such a place as this, each one takes a different path, and it is his business to find pasture for them. It*

*is necessary, therefore, that they should be taught to follow, and not to stray away into the unfenced fields of corn which lie so temptingly on either side. Any one that thus wanders is sure to get into trouble. The shepherd calls sharply from time to time to remind them of his presence. They know his voice and follow on; but if a stranger call, they stop short, lift up their heads in alarm, and, if it is repeated, they turn and flee, because they know not the voice of a stranger. This is not the fanciful costume of a parable; it is simple fact. I have made the experiment repeatedly. The shepherd goes before, not merely to point out the way, but to see that it is practicable and safe. He is armed in order to defend his charge, and in this he is very courageous. Many adventures with wild beasts occur not unlike that recounted by David, and in these very mountains; for, though there are now no lions here, there are wolves in abundance; and leopards and panthers, exceedingly fierce, prowl about these wild dry watercourses. They not infrequently attack the flock in the very presence of the shepherd, and he must be ready to do battle at a moment's warning. I have listened with intense interest to their graphic descriptions of downright and desperate fights with these savage beasts. And when the thief and the robber come (and come they do), the faithful shepherd has often to put his life in his hand to defend his flock. I have known more than one case in which he had literally to lay it down in the contest. A poor faithful fellow last spring, between Tiberias and Tabor, instead of fleeing, actually fought three Bedouin robbers until he was hacked to pieces with their khanjars, (weapons) and died among the sheep he was defending."*

**They understood not**, they did not understand the meaning or design of the illustration the Lord gave. How sad is this? God speaks and the hearers will not listen to the words or take heed to the message given so with the darkened mind they cannot understand what the Lord would have them know and believe.

**7. I am the door of the sheep;** Jesus here says He is the only way and means by which sinners have access to God, and can obtain salvation; He is the only door by which sinners can enter into the kingdom of God, know the grace of God in salvation, and be recipients of the Holy Spirit. There is no possible way of access to God for fallen man, but by Jesus Christ. There is no way of entering the sheepfold but by the door, no access to the house but by the door, those that enter legitimately are safe. In like manner, such as come unto God through Jesus Christ, by faith and in obedience, are secure and have the Word of God to assure them of eternal salvation.

Notice the Lord Jesus Christ does not say He is a door, as in one of many. He is *the* Door, the only Door, the unique entrance into the Kingdom of God. In chapter 14<sup>6</sup> the Lord Jesus is to say He is the Way, the Way is through the Door to salvation; the Way into the Kingdom of God is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This Door is the way for a Jew to leave Judaism and enter the Kingdom of God, the way out of darkness for a Gentile, for the Gentile to enter the Kingdom of God. There is no possible way of access to God for fallen man, but by Jesus Christ. As there is no way of entering the house but by the door, and those that so enter are safe in the house; so all who come to God through Jesus Christ, in the way of faith and obedience, shall be in a secure place and have eternal security, salvation by faith.

**8. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.** The word "all" cannot be taken absolutely. The Lord is speaking of shepherds, the shepherds of Israel; but not all of them had been "thieves and robbers." Moses, Joshua, David, the prophets, Nehemiah, and others could not be included in this category. The "all" here must be restricted to the scribes and Pharisees, who were being addressed by the Lord. Flattering everybody and complimenting all teachers who have large followings, without reference to the soundness of their faith and expression of it is not according to Scripture. A false teacher, a false prophet, a false shepherd are all offensive to Christ.

It is noted that the most severe public condemnation found in the Scriptures is reserved for false teachers. The Lord Jesus Christ said; **Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel! . . . Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?** Matthew 23<sup>14, 24, 33</sup>. John the Baptist said; **O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?** Matthew 3<sup>7</sup>. The apostle Paul wrote; **For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ** 2Corinthians 11<sup>13</sup>. Peter in his second epistle penned; **these are wells without water, clouds that are carried with the tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever** 2 Peter. 2<sup>17</sup>. And Jude referred to these same heretics; **clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever** verses 12, 13. Many thousands give heed to false teachers, those who the Lord Jesus Christ calls thieves and robbers; they take from God what belongs only to God and rob God of the honour due to Him for who He is and what He has done. Moreover they misrepresent the Lord Jesus Christ and often claim the work of the flesh is a work of God.

**9. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.**

Christ is the door of the sheepfold; by me, said the Lord, through me as the door, if any man enters into the sheepfold, as one of the flock, he shall be saved. The one who enters this way not only will be safe from thieves and robbers, but he shall go in and out. Entrance into the fold is by Jesus Christ as the door. By faith in Him as the only Mediator between God and man; we come into communion with God; into a relationship with God as our Father. There is no entrance into the church of God but by coming to Christ as a sinner and acknowledging Him as the Saviour. None are in the kingdom of God apart from those that have submitted to the Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the door into the Kingdom of God.

Those who come for salvation to God, through Christ, **shall be saved**, shall have all sins blotted out, the soul purified, and be preserved unto eternal life.

**Go in and out**, this phrase emphasises the actions of a man's life, the freedom he has of doing, or not doing. A good shepherd leads his flock to the fields where good pasture is found; he watches over them while they feed and the young feed and frolic, and they all follow the shepherd back again and he secures them in the fold.

He whom God has appointed as a shepherd feeds the flock of Christ with those truths of God's Word which nourishes them spiritually. God blesses together both the shepherd and the sheep, so that going out and coming in they find pasture, and all things work together for their good; their travels, feeding, gambolling and rest.

Notice Jesus did not say **I am the door: if any man enters in, he shall be saved**, He said, **by me if any man enters in**. Man cannot enter of himself, for being by nature **dead in trespasses and sins** he is helpless, and cannot find the path of life. It is only by the light of the Gospel of the glory of God, the light the Holy Spirit sheds on the Word of God that any can enter in and be saved. Not only is it a fact that no one can come to Christ except the Father draw him, John 6<sup>44</sup>, but it is also true that none can be in the presence of the Father except Christ has given eternal life to them. Only in the Lord Jesus Christ can we enter into the presence of a holy God and even then the work of the Lord Jesus in cleansing us from all sin must be acknowledged as a personal experience.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the door to **Salvation, Security, Safety, and Service**. Each of the redeemed, the sheep, knows the Lord Jesus has paid the penalty for their sins, they are saved, they have **Salvation** from the penalty God imposes on all who die without the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. Every redeemed person, whether they know it or not has **Security**, each person saved by the Grace of God can be sure the work of the Lord Jesus Christ will suffice for eternity. The price God demanded for the redemption of a sinner was paid in full; so He will keep all who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation He procured for them; they are secure. **Safety** for each child of God is guaranteed to them by the gift of the Holy Spirit, He who is ever with each believer. This **Safety** is from the attacks of the evil one, but we must rely on the Lord Jesus to enjoy that pleasure. **Safety** in that we are by the Son of God, being kept for the eternal blessing reserved for the Child of God. All the events that make up the chequered life of a believer have no effect on the eternal destiny; they relate only to the present enjoyment. **Service** is what comes of spending time with our Redeemer; He will direct our paths into the area where He would like us to be a witness for Him. **Service** is not always overtly public; it is always related to the Lord Jesus, His redeeming work and His expected return. He will cause us to feed in the right place and supplying enough for complete personal satisfaction and something extra for others in the Gospel and ministry.

The preacher tells us in Ecclesiastes 3<sup>14</sup> **I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him**. The work of God complete; the salvation of man accomplished, the church formed, the Kingdom of God established and all to be wrought out in time. God has done a great work and the Lord Jesus Christ makes it available to his sheep.

Verse 10 shows us the contrast between the self-seeking thieves and the altruistic shepherd. The thief, (false teachers, religions of works, and many isms) is destructive, taking the goods and peace of the injured party and of those that follow willingly the broad way presented to them. The Shepherd ensures the sheep have abundant life with all the accompanying blessings; not least is the blessing of peace with God.

Those who enter into religious service in the church that they may enjoy the benefits of a wage and job security are thieves and murderers. Their unchristian motive and their conduct is a snare to the straightforward believer, and will do untold damage to the Christian testimony. Their doctrine is deadly for they are not commissioned by Christ, and therefore they cannot command a blessing to the people of God. Ezekiel 34<sup>2-4</sup> says; **Woe to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves! Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool; ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which**

**was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.** How can worldly-minded, vicars, priests, pastors read these verses and be unmoved, without a concern for their own souls and the souls of the people who support them.

**11. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.** Jesus Christ, the *great shepherd* of his church, has an exact and distinct knowledge of all his flock. I know my sheep, with a three-fold knowledge, with knowledge only I as omniscient could have, He knows us so as to see each need and all threats and is therefore ready and able to care for and protect the sheep and the flock; He knows the sheep so as to defend and keep them from all danger. Christ knows his sheep, and is also known of them; He is believed on, beloved, and obeyed by the sheep. The Lord appoints shepherds under Him to care for the flocks in His physical absence.

He was prophesied as a shepherd, Isaiah 40<sup>11</sup>; Ezekiel 34<sup>23</sup>; 37<sup>24</sup> Zechariah 13<sup>7</sup>. In the New Testament Jesus is spoken of as the great Shepherd, Hebrews 13<sup>20</sup>, the Chief Shepherd, 1Peter 5<sup>4</sup>, the Shepherd and bishop of our souls, 1Peter 2<sup>25</sup>. God has presented his Son, Jesus Christ to us to be our Shepherd. The Lord Jesus has the care of His flock the church, and every believer is cared for in the same inimitable way a good shepherd cares for his flock.

The Lord Jesus Christ expects all shepherds to follow His example of care for the sheep over which He has made them overseers.

**12. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.**

**13. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.** A hireling, a man employed to take care of the sheep, who is paid wages for so many hours. As he does not own the sheep, and guards them for mercenary reasons, simply for personal gain, rather than risk his life he would leave the flock to the destruction of wild beasts. Hireling is often used in a good sense; but here it denotes one who is unfaithful, one who does not have his employers' interest at heart. It may be applied to those ministers of religion who preach only for financial support, popularity, and who are unwilling to be in a position where they must rely entirely on the Lord. The hireling makes his living, and too often a very good living giving no thought to self-denial or the spiritual welfare of the church of God. They are those who see their congregation disappearing because Christ is not preached, or growing beyond the 'norm' because the 'flock' are entertained in worldly ways. The hireling does not put the Lord Jesus Christ first, he has no confidence in the cause of the Lord, but rather than lose his reputation would see the church corrupted by the enemies of the Cross.

What makes these shepherds bad shepherds? Is it not that they care more for themselves than for the sheep? What makes them self-seeking? It is because they are in it for the money. Worldly wealth and a comfortable place is their aim; it is because they are hirelings. They took up the shepherds' office as a livelihood and they grow rich in what the world offers. Possibly the shepherd has lost sight of the Lord having been distracted by what the world offers. It is the love of money, and comfortable lifestyle that sees them persevere in the error of self seeking.

The labourer is worthy of his hire and the Lord makes sure His workmen are paid in full; the Lord is no man's debtor. Those are hirelings that love the wages more than the work, and set their hearts upon a high standard of living or a secure employment instead of doing what the Lord requires. What other result can be expected when the wolf comes in the form of persecution, want, antagonism, disrespect and rejection. In one respect the under-shepherds do not have the same heart for the sheep as the owner. The commission to care for the sheep is agreed to and the terms of employment are accepted by true shepherds; they also obey the Lord who has called them to the work of caring for His flock. **Feed my sheep and my lambs, saith Christ;** but seldom does the employed shepherd love the sheep as his own. The Apostle Paul looked upon those as his own whom he called his dearly beloved and longed for.

A hireling, one who has not been instrumental in bringing sinners to the Saviour will not suffer with them in times of danger or persecution. The sheep are not the product of his labour, and the answer to his prayers. The hireling has no other interest in the welfare of the sheep than that which comes from the wool and which provides for his own welfare in finances, food or clothing. The hireling counts the sheep as his own only as long as they are profitable to him. *The good shepherd looks upon them as his, so long as he can be profitable to them.* They who are more concerned for their position and prestige than their duty as a servant of the Lord fall easily to the deceit of the world, the flesh and Satan's temptations. The Shepherd and the sheep are neglected by such hirelings for their personal interests come before the Lord Jesus Christ.

**14. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.** This title, applied to Jehovah in Psalm 23<sup>1-6</sup> and in Ezekiel 34<sup>12</sup>, Christ applies to Himself in this gospel. The mark of the good shepherd is that he gives his life for his sheep. In that unsettled country with Roman rule and secular interests prevailing, the

shepherd had often to defend his flock from wild beasts and thieves and robbers. Many, who are not thieves or robbers, may be careless in their duty, and by neglect of the flock some sheep or lambs could be stolen or wander away. I am the Divine and spiritual Shepherd, all other shepherds were only human; I am the Son of God. The shepherds the Lord is contrasting Himself with are the Pharisees and they were carnal, self seeking wanting for themselves what belonged to God; but Jesus was spiritual, all his desire and work was designed to bring glory to God.

The Lord Jesus Christ knows whom He has set over His flock, is sure of them; they also know in whom they have believed and trust Him to deliver them when necessary, they are sure of Him. None could demand Christ sacrifice His life for the sheep, He laid it down of Himself for our redemption, to secure for us a safe eternity. He offered Himself to be the Redemptive price for our salvation, we who were led captive at the will of Satan. Because we were all under the curse; the soul that sins it shall die, He offered Himself as the Sacrifice for our redemption. He was both the one who offered and the offering, so that His laying down His life was His offering up Himself. Christ died in the place of men; to obtain their freedom from the punishment, the penalty of sin, to obtain pardon for each one who believes; and that His death should obtain that pardon. The Lord Jesus Christ laid down His life not for doctrine, not as a duty but as an act of love for His Father and for His sheep.

**I know my sheep** know my people, all who now make up my church. The word know here is used in the sense of affectionate regard or love. It implies such knowledge of individuals' needs, their dangers, and their characters, resulting in a deep interest in their welfare. The word **knoweth**, in John 10<sup>15</sup>, is in John 10<sup>17</sup> explained by the word **loveth**. Jesus knows the hearts, the dangers, and the needs of His people, and His kindness, compassion, gentleness as their Shepherd causes Him to defend and aid them. The Shepherd of our souls knows our thoughts afar off, and His Spirit will guard and keep all His flock, feeding and admonishing as and when appropriate.

**Am known of mine;** He is known and loved as the Saviour, Guide and Friend of His redeemed. They have recognised their sins have alienated them from God and seen the dangers facing them, and they have been conscious of the need of a deliverer, their need of a Saviour. The sheep have come to Jesus and they have found Him and his teaching to be what they needed, and they have loved him. As a flock follows and obeys its shepherd, so the sheep follow and obey the Lord Jesus Christ who leads them beside the still waters, and makes them to lie down in green pastures. He brings them to the place of safety within the fold and takes them to the places where there is good food and sufficient for them.

The good Shepherd is contrasted with the porter, the porter had temporary care of the sheep, whereas Jesus is the good Shepherd and has assumed permanent care of the flock. It is comforting to the church, to each believer, that whatever dangers may be faced, or self interested leaders may try to influence the sheep the Lord Jesus is, and will ever be, as He ever has been, the good Shepherd.

He is intimately acquainted with all that are now His flock, John 10<sup>14-15</sup>, as the good Shepherd John 10<sup>3-4</sup>, He says I know my sheep and am known of mine. There is a mutual acquaintance between Christ and true believers; they know one another, He knows His sheep very well, and His sheep are getting to know Him better day by day as they spend time with Him and His Word.

**15. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.** Here we have three very important truths stated, the Father knows the Son, the Son knows the Father in exactly the same way and the Son of God is stating the fact that He is giving His life a ransom for the Sheep. It is certainly true that having intimate knowledge shared equally between two, having the same abilities, the same desires, the same power, the same nature, proves they are equal in every respect. The man, Christ Jesus is speaking so we have further proof that Jesus is God manifest in the flesh.

**As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father.** The Father and the Son understood one another perfectly in the subject of redemption and the extent. The Lord Jesus knows the chosen, and is sure of them John 13<sup>18</sup>, and the believers know whom they have trusted, and are sure of Him, 2Timothy 1<sup>12</sup>. The perfect knowledge which the Father and the Son have of one another's mind and the peace between them is the basis for our confidence in the salvation the Lord Jesus offers us. As the Father knows the Son, and loves Him, and owns Him in His sufferings when Jesus was led as a lamb to the slaughter, so Christ knows his sheep.

Considering the statement of the Lord Jesus Christ, **I lay down my life for the sheep.** There are truths hidden in this verse hard to understand yet vital to the security and salvation of a sinner. God is eternal so He cannot die. The Son of God is eternal so He cannot die. Who then gave his life as a sacrifice for sinful man? Who died on the Cross? Who is the redeemer? The answer to these questions and any other related questions is in the truth that the Man Christ Jesus said **I lay down my life for the sheep.** We are not asked to understand the nature of the Triune God, yet in believing and receiving the salvation of God we know only one perfect in all

His ways could be an acceptable sacrifice for sin on our behalf. This one is the Lord Jesus Christ, the man Christ Jesus.

**16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold (flock), and one shepherd.** There is no doubt the Lord Jesus came unto His own, but his own received Him not. His own were of the house of Israel, they in the main rejected Him; not all for we are told of many that had faith from Abraham to the widow of whom we read in Luke 2<sup>37</sup> **And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.** The other fold, the second reference in this verse, refers to the Gentiles and is correctly translated as flock. It is a different word. The day was approaching when the work of the Lord would expand to include all believers; all who would believe that salvation is only ours when we rely on the Lord Jesus Christ alone relying of the satisfaction He gave to the Father when He offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins.

Christ knows His sheep, He knows with a discerning eye who are His sheep, and who are not; He knows the sheep and their many infirmities and idiosyncrasies. He concerns himself for them, and is continually mindful of them in the presence of His Father. He communes with them by His Spirit, and they recognise Him. He is known of them. He observes them with favour, and they see Him with the eye of faith. Christ knew and loved His sheep before we knew Him, 1John 4<sup>19</sup>, and in knowing Him our joy and peace and happiness is guaranteed, Galatians 4<sup>9</sup>. It is the character of Christ's sheep that they know Him; know Him from all pretenders, they know His mind, know His voice, and know by experience, the forgiveness of their sins.

He is acquainted with those that are yet to be of this flock. Other sheep I have said the Lord, not of this fold, not of the Jews; them also I must bring. The Gentiles are to be brought into the flock. Jesus had expressed His special concern for the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and to them His personal ministry was confined. But He said **other sheep have I**. Those who in time should believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and be brought from among the Gentiles, are also called sheep, and He is said to have them, though as yet they were not called, and for the most part unborn. The Church was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, Ephesians 1<sup>4</sup> **According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.** Those other sheep I have says Christ, I have them on my heart, I have them in my mind, my work is to bring them into the Church, the Church I will be building till I return to take it to myself. Christ speaking of sheep not from among the Jews intimates to the Jews the work of the Lord is not limited to the nation of Israel.

**Them also I must bring**, bring to God by redeeming them, bring them to myself as the Good Shepherd, bring them into the Church,. As the Good Shepherd I must gather all my sheep into the heavenly fold. He must bring them, or He would fail in the work the Father sent Him to do. Jesus says, they are my own, I bought them, each one, and paid for them each one, and therefore I have a responsibility not to neglect them or leave them to fend for themselves in the midst of a sinful and rebellious and hostile world. This work was planned and promised before the foundation of the world, in due time it will be completed.

God the Father commissioned His Son to do a work and the Son of God will finish the work the Father trusted Him with. The Church will be completed and the Lord Jesus Christ will call it to Himself in due time; there will be one flock and one Shepherd.

**17. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.** The Lord Jesus is saying, as I shall shortly be crucified by you, do not think for a moment my Father will abandon me, and I fall victim to your malicious plans. My Father loves me; He loves me particularly because I am going to lay down my life for the lives of all who will believe, the Church. This was the effect of His Father's love, love works obedience, and the first step of the exaltation of the Lord Jesus is the fruit of that love. Jesus was God's holy one; He must not see corruption, Psalm 16<sup>10</sup>. God loved His Son and could not leave Him to the corruption of the grave.

The obedient Man, Christ Jesus, in His obedient determination in the desire to lay down His life, that he should be declared the Son of God with power by His resurrection from among the dead, Romans 1<sup>4</sup>. Jesus yielded himself to death that He might conquer death, and triumph over the grave. He suffered the humiliation and mutilation and reviling in His body that He might take on take on a glorified body. He left this body of humiliation and donned a body of glory; Jesus laid down a life suited to this world, and took on a life suited to the world to come.

In effect He said; do not suppose I shall be put to death by your rulers because I have no power to resist them.

**18. I lay down my life voluntarily willingly and cheerfully; no one can take it away from me.** The fullest proof of my divine person and power will be seen when My Father raises my body from death after three days and three nights. The very body which you by wicked hands will take and crucify, My Father will raise from

among the dead, will bring out of the grave. This will be the vindication of all my claims and the proof positive that I and my Father are one.

**19. There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.**

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

**21. Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?**

Here John shows the different effects the words of the Lord Jesus Christ had upon the Jews; many of them falsely accuse and slander the Lord, as one possessed of a demon or mad, and therefore not to be heeded; others said, the doctrine He taught, and the miracle which He had wrought in curing the blind man, were sufficient evidence to refute such slanderous statements.

The doctrine of Christ met with a variety of opinions and counter claims, and it does the same today, some listen, some are hardened against it, but the Word of the Lord remains true no matter how it is treated by the hearers of it. Men's corrupted minds will distort the truth, the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ; also oppose those who embrace the Truth as it is in Jesus. **There was a division again among the Jews.**

**He hath a devil;** or a demon, they said He is mad, is deranged, and because they could not understand what the Lord was saying and would not accept doctrines different to the teachings of the Rabbis. They said His words are incoherent and unintelligible; make no sense for the Lord spoke divine truths and the limited and closed minds of the leaders in the nation taught things contrary to the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. They believed Jesus to be possessed by a demon, who deranged his faculties, and therefore He must have been a wicked man, and a deceiver to be under the power of such a demon.

Religious man is still prone to ridicule those who teach things contrary to popular doctrines; as many experience when the doctrine of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is preached. This truth excludes works as a means of salvation; so many present day churches are discountenanced when confronted with this basic truth.

**These are not the words of him that hath a devil,** a demon. If Jesus was unstable in His mind, affected by an unclean spirit, His words would accord with the spirit that produced them. As Jesus spoke sensibly and convincingly the truth it was clear to many he was not possessed by a demon. A man possessed by a demon cannot do good works; only deceive the possessed man and observers. Could a demon possessed man open the eyes of blind men? This is not the work of a demon. We have seen this man give sight to one who was born blind. Therefore it is evident that he is neither a madman nor a man not in his right mind. Notice the meekness and humble nature of the Lord, not a word of impatience or reprimand from Him, no pride or contempt or indignation is expressed by the Lord Jesus.

The disciple is not above his master. When a Christian has done his utmost to follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ, let him not be surprised if he suffers reproach from those who do not have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is an example of suffering for righteousness sake, and to be in the same mind is the exhortation the Apostle Paul reiterates. The opponents of the truth had to give way to them who believed Jesus was genuine.

**22. And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.**

**23. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.**

**24. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.**

**25. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.**

**26. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.**

**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, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.**

**29. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.**

**30. I and my Father are one.**

**31. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.**

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

**33. The Jews answered him, saying, 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 hath 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, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.**  
 39. **Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,**  
 40. **And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.**  
 41. **And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.**  
 42. **And many believed on him there.**

**The feast of the dedication;** historically this was a feast instituted by Judas Maccabeus, in commemoration of his purifying the temple after it had been defiled by Antiochus Epiphanes. This feast began on the twenty-fifth of the month Chisleu, (which corresponds to the eighteenth of December,) and continued for eight days. The Christian church has adopted this feast, also called the festival of lights and joined with other non-Jewish feasts and festivals and instituted Christmas. Other holy days are taken from various pagan institutions, revised to suit the current religious trend, brought under the umbrella of Christianity, still celebrated hundreds of years later to the detriment of the Christian testimony.

*When Antiochus Epiphanes heard that the Jews made great rejoicings, on account of a report that had been spread of his death, he hastened out of Egypt to Jerusalem, took the city by storm and slew of the inhabitants in three days forty thousand persons; and forty thousand more he sold for slaves to the neighbouring nations. Not content with this, he sacrificed a great sow on the altar of burnt offerings; and, broth being made by his command of some of the flesh, he sprinkled it all over the temple, that he might defile it to the uttermost. After this, the whole of the temple service seems to have been suspended for three years, great dilapidation, disrepair and ruins having taken place also in various parts of the buildings and on holy grounds. As Judas Maccabaeus not only restored the temple service, and cleansed it from pollution, but also repaired the ruins of it, the feast was called the Feast of Dedication or **the renovation**.*

**It was winter** or, it was stormy or rainy weather. And this is probably the reason why the Lord is represented as walking in Solomon's porch, or portico, 23. Though it certainly was in winter when this feast was held, yet it does not appear that the word above refers so much to the time of the year as to the state of the weather. Indeed, there was no occasion to add it was winter, when the feast of the dedication was mentioned, because everybody knew that, as that feast was held on the twenty-fifth of the month Chisleu, it was in the winter season.

John omits all that Jesus did from the time when he left Jerusalem, after the feast of tabernacles in September, until the feast of the dedication in December the same year. He very likely did so because Matthew, Mark and Luke give an account of what our Lord did in the interval. Luke relates what the Lord Jesus Christ did on His way from Galilee to Jerusalem to this feast, Luke 17<sup>11-37</sup>; 18:1-14. According to John's account this time was the fourth occasion that Jesus went up to the feasts at Jerusalem in about a year. He went up to the feast of the Passover, John 2<sup>13</sup>; to the feast of Pentecost, John 5<sup>1</sup>; and to the feast of tabernacles, John, 7<sup>2</sup>, 10. Again He was at the feast of the Passover in which He was crucified. John seems purposely to have pointed out His presence in Jerusalem at these four feasts, because all the other evangelists have omitted to mention them. Most likely John had heard or read what the others Evangelists had recorded. He also presents a completely different aspect of the Lord and His Words and Work in that he presents the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

**24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.** The Messiah was predicted to come as a shepherd. Jesus applied that prediction to himself in saying publically **I am the good shepherd**. They supposed that was evidence that he claimed to be the Messiah. He also wrought miracles, which they considered as evidence that Jesus was the Christ, 7<sup>31</sup>. The rulers assumed Jesus was from Galilee, and that the Messiah could not come from there, 7<sup>52</sup>. Jesus was poor and despised. He came contrary to the expectation of the Rabbis; a prince and conqueror was expected, so they came to Jesus for a straight forward, positive declaration that He was the expected Messiah. Had the people considered the works Jesus did or had they believed His testimony of Himself there would have been no need for the question.

It is a significant that the Lord Jesus had not declared in public that He was the Messiah. He had done so to His disciples John 1<sup>41, 49</sup>; to the Samaritans John 4<sup>42</sup>, to the blind beggar John 9<sup>37</sup>; but He had not done so to the multitudes or before the religious leaders. The religious authorities had no legal grounds to seize Jesus before the time appointed by God so the Lord Jesus remained free. The Lord Jesus was the One that the prophets



announced should come, this was made abundantly clear by His person, His life, and His works; yet the absence of any formal declaration put the onus on the people to accept the Lord by faith. His miraculous works, called *signs* in John's Gospel were sufficient to prove Him to be the Messiah; those with an anti bias refused the evidence.

There is an abundance of evidence from many sources that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, yet there remain multitudes that have read the Word of God yet believe not. There are hundreds of unimpeachable witnesses who testify daily to the Lord Jesus Christ being the Saviour, yet the great majority of men continue in their sins.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation does not need works or sight or external testimony for confirmation. Jesus said **if ye believe not his writings**, (referring to Moses) **how shall ye believe my words?** John 5<sup>47</sup>, **I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins**, John 8<sup>24</sup>.

**25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.**

**26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.** In addition to what He had taught concerning His own person, His **works** bore conclusive witness to Him being the Christ of God. His **works** were essential to His qualifications and His testimony, as is clear from Luke 7<sup>19-23</sup>: **And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? Or look we for another? Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. Isaiah 35<sup>3, 6</sup>, Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.**

The Lord did not hesitate to tell the questioners they were in danger of eternal damnation for they had refused to believe His words, or believe His works were more than a mere man could do. The Lord said **Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep**. Christ is charging these Jews with unbelief, they were not **His sheep**. The Lord Jesus knows all them that are His and all who will be His; He therefore refers to them as they who will believe.

**27. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.** Here the Lord contrasts the elect from the non-elect. Not that they were chosen to be saved but that the Lord knew them all and individually from eternity; and all who will be in the Church, *which is His body*, will hear and believe. The elect hear the voice of the Son; they hear the Shepherd's voice because they were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Each of the sheep hears when the call comes to them, and responding to the call of God they are in the flock of God. The Shepherd is the Door by which the sheep enter into the fold and the Shepherd is the one who leads the Flock of God. Psalm 23 tells of the personal relationship between the Shepherd and the sheep.

There is an important distinction to be emphasised at this time; we are not chosen to be saved; being saved makes each believer a member of the Body of Christ, the Church, the Chosen, and the Elect of God.

**28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.**

**29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.** The promise made by Christ unto His sheep, is the promise of eternal life, and security with victory over all foes of the Gospel. The enemies of the Cross are more numerous than ever. The antagonism of Christ's enemies knows no bounds. Believers are attacked verbally and physically; if it were not for the indwelling Spirit of God none would stand against the attacks. It is at this point we rely on the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ and have assurance; **nor shall any man pluck them out of my hand**. Though we pass through the valley of the shadow of death we need fear no evil for the Lord is with us and He has a keeping power unsurpassed.

Fortunately my eternal security does not depend on me; the Lord Jesus Christ has given His word and it cannot be retracted.

It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish, **whosoever believeth in him should not perish**, John 3<sup>15</sup>. **They who have sinned without law shall also perish without law**, Romans 2<sup>12</sup>. In these places and others the word perish refers to future punishment, and the declaration of the Saviour is that His followers, His true disciples, believers, shall never be cast into the lake that burns with everlasting fire, perish. The original text is very forceful; **they shall not be destroyed for ever. They shall not**

*perish to eternity.* This is spoken of all Christians; of all who ever possess the character of true followers of Christ, and who can be called His flock, having entered the Kingdom of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The connection between this and what has gone before should be noted. Christ had been speaking about His approaching death, His laying down His life for the sheep. He would lay down His life in order that the resurrection life is imparted to those who would believe. This Divine and eternal life, would be given to them, not sold or as a reward for certain achievements. Eternal life is not earned as a wage, merited for outstanding achievements, nor won as prize. It is a free gift bestowed by the Lord Jesus Christ on all who do as He says; and the Apostle Paul explains. The Lord added, **and they shall never perish** so we can confidently say the Lord will keep His own and *present us faultless before the presence of His glory without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.* Not only is the eternal life given but the ones who receive this precious gift shall never perish. It is impossible for a sheep to become a goat, for a one who has been born again to be *unborn.*

The heritage the Lord gives is rich and valuable; it is life, eternal life. Man has a living soul and man seeks the pleasures of the flesh for happiness in his life, suited to his earthly nature. Man also has a spirit; eternal life is a quickened spirit that cannot die, in a blessed relationship with God who gave it life. **And this is the record, God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son;** 1John 5<sup>11</sup>. The peace and joy, the happiness provided is eternal life, running parallel with this earthly life then continuing through the eternal ages. Eternal life is the chief blessing a soul can have. Jesus gives this life to His sheep; it is not bargained for nor worked for, it is not sold neither can it be bought; but given by the grace of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus has power to give it. He who is the fountain of life and Father of eternity has authorised Christ to give eternal life, John 17<sup>2</sup>. Jesus said I give it; it is a present, a gift. Spiritual life, eternal life begins with salvation and will continue through physical life and eternity. **I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, or any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him** Ecclesiastes 3<sup>14</sup>.

**30 I and my Father are one.** That is, one in essence and nature, one in authority and power, and not merely one in will and consent. The original words do not say I and my Father are one person in the masculine gender, but in the neuter; I and my Father are one *thing.* Now if that one is not the divine being, they cannot be one; for since the Father is acknowledged to be God, the Son cannot be one with the Father, if He is not God too.

It appears from the context; the Lord Jesus, in the preceding verses, ascribed the preservation of His sheep to the power of His Father; **None can pluck them out of my Father's hand;** and Jesus attributes it also to His own power; **None shall pluck them out of my hand;** plainly stating His sheep were equally safe in His own hand or His Father's; for, says the Lord, I and my Father are one; that is, one in power and ability. Since they are one in power, they must be one in nature. It is evident by what follows in the next verse, that the Jews understood the Lord Jesus Christ in this sense; why else did they take up stones to stone him? **We stone thee,** say they, **for blasphemy, because thou, being a man, makest thyself God.** 33.

The Jews clearly understood the words of the Lord, and were satisfied, that when He said, I and my Father are one, He declared Himself to be God, and so deserved to die; and He did deserve to die if He were not God. The adversaries of Jesus' claim to be God, to elude the implication of this truth, interpret the words, **I and my Father are one;** saying, we are one in desires and concerns, we agree and consent to the same ideals. This is true, but not the full and great truth of this word of the Lord Jesus Christ, for in this manner all believers are one with God, and one with one each other; a harmony of wills and desires. All the believers should be united with the Lord in His will; desire the same outcome; be of one mind.

But God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are one in a much higher sense than Christ and believers are one; they are one in essence and nature, one in authority and power, Jesus Christ being co-equal with God in all possible ways.

Be cognisant, be mindful of the fact the Lord Jesus Christ is by nature co-essential, in dignity co-equal, and for duration co-eternal; that although Christ is one in essence with the Father, yet are they distinct persons one from another. **I and my Father, we are one.** The words omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient apply equally to the Father and the Son.

The Son being one in essence, one in power, one in consent and in desire with the Father, they are both equally concerned for the preservation of the saints and for the building of the Church. None shall pluck them out of mine or my Father's hand for I and my Father are one. Since the power and authority is the same, the essence must be the same.

The human mind will never fathom the mystery of the Godhead; God in three persons, blessed trinity.

**31. The Jews took up stones again.** Stoning was the punishment, Leviticus 24<sup>14-16</sup>, of a blasphemer; they considered Jesus guilty of blasphemy because He made himself equal with God. They had plotted against His life previously, John 5<sup>16, 18</sup> and at least one other occasion they had taken up stones to kill Jesus, John 8:59.

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

**33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.** The Lord may have replied I have healed your sick, delivered those of you who were possessed from the power of demons; I have fed multitudes, I have taught the truth in many places without expecting or receiving practical support, and is this my reward? His miracles were good works, as they promoted pleasure and contentment among the people, and were proofs of His compassion and goodwill. Jesus went about doing good and had performed no other works than those which were a blessing to the people. Jesus knew they had no legitimate charge against Him, He confidently appealed to them on that basis. The reply of the people was totally out of order for it took no consideration of the works of the Lord leading up to that time. In fact the people had no concept allowing them to believe God was among them in the person of His Son.

The leaders charged the Lord with blasphemy; they refused to let the works of the Lord speak for themselves. If ever there was an example of the works declaring the truth concerning the person who performed the works then it was what the Lord had done in their sight and what He had said in their hearing.

My father often said to me *“there are none as blind as those who won't see and none as deaf as those who won't hear.”* At the time my sight and hearing were both good but in the context of the statement I was blind to the obvious and deaf to the sounds of his voice; wanting to follow my own agenda. This is clearly the case here, the Lord Jesus has performed miracles and spoken words easy to be understood but completely misunderstood by those who saw and heard. The people did not want to hear the message from the Lord Jesus or accept the evidence of their eyes, listening rather to the leaders who would later call for the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus.

Blasphemy when applied to men means to speak purposefully to damage their reputation; but when applied to God it signifies to speak contrary to His holy nature, His wisdom, His provisions, His Word or His works; so the Jews said **Thou, being a man, only a man; makest thyself God;** that was blasphemy; calling into question the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Christ said, I and the Father are one, had the Jews understood Jesus to mean He was (as many called Christians profess to do today) only saying He agreed with the Father, they would not have attempted to stone Him as a blasphemer. In this sense Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and many others, were in agreement with God. The Jews were in difficulty understanding Jesus to be saying He was of the same nature as the Father. Therefore they said **thou makest thyself God;** which they understood in the most literal meaning of the term. So they charged the Lord with blasphemy. Though He only spoke the truth.

**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 hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?** I have said you are gods; it is an argument from the less to the greater. If you are gods, much more am I; the word is used of judges whom God appointed over the Israelites. Jesus explains His words by a reference to Psalm 82, He called them gods to whom the word of God came, the judges were commissioned, appointed to their offices, as judges, and therefore they are called gods, Exodus 22<sup>28</sup>. To some the word of God came directly, as it did to Moses who spoke with God face to face; to others the Word of God came through appointed leaders, prophets. **For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God,** Romans 13<sup>1</sup>, magistrates and judges are God's delegates, and therefore the Scripture calls them gods; and as the Scriptures are the Word of God we as mere mortals cannot find fault with the Word He has given to us. The Word of God is right in the language and message and intent and import; the Scriptures are exceptional, and are correct, man tampers with the Word of God at his own peril, jeopardising his eternal destiny.

The argument of the Lord Jesus is based on the Word of God so He quotes the pertinent passage. The words of this Psalm are plainly addressed to the Jewish magistrates, commissioned by the LORD to act on His behalf, judicially ministering justice to His people. They judged for God, appointed by God; when the judges passed sentence, when the sentence agreed with the Law that was God's sentence. Refusing to abide by the judgement passed was the sin of rebellion. The judges in Israel were called gods because they had the power of life and death.

Jesus calls Himself **the Son of God** and argues, you dare not say the Psalmist blasphemes; why the do you charge me with blasphemy? Jesus reasoned with the Jews on their own principles. Your magistrates are called God's sons, judges; therefore the Messiah can correctly claim the same title.

What the Jews believed did not change the truth; it did change their response to the Lord Jesus Christ, and demonstrated their religion had departed from the standards and boundaries God laid down all those years before.

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

**38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.** This further argument Jesus presents to prove it was not blasphemy to assume the title, the Son of God; but that he was God in deed. Jesus uses His works as an argument to prove His claim to divinity. If, says Christ, I do those miraculous works, which no power less than divine can bring about, then you ought by these works to be led to believe and acknowledge that I am God. The works which I do are the effect and product of omnipotent power, therefore you ought to believe, that I am one in essence with the Father, there being a mutual existence of one person in the other, so that the Father is in me, and I in Him; and therefore I and the Father are one.

Christ submits His doctrine to the trial of reason; His disciples and followers can have faith and experience based on physical and verbal evidence, actual personal awareness. The Lord Jesus submitted His miracles to the examination and judgment of His 'judges' therefore He says, If I do not the works of my Father, that is, divine works, do not accept me as divine. But if you judge the works I do can only be done by a divine power then believe me when I say I am the Son of God; **that the Father is in me, and I in him.** I have declared that I and the Father are one, one in power and operation. I do not call on you to believe this merely because of my spoken word, but I do expect you to believe it on my testimony supported by the miracles I have performed, works which can only be performed by a Divine power. These works speak for God, speak plainly and clearly. You cannot reject the doctrine that I and the Father are one, that the Father is in me, and I in Him, without calling God a liar.

**39. Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,**

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

**41. And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.**

**42. And many believed on him there.** They could not reply to His arguments but would use stones to silence the Lord. The truth could not be legitimately resisted; and they, who had no further charge to confront Jesus with, would try to destroy Him with stones; He had confounded them. Truth will confound the wicked, but it does not convert them; and it is a just judgment of God, to leave those to perish who obstinately harden their hearts against Him by refusing to accept the evidence presented to them.

**41. John did no miracle** but Christ did many miracles. God so planned the ministry of His Son that though the Old Testament prophets wrought miracles in confirmation of their God given ministry, yet John the Baptist the greatest of the prophets, coming immediately before Christ, as His messenger and forerunner, did no miracles. The Lord Jesus Christ in working miracles when He came made it very clear He was more than a prophet. The people may have had divided loyalties if John had displayed miraculous powers. John did no miracle; but all things that John spoke of Christ were true. John lost his life to jealous and biased unbelievers. Jesus gave His life for jealous and biased unbelievers, in fact for all of sinful man.

Many hundreds since the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ have lost their lives to the same class of people for the same reason. In this modern 'enlightened' age some extreme sects are killing Christians, calling them infidels, believing they are doing God a favour. Christ gave His life for them also; to redeem them and bring them into a right relationship with God.

## Chapter 11

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

**2. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)**

**3. Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.**

**4. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.**

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

**6. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.**

**7. Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.**

**8. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?**

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

**10. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbles, because there is no light in him.**

**11. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.**

**12. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.**

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

**14. Then said Jesus 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. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.**

John relates in this and the next chapter what the other evangelists have omitted. He does not tell us of the close friendship between him and the Lord and this family. Surprisingly the other evangelists omit this miracle. Some expositors think the other three evangelists wrote their histories during the life of Lazarus; and they did not mention him for fear of stirring the malice of the Jews against the Lord. Indeed, the Jews sought to put Lazarus to death also, 12<sup>10</sup>, to reduce the impact the Lord was having among the people. Probably Lazarus and Martha and Mary were dead before John wrote this Gospel.

Bethany was at the foot of the Mount of Olives, about two miles, three kilometres, from Jerusalem.

I think there is about three month's gap in John's record of the Lord Jesus Christ and His ministry between chapters 10 and 11. Without being dogmatic, what is mentioned in chapter 10 occurred at the Feast of Dedication, 10<sup>22</sup>, about the middle of December; and this miracle, the raising of Lazarus from among the dead was shortly before the following Passover, near the end of March, when Jesus was crucified, as may be understood from verses 54 and 55 of this chapter, and from 12<sup>9</sup>. John has not mentioned the miracles which the Lord did during the three months after the things mentioned in chapter 10.

In passing note there is no reference to the ages of the persons in this narrative or to salvation. Eternal life and separation from God, death, depend on our personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and not in the number of years we have spent in pursuit of our own agenda however good and philanthropic it may have been.

This 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of John's Gospel tells us of a third person Jesus raised from the dead. There was a young girl, a young man and an older man, Lazarus. Differences are noted; one was just dead, still in the bed where she expired. The young man was in his coffin, not yet interred. Lazarus was corrupting in his grave for he was dead four days. Another comparison is that Jairus' daughter was commanded to eat, the widow of Nain's son was restored to his mother and Lazarus was loosed from his grave clothes. These three differences suggest food, freedom and fellowship for we who have been delivered from death by the salvation of the Lord. We who are redeemed can now feed on the Bread of Life and feast on the Word of God. We are free from the penalty of sin; free to worship God and free to say no to the temptations that beset all who would walk with the Lord. Now the fear of death is removed all other fears can be viewed in the light of eternity and with the Lord Jesus Christ in view. This then is the basis for Fellowship, a correct view of the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and the One in whom we live and move and have our being.

**1. Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.** This verse introduces us to the people and place of the seventh 'sign', called miracles in the other Gospel records of the works of the Lord Jesus Christ. Where it was enacted was in Bethany and three of the principal characters are here named. The place where Jesus performed the miracle is nearby, the graveyard. Bethany was called **the town of Mary and her sister Martha** because they were well known in the district.

**2. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)** There is a lot of conjecture concerning whom this Martha is; were there two Martha's or do the other evangelists record the same incident from varying aspects and perspectives, from hearsay or personal observation. I do not see any need to determine the answer, being more concerned to see the power and glory of the Lord revealed in this display of His compassion, omniscience and power; the raising of Lazarus from among the dead.

**3. Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.** This simple prayer is directed to the Lord Jesus. The sisters do not even consider a demand, they do not say, 'Come and heal him', 'Command the illness to depart', and they are content to simply state the case. Martha and Mary agree the Lord can do something; Lazarus is sick, and you love him; will you do something to alleviate his suffering or prevent his early demise.

**4. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.** The word death here is not the same as in Romans 6<sup>23</sup>; **the wages of sin is death.** There it is permanent or unchanging death, opposed to eternal life. Jesus evidently did not deny that Lazarus would die. The words which He immediately adds show that Lazarus would expire, and that He would raise him up to show the power and glory of God. 11<sup>11</sup> makes it clear Jesus was to raise him up from among the dead. Better understanding of the words may be *His sickness is not fatal*; it is not intended for his death, but to provide an opportunity for the Lord Jesus to display the glory of God, and to provide a demonstration of the power of God over sin and death. This miracle exhibits the power of the Son of God, and is proof He is sent of God. Though the sisters buried Lazarus, yet they believed, on the ground of this message, that Jesus would and could do something wonderful, even raise him from the dead, 21 & 22.

**5. Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus** therefore His staying two days longer in Bethabara was not through lack of affection for these close and familiar friends but purely to have an opportunity of proving to them how much He loved them.

Sometimes the delays we experience, waiting for our prayers to be answered are simply God's way of strengthening our faith. The joy we know when God does answer is confirmation of His love and care.

**6. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.** Jesus staying two days longer in Bethabara was not through lack of affection, it is recorded that Jesus loved these three. There is a right time for all things, the best time for this demonstration of the power and love of the Lord Jesus Christ was not yet. Christ Jesus only wants the best for them that love Him; and we His children do not always consider His ways are far above our ways; or that His blessings may be delayed or disguised. God's delays in answering our prayers are often so He may bestow some greater blessing than we envisioned or prayed for. Also the Lord in His wisdom may take us through harder trials that His love and grace will be more evident when He responds to our prayers.

**This sickness is not unto death, said the Lord Jesus Christ;** it was mortal, proved fatal, Lazarus was truly dead for four days. But that was not the purpose this sickness was sent to accomplish; it was to give opportunity to the Lord to show He had the victory over death. If the death of Lazarus was the intended outcome then the Lord would not have shown, prior to the resurrection, He has conquered death. Lazarus died, and yet it might be said he did not die, for he lived after the Lord called him forth out of the tomb. Death is permanent farewell to this world and all its limitations; from this death we do not return. In this sense the demise of Lazarus was not unto death. The sickness of the Lord's people, however bad it is or painful or prolonged, is not unto death, for it is not unto eternal death, separation from God. The body's death to this world, the end of physical communication, for the Child of God is the birth of the soul and spirit into another world, into the presence of the Lord. If our family members and friends belong to Christ, they cannot be hurt of the second death, and the first death may be anticipated with joy. Though the waiting time is fraught with rejection, pain and suffering, to be with the one who has redeemed us and given to us eternal life makes the waiting bearable, the anticipation of being with our Saviour an expected pleasure.

Jesus abode two days still in the same place because He loved these three; they had cared for Him in practical ways. Jesus will show He cares for them in a far superior way and the care He has goes beyond the grave.

**7. 8. Then He said to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.** How important it is for us to note the Lord is not confined to our times or deadlines. He knew when it would be most effective and appropriate to raise Lazarus, His waiting two more days would prove to all that Lazarus was truly dead and buried; there could be no subterfuge or deceit, Lazarus was dead.

His determination to return to the place where the Jews tried twice to stone Him was not the decision of a thoughtless man; it was **that the Son of God might be glorified** in what He was to do and in what was to be done to Him. Stoning was carrying out the death sentence, the punishment for designated crimes against the God of Israel. The Jews accused the Lord of blasphemy and the death sentence was passed on Him, nevertheless the Lord Jesus determined to return to the place where the Jews tried vainly to execute their misguided justice on the Lord Jesus Christ. God can safeguard His people in the midst of danger, if He chooses so to do. Our way of choice, when in the Lord will be the best for us even if the way is rough and fraught with danger. As we see God going before us, and we walk with Him in view, the rough paths will be made smooth and the mountains levelled.

**9. Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walks in the day, he stumbles not, because he seeth the light of this world**

**10. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbles, because there is no light in him.** The Lord Jesus says to us *he that walks in the day is in not in danger of stumbling, but in the darkness there is danger.* So long as I walk in the light as He is in the light; and my days continue, divine providence will watch over me, and keep me

from all danger. The enmity of Israel against the Christ was exhibited; the end of His earthly ministry was imminent; therefore the Lord performed His mightiest work, manifesting His power in the raising of this dead man.

Six miracles, John calls them *signs* had already shown the Jews He was the Son of God, here at Bethany He does that which displays His Divinity in an inimitable way. Previously we have seen Him turning water into wine, healing the nobleman's son, restoring the impotent man, multiplying the loaves and fishes, walking on the sea, giving sight to the blind man; but here he raises the dead, brings back to life one who has been *in the grave* four days.

It is true that Christ had raised the dead before; Mark records the raising of Jairus' daughter, she had only just died. Luke tells of the raising of the widow's son, he had yet not been buried. In the case of Lazarus, not only had the dead man been placed in the sepulchre, but corruption had already begun to consume the body, he was in the tomb four days; having died some time previous to being entombed.

The Jews, as well as most other nations, divided the day, from sunrise to sunset, into twelve equal parts; but these parts, or hours, were longer or shorter, according to the seasons of the year. In Israel the day is closer to a regular 12 hours throughout the year. The extremes are the Arctic and Antarctic where one has 24 hours of daylight while the other has 24 hours of darkness. The Lord uses this example of light in both a physical and metaphorical way; of the daylight and spiritual light, and the night, no sunlight, no thought of God in the mind or way of God in the walk or talk.

He that walks in the day is in less danger of stumbling; so long He looks to see where he is placing his feet. While our time on earth continues the Child of God has divine providence watching over him, keeping him from all that might hinder the work of God in his life and for the glory of the Lord. All the while my 'day' continues it is not in the power of my enemies to hasten the end of my day, or bring night to me before the time appointed by my Lord. While the day lasts we are kept safe by the Lord Jesus Christ who is building His kingdom and using His workers in the various services He has appointed.

Each of us, *born again*, has twelve hours working time assigned to us by God as our working time, our daytime. While we walk in the Light as He is in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin, 1John 1<sup>7</sup>.

**11. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.**

**12. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.** In sleep there is nothing to fear but much to be thankful for. Sleep comes as a welcome relief from the sorrows of the day. As Solomon wrote **the sleep of a labouring man is sweet**, Ecclesiastes 5:<sup>12</sup>. Death, for the believer, is the door to eternity through which he passes from this world into the eternal presence of his Saviour. In retiring to sleep we expect to rise again. It is a few hours away from consciousness, our work, our leisure time, our family, friends, our hobbies and our studies, to wake refreshed to a new day. Sleep brings respite from the sorrows of life. In sleep we are unconscious of the things which trouble us throughout the day.

A reason why death is likened to a sleep is to emphasise how easy it will be for the Lord to quicken us. To raise the dead will be easier for the Lord Jesus Christ than it is for us to awaken one who is in a natural sleep. Sleep is a time when the body is prepared for the rigours, the duties of the coming day. The awakened sleeper rises refreshed and invigorated, and ready for tasks, duties, pleasures, whatever the day has in store.

**I go** said the Lord even though it is a dangerous journey for me to take. Yes the Jews sought to stone me but how can I forsake a friend in need. I will show I have command in this situation as I will have in all the dangers that you will face after my resurrection. At the moment you may be fearful of the powers arrayed against me; this miracle I am about to perform will convince you of my ultimate victory over death, the world, the flesh and the devil.

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

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

The Lord Jesus Christ approaching Bethany tells his disciples that Lazarus sleeps; that he was dead. This shows His omniscience, and that He was truly God for he had received no message of the death of His friend from any person, but as God Jesus knew that Lazarus was deceased.

Notice how the Lord speaks of death and Lazarus; death is called sleep, Lazarus is called a friend. Interestingly Jesus does not limit the friendship by saying my friend, but He says our friend Lazarus sleeps. All of us who are united with the Lord Jesus Christ in faith are friends; Proverbs 18<sup>24</sup> --- **there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother**. All believers are Christ's friends and the friends of Christ must die as well as others but their death is only sleep, waiting for the awakening shout which calls all God's elect to Him. Sleep in that there is no conscious communication with any one or any thing outside the body, no response to any stimulus applied to

any of the senses. Christ is pleased to own as His friends all His disciples so we His disciples should take all Christians as our friends. Christ speaks of Lazarus as the common friend of Himself and the disciples, He says our friend showing that death does not change the status between Christ and a believer. Lazarus is dead, and many of the saints are dead yet he and they are still our friends.

We may get to know many of our 'friends' by reading the reports they have left for us, informative books, expository writings, letters; and listening to reports of their exploits as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus does not say we will go and awake him, but I will go, and I will awake him. The disciples, who were with the Lord in the walk to Bethany, are not partners in the specialised work the Lord alone can do; they can witness what the Lord does, they cannot perform this unique work of the Lord. None can awake Lazarus, but the one who gave life to Lazarus in the first place.

We are comforted in the knowledge the Lord Jesus Christ has power over death, that our resurrection depends on His almighty power and the promise He has given for us to have Life, eternal life in Him. This promise is confirmed to us by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from among the dead.

**15. I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.** I tell you so there can be no misunderstanding, Lazarus is dead: and I am glad I was not there. Martha and Mary would have expected me to do something if I had been there seeing my friend's sickness. Had I been present to see the suffering of our friend I would not have had this unique occasion to display the glory of God to you, giving you an exceptional example of my power over death. The Lord knowing Lazarus was dead when no messenger had come to announce it was an example of His divinity. It was a greater example to raise a dead man than to cure a sick man. And it was a greater miracle to raise one that was four days buried, and in whose body putrefaction had surely begun to take place, than to raise one who had just died; there is no doubt Lazarus was dead.

**16. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.** Thomas, was his Hebrew name, and signifies a twin; one who had a brother or a sister born with him at the same time. Didymus is a literal translation of the Hebrew word into Greek. In Genesis 25<sup>24</sup> Esau and Jacob are called twins. **Let us also go** said Thomas; knowing the Jews had tried to stone the Lord. Is Thomas prepared to sacrifice his life for a friend? He knows the threats levelled against the Lord by the Jews, has he given up hope believing the Lord is determined to return to Jerusalem?

If we think well of Thomas then the better interpretation is; let us walk with the Lord as in total agreement with Him and be prepared to suffer and die with Him. Let us be united in life and death with this Man who has called us to Him and shown us His unique and marvellous power over demons, sickness, the elements, hunger, and has such exacting self control when confronted with powerful opposition. Jesus has withstood the antagonism of political leaders and religious zealots and there has been no change in His testimony or witness. Yes, I will go with Him or if called to do so die for Him.

We have this great comfort since the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, Revelation 14<sup>13</sup> **And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.** Thomas has not this promise yet; His volunteering to go and die with the Lord Jesus is not quite what we look forward to. Thomas has witnessed the efforts of the opposition to stone the Lord Jesus Christ and seen how the Lord evaded the attempts of Satan to stop the work of redemption, to cause the Lord to deviate from the path His Father planned.

**18. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:**

**19. And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.**

**20. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.**

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

**22. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it 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 in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:**

**26. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?**

**27. She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.**

The Lord Jesus Christ probably clearly left Bethabara after Lazarus died. He came to Bethany and it appears that Lazarus had been buried four days, interred late the same day or day after he died. Though it was the



custom of many nations to embalm their dead, Lazarus had not been embalmed; God ordered it this way that the miracle the Lord performed would be more amazing. Lazarus was wrapped in grave clothes but that did not hinder his exit from the tomb when the Lord called him forth.

The day is fast approaching when all in the graves will hear the call of the Lord and come forth. All without the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour will come forth to everlasting damnation; those who have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for Salvation will be with the Lord when that distinguishing and awakening shout is heard.

The total distance the Lord travelled by foot was less than 10 kilometres, comfortable walking speed of 5 kilometres per hour would have seen the Lord at the bedside before the death of His friend, if He had started the journey immediately He heard of the illness of Lazarus.

When Jesus came near the town, probably the graveyard, He was told by the neighbours that Lazarus had been four days buried. When Jesus said **our friend sleepeth**, suggests Lazarus had died; the time between his death and burial was within 24 hours; the four days Lazarus was in the grave, was taken up in this journey; the Lord travelled publicly, He passed through Jericho and stayed at Zaccheus's house. Sleep is the prelude to an awaking; this wake up call is unique, never to be repeated in this way again.

Christ did not send for witnesses to His miracles, but God so ordered it that there should be many to bear testimony to this miracle.

**19. Many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary.** Bethany being so near to Jerusalem, many of the relatives and friends of the family came, as was the custom, to mourn with Martha and Mary. Mourning, in those days lasted about thirty days, three days of intense sorrow and weeping followed by seven days of lamentation, weeping and expressions of grief. During the three days, the mourners did no servile work; and did not return greetings. During the seven days, the mourners did no work that is considered menial or degrading, except in private; the mourners made their bed on the floor. They did not put on footwear, did not wash nor anoint themselves, had their heads covered and did not read the Law, the Mishnah, nor the Talmud. The men continued through the thirty days unshaven, wore no white or new clothes, and did not repair garments torn in grief.

Martha and Mary were almost overcome with sorrow for the death of their brother; he was so well thought of that many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them.

Jesus found the sisters grief stricken over the death of their brother; where death is someone will be mourning, sad indeed if there is no one to mourn. The house or home of the dead is called the house of mourning, here was Martha's house, a home to the Lord Jesus Christ; where the fear of God was, now a house of mourning. The love of God may keep the heart and mind on Christ, free from despair; but only in the individual whose mind is set on the Lord. Where there are mourners there ought to be comforters; these Jews comforted Martha and Mary concerning their brother, by speaking to the sisters of Lazarus, of his goodness, their knowledge of him and the blessings shared in the relationship, they possibly also spoke of the 'place' he had gone to.

It is a duty we owe to those that are in sorrow to mourn with them and to comfort them; and our mourning with them will be a comfort to them. This visit of the Jews to Martha and Mary is evidence they were persons of merit in Bethany.

The Christian does not sorrow as one that has no hope. The Christian has confidence in the Word of God and knows with certainty there is a resurrection for all believers, so the natural sorrow is offset by the prospect of eternal joy.

**20. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.**

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

**22. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.**

We are told that Martha went and met Jesus, Martha was expecting Christ's arrival; she is probably the one who sent tidings of her brother's illness so was expecting the Lord to come. Martha heard of His coming before He arrived. She had waited expectantly for the Lord to appear, and I suspect had often enquired of watchers, is He come? When the good news was brought that Jesus was coming, she stopped all activities in the home, and went and met Jesus.

When God by his grace moves towards us, as He does with the offer of salvation we should hasten to Him. How sad it is when the voice of the Lord is disguised by or hidden by man's private agenda. When Martha went to meet Jesus, Mary sat still in the house. Martha's natural temperament kept her busy; she loved to be doing some thing; she was cumbered about with much service, many legitimate acts of service left her little time for devotion yet she dropped all tasks to be with the Lord Jesus. Many times we are cumbered about with much service, giving priority to the service and not to the Lord who redeemed us and sent His Spirit to us, empowering us for the work He wants done. The tasks we are equipped for are important and none other can do

the work the Lord wants me to do; the work is never so important as to take precedence over the personal time with the Lord Jesus. In fact the work will not be done as the Lord requires unless we take directions from Him. Mary's natural temperament was more reserved, when seated at Christ's feet, to hear His word; she was not distracted by those duties which Martha considered more important at the time. Now in the day of grief **Mary sat still in the house**. There is a work to do for those who are sitting still in the house, as there is a work to do for those who are in the front line. Both are equally important; both are done successfully when the work is carried out after the worker has been alone with the Lord Jesus; in the house or in the centre of activity. Spending time with the Lord Jesus Christ is the vital preparation for the ministry He calls us to and equips us for; the business of the day need not keep us from the Lord Jesus. In fact the busier we are the more time we should spend with the Lord.

**Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.** Martha is not sure that Christ could have, had He pleased, saved the life of one He loved while absent as well as present. There can be no doubt Martha had served the Lord faithfully during His visits to their humble abode, she had seen miracles performed and heard of others. It is likely she has heard of the raising of the Widow of Nain's son and Jairus' daughter so not surprising Martha looks to the Lord Jesus Christ for another miracle of the same kind, a miracle to stop the anguish and sorrow she and her sister are feeling. Of course the Lord did not have to be there in person; as yet Martha does not have that confidence in the Lord Jesus and His power over death. The Lord told Martha the sickness was not unto death; personal experience is lacking with Martha and faith is seeking the confirmation of personal experience.

We take note of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ from a perspective not available to the grieving sisters. We hear the words after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from among the dead. We see by faith a post resurrection Christ and experience His power and presence, His Word lives for us, we rejoice in a living Saviour. Looking back to historical records and farther back to the Bible records we find our faith is not misplaced when it resides in the word and work of God.

Death cannot be in the same place as the Lord Jesus Christ; He is the life giver and the sustainer of life; both physical and spiritual. So the question arises, what is life? The concept in the world in general is that life continues in a person while ever there is brain activity; bodily functions may continue with the aid of artificial stimuli but when the brain is not functioning the person is dead. Put another way, there is no communication of any kind or in any way, dead. This was the case with Lazarus and the sisters are grieving because their brother is dead and because their Friend was not there to prevent the death of their brother.

We believe the Lord can cure, heal, save and bring a sinner from death to life; in the case before us we have the clear example the Lord Jesus Christ is in control of the situation and of life and death, both physical and spiritual. Martha is coming to this conclusion. Martha believes the Lord must be there in person to perform a miracle; she also doubts the ability of the Lord to restore life to one who is dead and buried four days. What a surprise awaits her!

Knowing all Christians have passed from death to life, that is they are no longer subject to the penalty of sin, we rejoice in the knowledge of sins forgiven and the gift of eternal life bestowed. We know the victory over death is ours because the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead and in Him we have that same life. We have the advantage over Martha in that we live in the Christian era, the post resurrection period, where the Lord has been received up into glory yet has promised to return and receive us unto Him. But something more than the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ's return in person is the experience and knowledge that the Lord Jesus has made His abode in all and each believer. The life which He brings to us is eternal life; we receive it by faith in Him and it cannot be withdrawn. We may and sometimes do lose track of the blessing and experience of the relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ but He cannot go back on His promise.

**Even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.** Martha seems to believe that Christ was not able to raise Lazarus by His own immediate power, but as the prophets in the past, Jesus had to receive power from God. She thought Christ was highly favoured by God but did not believe Jesus was able to raise Lazarus by His own power in His own time. Had she looked to the immediate past and what the Lord had already done she would not have questioned His power to raise her brother from the grave. For though Christ did seek the face of His Father at the raising of Lazarus, it was not clear to those present; what is recorded is that **'He groaned in the spirit'**.

**23. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.** Christ directs Martha to look forward in faith for the source of her comfort is in the promise just given, **Thy brother shall rise again**. This was true for Martha in a sense unprecedented for the promised prospect of Lazarus living after being in the grave four days was not given to another individual before the event; Lazarus was shortly to be raised. Christ speaks of the raising of Lazarus as a normal and expected event, not of what He would do. Jesus not being specific leaves Martha

uncertain as to whether He would do something related to Lazarus now or later; particular or general. It is applicable to all the saints, and their resurrection at the time appointed. It is comforting to us to know our friends and relations in Christ shall rise again. The body at death is interred, the spirit and soul return to God, He who gave life to the body and soul and life to the spirit at new birth.

**24. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.** Martha considered it unfortunate Christ was not there for she reasoned the Lord would have been able to stop the demise of her brother, that her brother would still be alive. *We add to our grief by imagining what might have been, by thinking there could have been a more favourable outcome in different circumstances.* When God's will is done, our duty, our blessing derives from submitting to the Lord Jesus. Christ directs Martha to look forward and to find comfort in the promise of the resurrection for that is a certainty, and is of great comfort to the child of faith. **Thy brother shall rise again** was true of Lazarus in a special sense; he was shortly to be raised. Martha is uncertain, will Lazarus be raised 'today' or at the 'last day'; all will be raised at the last day was the teaching of the Rabbi's. It is comforting for us when we attend the funeral of believers to know the body only is interred, to know that they shall rise again. As the soul at death is not annihilated, so the body is not lost but simply waiting the resurrection. The body and soul of the believer are raised and united with the spirit, to be eternally with the Lord Jesus Christ. Redeemed man in his true state, a tripartite being will be with the Lord Jesus Christ through eternity. Martha has confidence in the Word as she has been taught and in this post Resurrection era we may have confidence in the Word as it has been preserved for us and is presented to us without the interpretations of men.

**25. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:**

**26. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?**

**27. She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.**

**I am the resurrection, and the life:** This something of vital importance for each of us who believe to grasp. We must fix our eyes upon Him; the Lord Jesus alive from the dead is ever present with us, we need to be occupied with Him primarily. In affirming He is the resurrection and the life, the Lord would have us take our minds and thoughts off the present problems, even if they are so pressing they lead to death, and focus on Him who has conquered death. Jesus leads Martha from grieving over her brother to believing in her Saviour. He diverts her from thinking of a remote and general resurrection to find her confidence in Him who is even at this moment, while conversing with her, the Resurrection and the Life.

**I am the resurrection, and the life.** This is what Jesus is in His own matchless, unequalled Person. This conversation leads to the truth that all power resides in Him. Shortly Martha will witness a display of this almighty power, but at the moment the Lord would have Martha occupied with Him alone.

But why is the **resurrection** mentioned before the **life**? Our spiritual experience is that Christ Jesus raises us from among the dead and then gives life to us. The sinner is dead in trespasses and sins, separated from God. The sinners first need is to be brought out of the place of death, where he is dead has no life, no consciousness of God, is dead in trespasses and sins; this occurs at regeneration, at new birth, being born again. The new birth is passing from death unto life John 5<sup>24</sup>; it is being brought on to resurrection ground. The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall *hear* the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall *live*. Lazarus in the grave, raised to life by the word of the Lord gives us a perfect example of this truth.

**He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;** this teaches us that what the Lord Jesus Christ had just spoken was selective and not common to all men. **He that believeth** limits the gift of eternal life to those, all those who have saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, termed believers. The resurrection of unbelievers is not to *life* but to the second death, where they shall exist in conscious torment forever, as is made clear in Daniel 12<sup>2</sup>; John 5<sup>29</sup>; and Revelation 20.

Jesus states categorically He is the author, the cause of and the power for the resurrection. The doctrine of the resurrection came from Him, and the power to raise one from the dead is His alone. Speaking of His life He said: **No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father,** John 10<sup>18</sup>. As the resurrection of all depends on Him, He now teaches by word and example that it is not necessary that the resurrection of all should be deferred to the last day Martha referred to. Jesus has the power to raise one from the dead now as well as in the future. We who have new life in Christ are freed from the power of death and are sure we will be raised from the grave or caught up to meet the Lord in the air when He returns. For the body there is the promise of the resurrection and for the soul there is the promise of eternal life.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ does not always save us from physical death; although we believers may die to this world naturally yet we will be raised to life when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to call His bride to Himself; to be ever with the Lord who has redeemed us. **He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;** the child of God by faith has eternal life and this life in His Son.

**27. She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.** Martha confesses her faith in Christ to Him personally; a confession which comes close to that of Peter. Martha adds **which should come into the world**, words not in Peter's affirmation. We should all tell the Lord how much we appreciate the saving work He has done and how we enjoy the freedom from the fear of death. Martha believed Christ to be the promised Messiah, promised to the saints of old and spoken of among the pious Jews and expected. The Lord Jesus Christ is never correctly appreciated or rightly believed in, nor depended upon for salvation, except He is owned and acknowledged as the Lord the Son of God. Martha was fully persuaded of Christ's divine nature, she has spoken with Him and believed Him and this confession of faith could be credited to her for eternal life. There is yet a doubt for verse 39 raises the question of whether Martha's confession was simple the result of teaching, or from her heart. The miracle of her brother living with her in the house is still in the future; her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ without the demonstration of the miraculous power of the resurrection of her brother is still in the future. Most of the disciples were not convinced till after the resurrection.

**28. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.**

**29. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.**

**30. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.**

**31. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.**

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

Most of the conversations of the Lord Jesus Christ are not recorded; various people spoke with the Lord and He did many miracles about which we have no record. Sufficient is written for us to have complete confidence in the record preserved to this day. Jesus probably directed Martha to go, though John has not recorded it, for Martha said to Mary, **the Master calleth for thee**. Secretly, privately, so that the other mourners did not hear her; so Mary could have an uninterrupted time with the Lord. The Master appears to have been the name and title by which Jesus was known to the family. It means literally, teacher, and was a title which Jesus claimed for himself, **One is your Master, even Christ**, Matthew 22<sup>8, 10</sup>. There is no reason why a family friend cannot be esteemed and addressed respectfully.

The Jewish burying places were outside their city and village boundaries; it appears that was the place where Martha met the Lord, not far from the burial site of Lazarus.

**28. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly;** Martha received comfort from Christ then called her sister to share the same joy she had in the comfort of the Lord. Martha called her sister secretly, possibly because the mourners were professional mourners or because the Jews had tried to stone the Lord and there was a fear of disruption.

Individuals are called into the fellowship of Jesus Christ by the direct work of the Holy Spirit in them, a call that is directed to each person by the Spirit of God. The positive response to that word from the Lord distinguishes a Child of God from one who is unsaved. Martha called her sister, for the Lord specifically asked her to do so. The Master is come, He whom we sent to and have waited for, He is come; this was the best comfort Mary could expect or enjoy at the demise of her brother. Lazarus our brother is gone, and our sorrow is real; but the Master is come, and He will be a great comfort in this time of grief. Martha encourages her sister to go to the Lord telling her of the call of the Lord; **He calls for thee**.

Mary was not slow in responding to the call of the Lord. As soon as she heard she went quickly to Him. How different it is today! The call of the Lord reverberates around the world, sounded out from many who have 'seen' the Lord Jesus and found in Him a freedom and joy not experienced in the world in any other sphere. We tell many people of the personal experience of sins forgiven and peace with God, of a certain future after this life, of the Lord who is ever present with us, of the help and comfort we receive in times of stress and troubles but the majority will not hear. The cares of this world, the family, the financial stress, the work load, the financial burden all take priority over spiritual matters; the troubled soul without the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour has no resources to fight the battle.

**Jesus was in that place where Martha met him;** Mary hastened to meet the Lord Jesus: she arose quickly, and came unto Him. Mary's love for the Lord Jesus Christ was such that she desired to be with Him. If we love the Lord with a full heart fervently we also will desire to be with Him. We too can be with the Lord.

The Jews observing her haste suppose Mary is going to the grave to weep there; the minds of the mourners were focussed on the mournful Mary while she was focussed on being with the Lord Jesus. They supposed that she went to her dead brother; she was going to a living Saviour. Mary at times sat at Jesus' feet, now she falls at his feet, and in the translation of the scriptures before us says the same as her sister Martha. In the original the emphasis is on the fact that there is no death in the presence of the Lord. **Lord, hadst thou been here, my brother had not died.** The Lord Jesus Christ is fully aware of the situation; He delayed His visit knowing Lazarus would die; He also knew the testimony to His deity and the relationship He has with the Father would be made clearer for future generations. It is a comfort to the bereaved to know they are not alone in their grief. Martha chose to be discreet in calling Mary to the Lord Jesus but God had purposed that this *sign*, this miracle should be seen by many. The Jews followed Mary because they supposed she had gone to the grave to weep in private, but He who does all things according to the counsel of His own will, drew them there, that the miracle of the raising of Lazarus should be done before many witnesses,

The Jews who had journeyed from Jerusalem to Bethany commiserated with Martha and Mary in their bereavement; they came to give support and what comfort they could to the sisters. By so doing they received an unexpected reward. They witnessed the greatest miracle which Christ wrought while He was among men, and as a result many believed on Him, 45. To show sympathy and kindness to those who sorrow is good for our own souls; a kindred spirit can share the burden and thereby lessen the impact on the bereaved. To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, to weep with them that weep, to bear one another's burdens and lighten one another's cares, is the outworking of Christ in us.

The secret of being miserable is to live a selfish life, the secret of being happy is to lighten the burdens of others and give them comfort. We live in an age of selfishness and self-indulgence; the Salvation of the Lord can and will deliver us from this and open our hearts to share the burdens of others and thereby lighten their load, give comfort to them.

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

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

**35. Jesus wept.**

**36. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!**

**37. And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?**

**38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.**

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

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

**41. Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.**

**42. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.**

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

**44. And 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.**

John is the only one who tells us of Christ being wearied with his journey 4:<sup>6</sup>, groaning as He saw the tears of His loved ones, and thirsting as He hung upon the Cross. God became Man in the fullest sense of the word, and we see His human sympathies and perfections displayed in the Gospel by John, which portrays Jesus as God manifest in flesh. Not as some say, God-Man, but truly and wholly God and totally and fully Man. This concept we may find hard to fathom yet it is fundamental to the faith of a Christian. All the attributes of divinity resided in the man, God was manifest in flesh.

**33. He groaned in the spirit**, here Jesus shows Himself to be truly man; and a man, notwithstanding His remarkable dignity, a man who was able to sympathise with the distressed sisters, to weep with those who wept. There is no shame in weeping over the death of a loved one, indeed there may be comfort gained from weeping as a release of emotions. This example of our Lord, teaches us it is reasonable to weep and grieve over the death of a family member, a loved one, and to share in the grief of those who mourn.

The grief we suffer or share with others is not always evident on the surface; Jesus **groaned in the spirit and was troubled**; it was a deep sorrow the Lord felt at the death of one He loved, who had died and the effect death had on so many others. We can only guess at the reason why the Lord was troubled. Was it because so many others were sorrowful? Was it because Lazarus had died in his sins? Was it because the mourners were without hope? Or was it because He saw the effect of sin? Knowing He would have to go through the same agonies, the separation from loved ones, be forsaken of His Father, was a burden He alone was able to bear but was that the cause of His groaning and troubled spirit? It was not for His own self the Lord was troubled; Jesus saw beyond the immediate situation to a time not many days away when He would be made the sacrifice for sin. The day was fast approaching when He would have to taste death for every man, as the writer records in Hebrews 2<sup>9</sup> **But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. He was troubled**, He troubled Himself. Jesus had all the passion, fervour and care of a normal man, He had a perfect command of His emotions, He was never overcome by grief, never elated beyond the norm, never aggravated so that He acted irresponsibly, never worried as to the future or result of His actions. He troubled Himself for He saw the cause of death and the reason for the grief of the mourners, the hopelessness the family and friends of Lazarus were experiencing.

**34. Where have ye laid him?** Jesus spoke as a man, He was sympathetic as a man; and though He who could raise Lazarus from among the dead could also know where Lazarus was entombed yet Jesus asked the way to the grave so there would be no doubt as to the miracle He was about to perform, no accusing the sisters of planning this remarkable event.

**35. Jesus wept.** It has been noted that this is the shortest verse in the Bible, English translation; but it is very important and compassionate in its implications. It shows the Lord Jesus as a friend, a caring friend, and reveals His character as a man. A personal friendship is not inconsistent with a Christian relationship. In Christ our emotional bonds are stronger and friendship is more real.

It is right for the Christian to sympathise with others in their good times and their bad times. Romans 12<sup>15</sup> **Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.** It is right to weep when loved ones are in strife or difficulties and we have no means to remedy or alleviate or lighten the burden.

Jesus wept over Jerusalem, a city full of sinners. Here we see the Lord weeping as He approaches the grave of one He loved. The miracle Jesus was about to perform would bring Lazarus back into a sinful world; Lazarus would still be subject to the flesh. All the sinful passions that plagued him in the past are to be renewed. The Jews seeing Christ's tears interpret them as a sign of love for Lazarus; **Behold, how he loved him!** Christ's love for the world is amazing; for the church remarkable; for me it is incomparable and I will never fully comprehend it. The love the Lord Jesus Christ has for individuals is displayed in the love He shows He has for Lazarus. The Apostle Paul writes, Galatians 2<sup>20</sup> --- **I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.**

Some Jews attempted to denigrate the Lord Jesus Christ because He did not prevent the death of Lazarus; supposing Christ could not be the Son of God, because He did not display His divine power by preventing the death of His friend.

We, having witnessed the power of God and heard the testimony of many in the years following the Cross and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ have no difficulty in believing Jesus Christ is Lord. We believe He is Lord of the living and the dead. Looking back at these Jews it is extraordinary that so few believed Jesus could do more than they had seen with their own eyes or had heard of from others. The testimony of the prophets was not regarded as relevant to their current situation. They believed the Messiah was still to come and had to be present to do the works of God. Had they looked with an open mind at the Lord and considered His words and works and checked the scriptures all difficulties could have disappeared.

**38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.**

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

The graves of the common people were dug as ours are; those with a higher station in the society were placed in vaults, as was Lazarus and later the body of Jesus. It is likely many of the Jewish burying-places were made in the sides of rocks; some dug down like a well from the surface, and then hollowed under into niche or recess, and a flat stone laid down upon the top for a seal.

**Take away the stone** so that all may see that Lazarus is truly dead. Jesus desired all those who were present, and especially those who took away the stone, that Lazarus was not only dead, but that the body was decomposing. None could later say that Lazarus had only been sleeping or in a coma; but would have to agree that the greatness miracle was performed.

**He stinketh**, the body is in a state of putrefaction; there is no denying a dead man was buried. There is no denying this body is returning to the dust from whence it came. All the witnesses to this miracle are must be convinced Jesus is God, for only God has power over life and death.

**Take away the stone. You will see the glory of God.** The Lord's words to Martha are a promise, an assurance that God is able to and will do something not previously known to man. We are prone to limit the work of God to the restrictions of the flesh and mind, flesh corrupted by sin and a mind limited in understanding by the physical boundaries we experience. When we are 'born again' by the Spirit of God then spiritual facts and experiences change those boundaries to embrace spiritual realities; we can then see God working in ways not hitherto seen or known. The stony heart of unbelief is removed and replaced with a heart of faith; faith based on things not seen but revealed in the Word of God. The glory of God is seen in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, seen with eyes that are opened, eyes which can see things not seen by the natural eye. **The glory of God** is revealed in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; is seen in the work of redemption; is experienced and enjoyed by the redeemed.

**41. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.** This prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ was heard by His Father, not by the people standing by. When was it prayed? Possibly **when He groaned in the spirit**, 33; when He groaned in Himself, 38, it was a human reaction to the death of a loved one and the effect it had on those near and dear to Lazarus.

We learn from this that we can pray silently, we can pray with an attitude of reverence without sound. We can be in contact with God our Father when alone or in a crowd. A lesson we all need to learn is to pray without ceasing, to be in contact with God our Saviour in all the changing scenes of life. God our Father is always listening to hear His people pray. Let us not limit our times of prayer to the 'prayer meeting', the 'quiet time', 'family prayer' or any other set time. The Lord is ever listening for the prayers of His people and His ears are open to the cries of His saints. We don't need big words or long prayers; we are not required to adopt a particular stance or a certain language; God hears our heart's cry whether words are formed or when it is groaning in the spirit. 1Thessalonians 5<sup>17</sup> **Pray without ceasing**, the shortest verse in the original text comes to us with the same force these many years later. What is most important is that we are in the presence of God, communicating with Him, whether silently or audibly. The Lord is ever attentive to the prayers of His people; He understands our groaning and our carefully formed phrases. His response is not governed by our intellectual understanding of His nature, by our grasp of the language, by our posture, by the presence of others or any other perceived situation requirement.

**42. And I knew that thou hearest me always**, this confidence the Lord Jesus Christ has in the omnipotence of His Father can be the portion of all believers. The Lord Jesus Christ publically thanks the Father for the yet to be received answer to His prayer. God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ always hears the prayers, always answers the prayers directed to Him through the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to humbly accept the answer to our prayers even if the answer is not what we looked for or expected. The answer to our prayer request may be yes, no or wait; the answer is sure but our acceptance of the answer is a measure of our faith. This prayer of the Lord is not recorded for us but the reason the Lord Jesus thanks His Father is so we may know there is a direct tie, a link, a unity in the desires and actions of the Father and the Son. Also that the Man, Christ Jesus is indeed the Son of God and they work together for the one purpose. **And I knew**; as for me, so far as I am concerned, I had no doubt my prayer would be heard and answered. Those who are witnesses to my deeds will know the value of prayer and know who answers prayer. Jesus never prayed in vain; He never did a miracle for His own glory or acted ineffectively; in all His miracles the basis of His joy was the benefit of others and the glory of God His Father.

**And I knew that thou hearest me always.** How wonderful is this; what confidence and joy does it minister to the person who believes. Christ did not cease to pray when He returned to His Father, He still prays for us, His redeemed people. **Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them** Hebrews 7<sup>25</sup>. The Lord Jesus Christ prayed for individuals, **I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not** Luke 22<sup>32</sup>. We cannot tell or comprehend how much we owe to the intercession of our Saviour, eternity will reveal it is well past our greatest thoughts, much more than we can imagine. John 17 records some of what the Lord prays for and desires for His people. He asks that His joy may be fulfilled in us 13, that we may be kept from evil in the world 15, that we may be one 21, that we may be made perfect in one 23, that we may be with Him where He is 24, that we may behold His glory 24, that we may be sanctified through the truth John 4<sup>17</sup>. The Father hears Christ **always**; therefore all the Lord Jesus Christ prays for is sure to be, it will be in the time determined by the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**43. Jesus cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.** It was not necessary for the Lord to call out loud; by doing so the bystanders were made witnesses to the miracle and to Jesus who performed it. The voice the Lord

Jesus Christ uses to wake the dead is suitable to the person and the time. It is noted that Lazarus was addressed personally. There is a general call to wake the dead, to call a sinner to salvation, a call which goes to all mankind. There is a specific call to the individual and only the person who is called can respond to that call. Lazarus was named, Lazarus was commanded, and Lazarus obeyed.

The Lord Jesus Christ, travelled some days, He wept, He prayed, He groaned, He cried with a loud voice, and commanded the dead to come forth. Part of this is an example for us; the command with a loud voice is the prerogative of the Lord alone.

**44. And 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.** He that was dead is bound with the wrappings of death. Help is needed to free Lazarus from the bonds; the Lord Jesus Christ gives a command to His followers to take the ties off Lazarus. Lazarus will not walk as a free man till the grave clothes are removed. He has new life but the restrictions of death are hindering him still from freedom of movement. The power of God gave mobility to Lazarus, he came forth from the grave, he was still unable to see or walk on his own; the trappings of death hindered him in all aspects.

The Lord Jesus Christ gives a command to His followers to do for Lazarus what Lazarus could not do for himself; **loose him**. We who have followed the Lord Jesus Christ for some time have a responsibility to teach, encourage, be alongside, assist, guide and do all we can to see the babe in Christ gets the right food and walks in the right direction. A duty of those who have walked with the Lord for some time is to be there for the babe in Christ. Worldliness, in its many forms is the major hindrance to the growth of a new Christian. Worldliness is the grave clothes we have to help the new believer to take off; the garments of worldliness come in many materials and styles and they all stop the eyes from seeing, the ears from hearing, the mind from contemplating and the feet from walking.

**Loose him**; remove the bandages, so that he may walk freely. This miracle is the reason that that many believed on Jesus. There could not be a more powerful and positive striking proof of the divine mission and might of Jesus Christ. There was no possibility of deception.

The sisters and friends of Lazarus believed him to be dead; they were not deceived. Neither did they plan to deceive others. He was four days wrapped in the grave clothes and buried; it could not be a case of coma or sleep. Jesus was at least two days walk away at the time of his death.

No higher power is known to man than that of raising the dead. It was not possible to deceive his sisters, to convince them that he was restored to life, if it was actually so.

God had so ordered it that this miracle should be done before many witnesses. There was no concealment, no secrecy. It was done publicly in the day, and was witnessed by many who followed Jesus to the grave, 31.

Some who saw the miracle and did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, went and told the Pharisees. They did not deny that Jesus had caused Lazarus to leave the grave while still bound. They went to the Pharisees because they had witnessed Christ performing this miracle.

The Pharisees would have questioned the fact if it were possible. It was not possible; for Lazarus was alive and the fact of his resurrection could not be denied. Since Jesus performed this miracle His teaching is true for God would not give such power to an impostor; nor could an impostor have done this miracle; therefore the Christian faith must be from God. Therefore:

**45. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.** The work the Lord Jesus Christ does in and through believers is a powerful testimony; the changed life, from spiritually dead to alive in Christ is a testimony that does not need words. When questioned about the change in one's life then the actions will confirm what is spoken; and the life lived will be a strong testimony to the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ; hard to be denied. Unfortunately recognition of the truth is not salvation; it may lead to faith and salvation but it is not always so.

Today we see prostitutes redeemed and living modest lives; gamblers controlling the urge to bet on dogs, horses, cards, and no longer visiting casinos; alcoholics abstaining and other vices controlled because the Holy Spirit dwells with the believer and He supports the holy desires of the one relying on Him.

**Many of the Jews believed on him**, they saw the miracle Jesus had performed and knew there could be no doubting the miracle worker was the Son of God, they were not able to resist the truth. Their friendship and condolences to Martha and Mary became the means of their conversion. Solomon said, **It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting**, Ecclesiastes 7<sup>2</sup>. What a contrast that is to the way of all modern societies; pleasure seeking and entertainment is desired more by most, than quiet contemplation. The music is loud, the pictures are lurid, the dress standards are immodest, relationships are self seeking and the general attitude is 'me first'. When we put the Lord first then we may have a correct relationship with our family, neighbours, society, and the local church.



**46. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.** Unfortunately it is not always the case that they who are confronted with the truth accept it and believe it. Some report it to those leading the opposition as did some of the witnesses to the miracles of the Lord Jesus. They were hoping to be treated more favourably by the religious hierarchy. Some to curry favour, or out of spite, or maybe seeking recognition by the prominent people in their society reported the works and words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A Believer not only receives the truth, he takes it to heart, he lives according to the truth, he lets the truth govern his thoughts, his motives and then his speech and his activities. I am not saying a Believer is perfect, a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ will be conscious of wrongdoing and bad thoughts; he will feel guilty at having let the Lord down by marring the testimony and breaking the communion with his Saviour.

**47. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.**

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

**49. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,**

**50. Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.**

**51. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;**

**52. And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.**

**53. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.**

**54. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.**

**55. And the Jews' Passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves.**

**56. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?**

**57. Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.**

**47. What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.** The ardent opponents of the Lord Jesus Christ were aroused by the report of the miracles; the mighty acts of the Lord were not rejected, but these miracles did polarise the people. The Pharisees believed the reports; they called for a meeting of the Sanhedrin; they reported what they had seen and heard; not as believers but as those who would lose their standing among the people if Jesus was admitted as the Christ. It is the same today among many Christian groups, the leaders feel threatened when the Lord Jesus demonstrates His power in a new believer. They look for conformity to their practices and doctrines no matter how much they deviate from the truth.

Still other Christian sects try to gain converts by pseudo Christian acts and speech; moving away from the Word of God to accommodate their false teachings. Some even have the audacity to say God has spoken to them privately; claiming therefore what they say has divine approval.

We may rest assured the Word of God, the Bible, is complete; nothing will be added to it or taken from it; the Lord has given it to us and it is all we need for faith and all we need to know to live before man and as a Child of God, all we need to live our life in the presence of God. Obedience to the Word of God is a prime requirement to live the life of a Christian and be a true witness to the work of the Lord.

Suppose the Word, the Bible we have is a transliteration; that may not be bad. What if it is a false translation, where some words and phrases are changed, specifically designed to accommodate the practices of the sect supporting that view? How can I, as one who wants to obey the Lord, know the Book I read each day is the Word of God? What criteria can I use to establish the bona fides of the ministry I listen to or the text I adhere to? When a false teacher tells me it is not what it appears or the text means something else, what recourse do I have to seek out and know the truth? Not being a Greek or Hebrew scholar sets definite limitations on my ability to find the true meaning of the passages of scripture queried by myself or those I converse with.

I suggest prayer, coupled with the belief that the Word of God cannot contradict itself; that no verse is its own interpretation and that the Spirit of God will guide into all truth. This calls for a humble and quiet spirit and, very important, obedience to the Word of God. Obedience to the Word of God precedes obedience to members

in the congregation, irrespective of the offices they hold, or their standing in the community. Far better is it for us to be received by God than to be accepted by man; faith and obedience to the Word of God can bring untold trouble upon the believer by those opposed to the truth. As we see here the Pharisees feel threatened and desire to remove the threat, even to their plotting the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**48. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.** The Pharisees had no thought for the honour of God. Their concern was national; related to their status among the nations of the world, also they did not want their position as the religious leaders undermined. In general they believed they were the chosen of God, they also were erroneous in that they believed the work of God ceased with them. For this reason they were overly concerned with their national status. Also the Pharisees desired to keep the God of Israel for the nation of Israel exclusively. The Pharisees were often right in their doctrine, wrong in the application of it; they were right in their lifestyle but wrong in the methodology. Legalism is correctness, even truth but without love and righteousness it is misplaced; called today Pharisaic. How easy it is to be legally correct but spiritually wrong.

The patriotic Jews had a fear of losing the Temple to the Romans; **they will take away our place.** Should that happen we as a people would lose our religious focus, our centre of worship, our holy and sacred identity would be tarnished or lost. The Pharisees feared, if they let Christ continue to work miracles, that the number of His disciples would alarm the Romans, and cause them to bring an army and curtail their religious liberty, and take away their place of worship and disperse the nation. Their place of worship, the temple, and their nation, their national identity, so Israel would be swallowed up and lost in the Roman Empire.

*Can you think of any similarities or parallels in the current world economies and religions?*

Some that had seen even this miracle steeled their hearts against it; and not only so, but conspired the destruction of this most humane, amiable, and glorious Saviour! Those who obstinately resist the truth of God are capable of every thing that is base, perfidious, and cruel.

**49. Caiaphas**, the High Priest; the Pharisees had no power to assemble a council; therefore only those Pharisees who were scribes or elders of the people, in conjunction with Annas and his son-in-law Caiaphas, who were the high priests, the chief priests mentioned here. **What shall we do?** This miracle was so clear, and incontestable, that they did not try to discredit it or explain it away. Their own people had observed it and testified to it. They reported what they had seen, and on their word, the council in league with the Pharisees against Jesus confidently relied on this report.

The facts can be accepted without them being applied to the life, believing the facts are not salvation. Applying the truth of the facts to one's own life; expressing faith in the Word of God and showing by the life that the truth is believed constitutes salvation. **Caiaphas** showed remarkable insight in prophesying one Man should die for the nation. The import of his words is made clear to succeeding generations by the comment the Lord causes John to add in verse 52.

The Council was puzzled. They saw in Christ a threat to their interests, up to this time they had unanswered queries. The high priest **Caiaphas** brought them brusquely back to the problem and a solution. **Ye know nothing at all.** Our own interests, what is **expedient for us**, this Man must die. His miracles, His teachings, the beauty of His character are not our problem; His very life is a threat to us as the guiding body and to our aims. I vote for death says Caiaphas; **that one man should die for the people**, the vote is unanimous. The Council regarded it as the most expedient solution to their difficulty. Our loyalty to the Roman Empire will be established is the consensus. The execution of Jesus will show that we have no intention of revolting. The slaying of this Man, who is seeking to establish an independent kingdom, will show we want to remain the faithful subjects of Caesar. Caiaphas spoke as a politician of the present day; Peace at any cost. In accepting his policy, the Council was persuaded that good political sense, the death of an innocent, would not provoke the Romans.

**51. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation.** Caiaphas was actuated by political expediency, what he thought best for him and the nation. The Lord Jesus was to be sacrificed for the good of the nation. The Holy Spirit put words in the mouth of Caiaphas, **It is expedient that one man die for the people** not realizing that he had been moved of God to fulfil prophecy. The Holy Spirit's explanation of this saying of the high priest is the best interpretation of the passage and it gives reality to the word in Peter's epistle. 2 Peter 1<sup>20, 21</sup> tells us, **No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation**, of human origin or explanation, **for the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man.**

This is another instance of an unbeliever prophesying, speaking the truth without knowing it. The rank of the person does not hinder God in His purposes; none can stay His hand.

**53. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.** Caiaphas no sooner suggests the putting of Christ to death, but from that day they lie in wait to take the Lord Jesus. The high priests, Annas and Caiaphas, had satisfied their consciences by a majority agreement of the Sanhedrin so now they hasten to execute their evil plans. The judgment of the high priest silenced all opposition so they began to plan measures to put Jesus to death without creating a furore or tumult among the people.

**54. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.** There is no disgrace in moving away from physical danger when it is not the will of God at that time for you to be exposed to harm. The time was fast approaching when the Lord would **give his back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair** as prophesied by Isaiah. Jesus walked no more publicly, in the cities and towns; He never exposed His life unnecessarily to hazard. The time of his death was determined in the counsel of God, and as the time was not yet it did not prevent the Lord Jesus from using lawful means to preserve His life, removing Himself from the threats.

In this threatening situation the Lord Jesus Christ spent time with His disciples; when the disciples of the Lord are threatened they need to spend time with Jesus Christ.

**55. The Jews' Passover was nigh at hand:** the wording here indicates the writer had spent much time away from Israel, there was no other national festival called the Passover. It's being called the Jews' Passover shows that John wrote this gospel among people who were not Jews, so it was necessary to explain their customs.

**To purify themselves** as was the ordinance and the custom. This purifying was preparing themselves for the Passover, according to the commands of the law. If any were ceremonially defiled by contact with the dead or by any uncleanness, they were required to obey the Law for purification, Leviticus 22<sup>1-6</sup>. Different time periods were necessary in order to be cleansed from ceremonial pollution. For example, one who had been polluted by touching a dead body, a sepulchre, or the bones of the dead, was sprinkled on the third and seventh days, by a clean person, with hyssop dipped in water mixed in the ashes of the red heifer. After washing his body and clothes he was then clean. These persons who went up before the Passover often a week or more, were those who had in some manner been ceremonially polluted; they would not let that hinder them from keeping the Law in relation to the Passover.

We on this side of the Crucifixion of Christ are so blessed in that the Lord Jesus Christ has kept the Law, been our sacrifice according to the Law, that He has done all that the Law requires and we are accepted by God in Him. Freed from the demands of the Law, not relying on the Law for righteousness, and finding we are deemed righteous in Christ our sin bearer; we enjoy the blessings on a conscience freed from guilt and so much more that God has for us. In the eyes of the Lord God Almighty we are seen as freed from the penalty of sin because Jesus bore the penalty for us. We can say with confidence, **He loved me and gave Himself for me.**

**56. Then sought they for Jesus;** the persons looking for the Lord may have been sent by the high priest, hearing that Christ had been at Ephraim, came and inquired among the people whether Jesus would attend the festival. Knowing that Jesus had been at the three previous Passovers during His public ministry; also knowing He was sought by the Council with plans to arrest Him, they thought He might be avoiding the Pharisees and the council for such had been antagonistic in the immediate past.

The Lord Jesus Christ will never distance Himself from someone seeking Him; there is nothing secretive about His person or His ministry. The divisions of Christianity that exclude anyone for any reason are not true to the Word of God or the work of God. The Gospel message is for all, all nations kindred's, peoples, tribes, nationalities but, and it is a big but, Christian fellowship is for the redeemed alone.

**56. What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?** They doubted whether Jesus would come. It was required by law that all males should come; but Jesus coming to the feast fraught with great danger to His person. This caused of their doubt; it was in this situation that the Lord Jesus Christ, like many of His followers living as Christians today. Danger on the one hand from those opposed to the Gospel, and duty to the will of God on the other. He chose to do His duty, and leave the situation with His Father. He preferred to do the will of God though He knew that death was the consequence; and we should not fear danger, persecution, or death, as we obey God.

Two things gave rise to this questioning among those who had come up to Jerusalem from all sections of Israel; in previous years Christ had been present at the Feast. Now the leaders of the nation were incensed against Him. They had decreed that Jesus must die, and their decree public knowledge. The main topic of interest among the crowds of Jews in Jerusalem was, would the miracle worker who claimed to be not only the Messiah but the Son of God, enter the danger zone.

**57. Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man know where he were, he should show it that they might take him.** Satan was behind the edict of the Council; the enmity

was directed to the Seed of the woman. The raising of Lazarus, this forerunner of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, this demonstration of the power of the Son of God had brought to a head the hatred of him who is the god of this world. It is true that Christ had raised the dead on other occasions, but here He had given a public display of His mighty power on the very outskirts of Jerusalem, and this was an open affront to Satan and his earthly instruments. The glory of the Lord Jesus threatened the dominion of *the prince of this world*, and so he no longer hid his intentions; Jesus must die. The enmity of the Devil himself is overruled by God to the outworking of His eternal purposes in Christ Jesus our Lord. How futile are the devices of the devil and man when they are in opposition to God and His eternal purposes.

## John chapter 12

1. Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.
2. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.
3. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.
4. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,
- 5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?
6. This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.
7. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.
8. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.
9. Much people of the Jews therefore knew 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 consulted 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.

Jesus is at Bethany again, maybe now at the house of Simon the leper, Martha, Mary and Lazarus were invited to the supper; Jesus has come to Bethany on the way to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. Jesus is treated hospitably and the devotion of Mary and the foresight of Mary in anointing the Lord are commended by Jesus. Some speculated as to whether there would be further manifestation of the hatred of the Jews at this time as all were now aware of the edict of the council. The true colours of Judas are revealed and the Lord makes it clear that the action of Mary is timely and relevant. Many who had heard of Lazarus being raised came to see him and opposition from the chief priests became more overt.

1. **Six days before the Passover**, before the last Passover, the Passover in which the Lord becomes the Passover Lamb. **Where Lazarus was which had been dead**, Lazarus is particularly mentioned, since it was remarkable that one who had been once dead should be enjoying a meal and fellowship with friends. This shows that the resurrection of Lazarus was no illusion; that he was without question restored to life and was able to participate in the normal activities of life. Some estimate this was about two months after his resurrection, and it is the last that we hear of Lazarus. How long he lived after being raised is unknown, what he encountered in his absence from this world is also a mystery to us. It is remarkable that none, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, who have been restored to life from the dead, have made any comment respecting that world they were rescued from.

All we know of Lazarus is completely overshadowed by the demonstration of the power resident in the Lord Jesus Christ. We know he had two sisters; he lived and died at Bethany, He left the tomb at the command of the Lord Jesus and in the power of the Lord. Lazarus is silent to us in his times with the Lord and his times with Martha and Mary. He sat at the table with the Lord Jesus.

We have in Lazarus a clear example of the teaching of the Apostle Paul in Colossians 3<sup>3</sup>, for ye are **dead**, and your **life** is hid with Christ in God. Lazarus was dead, even to the point of decomposing, but that was no hindrance to the Lord Jesus Christ. We know the Lord has power over diseases and deformities and even death, physical death and spiritual death; personal experience teaches us that truth. We were dead in trespasses and sin but now are alive in Christ Jesus our Lord. Reckoning ourselves dead to the world and the claims on us by the world we may live unto the Lord as true disciples, having a testimony that clearly shows the life we live in the flesh is not self centred. As children of God we must live so the glory of God is seen in us and the power of God is evidenced by the change wrought in us by our Saviour.

2. **There they made him a supper**, a feast. Supper was the main meal of the day. This they did with Jesus as the honoured guest. This feast was for friends and in fellowship with each other. At the table with friends there is amiable conversation, pleasant fellowship.

This could be the precursor to the fellowship of the Lord's Table.

2. **Martha served**; she herself waited at table where the Lord was in fellowship with His friends. Martha did not consider it a task below her status to serve the Lord, when Christ was dining; we should not think any service in the Lord to menial a task. The Lord Jesus had reproofed Martha for being troubled with much serving, but she did not cease working, she still served. Our service for the Lord must not interfere with our fellowship with the Lord.

3. **Lazarus was one of those that sat at meat**, this activity of Lazarus proved the truth, the reality of his resurrection. We who partake of the Lord's Supper declare the Lord Jesus is alive and is to return. What is more important is we were dead in sin but are now alive in the Lord Jesus Christ. Lazarus joined in the normal life activities of family and friends after receiving new life from the Lord. He did not go into hiding after his resurrection, nor did he seek notoriety and a following as one who had experienced a remarkable restoration from the grave. He lived as others did; he sat at the table for his meals as usual. Those whom Christ has raised up and have new spiritual life in Christ are made **to sit together with him**, Ephesians 2<sup>5-6</sup>, not separate themselves as a cut above the rest of the society.

Believers are in the world but not of the world; that is the interests and aims of Christians are not the same as those who have not experienced the salvation of the Lord.

4. **Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,**

5. **Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?** John has a clear memory of the occasion of the betrayal of the Lord. Even as the memories we have of those who have wronged us remain fresh. Writing many years later the 'disciple' who betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ is not forgotten.

Let us take note of the subterfuge of Judas and try to avoid the deceitful wiles of those who would draw us away from the Lord with deception or a variety of wiles and excuses, wild schemes, enthusiasm, or seemingly pious works. When we are confronted with requests to support this or that, works that appear to be good we have a duty to wait on the Lord for guidance. The Lord Jesus Christ will never tell us to do anything contrary to His Word; we must also know that the Bible is complete so nothing can be added to it or anything taken from it legitimately. Related to our giving to the work of the Lord we should not be swayed by appeals from the people who work to relieve the poor and needy, we should, by prayer and relevant information be persuaded by the Holy Spirit of the Lord Jesus to do what we can, when we can, and where we can. Supporting large organisations that make a business out of gathering funds, which spend much of the donations gathered to support the organisation and on advertising, is less than the best way to give to, or support, the work of the Lord. The great proliferation of 'Christian works' and 'Para-church' activities have so disseminated the Church and fragmented it that many are misled as to Christianity and the uniqueness of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

6. **He was a thief**, the intent was there in Judas to use the gathered funds for himself, how we may only conjecture. Is there a parallel in the religious world now? Do we see very wealthy 'evangelists', huge and ornate buildings, hear the call to support this work and that person; are we not caused to feel the responsibility of the poor and oppressed in other lands. Is the organisation we support with our prayer and donation as sacrificial as we are in our giving?

We should be careful and prayerful before giving money to any cause. We are responsible to the Lord for the distribution of the funds He allows us to have, for the ability He has blessed us with to earn our living and for our obedience to the Word of God for the use of all He gives us. The Word of God teaches us all we have is His and we are stewards of the grace and gift He has blessed us with. To think or act as if what I have in worldly goods or what I have earned through my labours is mine alone then maybe I also am misusing what the Lord has entrusted to me. Also applied to intellectual abilities the Apostle Paul teaches us in 2Corinthians 10<sup>5</sup>

**Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.** In so many ways we may be robbing God; taking to ourselves what is rightfully His. If such is the case we are no better than the disciple who would betray the Lord for an amount of silver.

Many boast about avoiding taxes, finding ways to hold on to the money earned; not considering there may be sin in cheating the government. Subtle schemes, tax havens, false claims or tax accountants with financial acumen may all seem legitimate but being in communion with the Lord will show us what is right and what is permissible for the Christian. It is not a new thing for a member of the church to be covetous; such members

will be those who complain at the expense of spreading the gospel and will not cavil at their own expensive lifestyle or what is spent on luxuries.

This deadly covetous obsession will work evil in a local church, even as it brought a curse on the children of Israel in the case of Achan, Joshua 7<sup>1</sup>, and in this instance, in Judas it betrayed the Lord Jesus and led to His death. Since the inception of the Church there have been those with the covetous spirit spoiling the local church, heaping to them treasures, building monuments with the monies given to the Lord by devoted believers and saying “look and see how the Lord has blessed me, or us, in doing all this”. Buildings are not a sign of spiritual prosperity or of the blessing of the Lord; though the Lord Jesus may bless individuals with wealth. The Lord allowed the Temple to be destroyed; the new Building to take its place in not made with hands nor are the materials purchased with any valuables devised or manufactured by man.

**7. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.**

**8. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.** Only one of the disciples questioned the action of Mary. He had a covetous spirit; he was not concerned for the Lord and the work of the Lord. Jesus gives definite instructions concerning Mary, **let her alone**; this instruction is not limited to Judas; no one was to question the action of Mary. The prophetic act of Mary pointed forward to the burial of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no certainty that Mary emptied the container of embalming fluid; there is certainly the assurance the action of Mary could not go unnoticed, the whole house was filled with the odour.

What we do to make the beauty of the Lord evident, what we say in acknowledgement of the Lord working in our lives, our public testimony, is as the **oil of spikenard** very precious. Allowing the Lord Jesus Christ to have all the glory is like pouring out the most valuable perfume so all within range can know something very precious, very costly is present and available. Christ Jesus having control in a believer's thoughts and life will be a more powerful witness than the sweetest perfume.

The death of the Lord Jesus Christ is a sweet savour of life to all who correctly understand He was the planned sacrifice for sin. Martha said to the Lord “by this time he stinketh”, was he not buried with the embalming fluids and spices? Is the application and effect of this oil so short lived? We may learn from this that the life we now live in the flesh falls a long way short of the ideal. The best and sweetest life and the strongest perfume and the longest lasting aroma come from a man who is dead to sin and alive in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ in one's life is most pleasant to the person indwelt by the Holy Spirit and has a pervasive and pleasing fragrance so many of those around will notice the effect it has and seek the source.

All believers have the responsibility of making Christ known and those who are dead to self and have put on Christ are the ones who will have a powerful testimony. We are taught by the Apostle Paul in Romans 6<sup>11</sup>; **likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.** Christ in me will show in new interests, different speech, controlled emotions and pleasant relationships, and a desire to do as the Lord Jesus instructs according to the Bible.

**The poor always ye have with you;** this statement of the Lord Jesus Christ is as relevant today as it was two thousand years ago. I suggest hidden in these words is the thought that every day brings an opportunity to do something to alleviate the suffering of someone somewhere. The assistance may be practical, financial, and emotional and is not limited to those we know or are in the family. The Apostle Paul did write in 1 Timothy 5<sup>8</sup> **But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.** Who then are the poor? In this country, as in others we have the poor without money; the poor without property; the poor without work; the poor without family and a far greater number of the poor without faith. They are not always poor who rely on the welfare agencies when they are capable of working and earning their living. Poverty is sometimes the result of the avarice of other people or institutions demanding usury, interest rates far in excess of reason. Today the banking institution charges interest and interest on the interest charged. After paying off a mortgage for many years one still owes more than the borrowed amount because the banks are greedy and are not there for the benefit of the borrowers or to serve the public; they seek only to gain huge profits, to be the biggest bank.

When the Lord said **but me ye have not always** He was clearly speaking of His physical presence. Jesus made the promise Hebrews 13<sup>5</sup> **‘I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee’** so we can be assured of His continual abiding presence. Not physically but in a more real way we can enjoy being with the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, know He is present, commune with Him, and share the joys of salvation with others who are enjoying the same experience.

**9. Much people of the Jews therefore knew 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 consulted 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.**

The testimony of a man with new life, one who has passed from death unto life, is a draw card attracting 'crowds' to the novel experience. The Man who had worked this miracle on Lazarus is placed second, not because Lazarus wants the glory. Many having heard want to see also, confirmation of the testimony is to them dependant upon seeing with their own eyes. Christians are exhorted to show the Lord Jesus Christ is alive in them by their lives and their testimony. In stark contrast to those who sought confirmation by sight is the Gospel message '**faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God**'. Yet there is no escaping the responsibility incumbent upon all who own the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, we must so live and speak that the Lord Jesus may be seen in us. Our lives must speak at least as loud as our words. It was curiosity which brought these persons at this time to where Christ was; they had a desire to see Lazarus, to ask after the truth of his death, and possibly ask what it was like in death. The miracles of Christ drew many followers after His person; they were not immediately convinced by His miracles that He was more than a good man. It was the sin of many, when Christ was here upon earth that they flocked after Him to see His works, and at the same time refused to believe He was more than a prophet sent from God. The multitude here came to Bethany, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus who they knew was dead and buried and now sitting with the Lord Jesus Christ at supper.

**10. But the chief priests** were provoked to jealousy because many turned from them to follow the Christ. Losing their following did more to antagonise them than the doctrine of the Lord. Notice how religion in even modern society's desires pre-eminence, religion also wants to organise the community's secular affairs. These religious zealots wanted Lazarus dead and the Lord Jesus dead so they could continue to rule the people with a legalistic spirit and apply the law as they had interpreted it. The Old Testament prophet lamented because the people had left off following the Lord and had chosen to follow man. He said **the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: Jeremiah 5<sup>31</sup>**. And in this instance we have the religious leaders uniting to destroy the work of the God of Israel

**Put Lazarus also to death;** because Lazarus was living proof that the Lord Jesus was who He claimed to be. Let us destroy this man so that others will not have him as an example was the demand of religious zealots. Satan's war against the Lord Jesus Christ continues; many thousands have died as a result of false Christian religions instigating and leading opposition against those who know and experience the salvation of the Lord. The numbers that have forfeited their lives, refusing to turn back from following the Lord Jesus Christ continues to rise. Two thousand years later and Satan is still stirring up his disciples against the Lord and His people. Much of the opposition comes from various groups coming under the heading of 'Christian'. The Lord Jesus Christ said a house divided against itself cannot stand. Looking at Christianity today in this modern world we see so many factions, so many sects, so many divisions it is very hard for one who is searching for the truth to find satisfaction for the answers and demands of the various groups are so different.

Didn't the Lord Jesus say '**in the world you will have tribulation**' though we need not fear because He has overcome the world and all its forces. Jesus has proved His power over all antagonistic forces by the resurrection. Unfortunately many called Christians have not a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The proliferation of groups called Christian and the variations of doctrines extent puts the onus upon believers to have a basis for belief and practice centred solely on the Word of God.

There is a vast difference between Christianity as a religion and being a Christian, a Child of God by faith. I am not a Christian by birth, nationality, heritage or 'rite of passage'. Having a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, believing He died in my place and bore the penalty for my sins; that He is alive and represents me before His Father in heaven; without anything another man can do or has done makes me acceptable to God, a Christian. Religions impose man's ideas and ideologies on a finished work and make the truth a lie. The Lord Jesus Christ finished the work His Father gave Him to do concerning Salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ continues to work this day in building the Church of which He is the architect.

Lazarus takes second place to the Lord Jesus Christ in this record. We know nothing more about him. Lazarus was recognised as one who the Lord Jesus Christ had raised from among the dead yet there is no record of him boasting about the time before new life was imparted, how corrupt he was, how unresponsive he was to outside stimuli. What is known of Lazarus is that he communed with the Lord and dined with the Lord after he was given new life. The testimony of one recently converted, one just starting a new life in the Lord Jesus Christ is seen by those who knew the 'old man' and a comparison is made. Let us all who know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour have a clear testimony, an evident change so all who knew us in the past will see the change. We then will have an opportunity to speak well of our Redeemer.

Believers like to meet with those of a like mind, they enjoy talking about their Saviour, they love to spend time together talking about their Lord and discussing the Word of God, rejoicing in a common salvation. Many sects, governments, non-Christian religions feel threatened by Christians sharing their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The truth loved and shared, lived and spoken of has a greater drawing power than the devices and ways of man; yet unsaved man has a deep-seated aversion to the truth and will seek out and follow lies rather than submit to the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word.

Opposition draws Christians closer together and makes them more reliant on the Lord Jesus, more concerned for the testimony of the Grace of God at work in the present trying circumstances. Persecution on a personal level tests the sincerity of my faith; persecution will reveal to me what I truly believe about my Saviour and His promises. During the trials of life the Lord Jesus Christ, by his Spirit gives guidance, comfort, assurance and peace even during the frantic moments when we know not what to do.

**12. On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,**

**13. Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.**

**14. And Jesus, when he had 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 people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.**

**18. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.**

**19. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.**

**12. On the next day much people that were come to the feast,** from Jericho to Jerusalem was about nineteen miles and many heard of the Lord Jesus and wondered if He would come to the feast. Most of the way was a desert, or filled with caves, and rocks, and woods, an area noted for harbouring robbers. The Mount of Olives, or Olivet, is on the east of Jerusalem. Between Olivet and Jerusalem there is a small stream called the brook Kidron, it is dry in the summer months, but swells considerably during the heavy rains. It was about a Sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem. On the west side of the mountain was the garden of Gethsemane; on the east were the villages of Bethphage and Bethany. Mark and Luke say that he came near to both those places. Jesus came nearest to Bethphage, and sent His disciples to the village nearby, to Bethany where the friends of the Lord were. The Mount of Olives is about one and a half kilometres long and about two hundred and fifty metres high; much of the city can be seen from Olivet. There are two roads from Jerusalem to Bethany; one around the southern end of the Mount of Olives, and the other across the summit. Over the top is shorter but more difficult; it was probably the upper road that the Lord Jesus took for He looked over the city and wept and prayed. It was not uncommon for the Lord to resort to a mountain top to pray.

**They heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.** They had enquired for Him; will he come up to the feast? And now they hear Jesus is coming.

There are few among Christian Churches that proclaim Jesus is coming. None that seek Christ will seek in vain but the responsibility is upon believers to tell of the imminent return of the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ left the earthly scene with the promise to return. Hearing of the soon coming of the Lord Jesus Christ should stir Christians to devotion and service, their testimony being an encouragement to the unsaved to consider the state they are in and the prospect they face in the future. Tidings of the approach of Christ should wake us up to consider what work may be done this day in preparation for the future and in obedience to the commands of the Lord related both to our own state and to the unsaved. This preaching the Gospel and living the Christian life is redeeming the time, the days are evil and the only escape from the wrath to come is in Christ so the onus is upon believers to point the way.

These Jews were unconsciously welcoming the Pascal Lamb, who now, according to the usual ceremony, four days before the feast, was set apart to be sacrificed for us. The Passover Lamb was set aside for four days and admired by the givers of that lamb. It was without blemish or defect of any kind. They had palms in their hands; the palm has been an emblem of victory in many nations; the people acknowledge a victory, a triumph, not aware of the implications. Christ was now by His death to conquer principalities and powers, have the victory over death therefore it was fitting that He should have the victor's palm borne before him.

Building a temporary dwelling of palm-branches was part of the ceremony of the feast of tabernacles and crying Hosanna was the welcome given to our Lord Jesus Christ. All the feasts pointed in some measure to the Lord Jesus Christ and His ministry.



**Hosanna, blessed is the king of Israel, that comes in the name of the Lord;** hosanna means salvation. It is quoted from Psalm 118<sup>25-26</sup>. It is good when we speak of the Lord in the words of scripture. The people own Jesus to be a rightful king, coming in the name of the Lord, Psalm 2<sup>6</sup>, sent by God as a king. According to the spiritual light they had they proclaimed Him King of Israel in the streets of Jerusalem. In crying hosanna they prayed that His kingdom might come soon; and rid them of Roman bondage.

Hosanna is, Let the king live for ever; though his kingdom may be disrupted, let it never be destroyed, Psalm 72<sup>17-19</sup>. Or Psalm 118<sup>25-26</sup> **Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.**

In general the Christian world welcomes what the Lord gives, prosperity and blessings yet the person of the Lord is rejected. How like the Israelites we are today, rejoicing at the coming of the Lord Jesus into Jerusalem and rejecting the same Lord Jesus as the Christ and the implications of the Cross, the death of Jesus as the Saviour of the world. Today in the world of Christianity the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ has more importance than the death and resurrection of the Saviour. Christmas has become a worldwide celebration; in the festivities of the occasion the 'work' the Lord Jesus came to do is forgotten or overshadowed by festivities. It is only a few days later these same Jews cry out for the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**14. And Jesus, when he had 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.**

It was foretold that Zion's king should come sitting on an ass's colt; even this detailed circumstance was foretold, the Christ of God could do no less than exact the prophecy completely. Christ is Zion's king; the holy hill of Zion was destined as the royal city of David to be the city of the Messiah. Zion's King will look for the City of Zion, and come to her; though He is at this time not there in person, in due time He will return. Though He comes slowly; an ass is slow, yet He surely comes.

The daughter of Zion is called to behold her King, to take notice of Him and see His approach is as the sacred writings predict. **Fear not;** in the prophecy Zion is told to rejoice greatly, and to shout, but here it is rendered, Fear not. Fearfulness is the arch enemy to spiritual joy; fears overcome leads to rejoicing. The Lord Jesus Christ comes to His people and they will have the victory over all fears as they trust in Him. Rejoice greatly; or at the least, fear not for the Lord Jesus Christ has the victory and we share in that victory with Him.

We Christians today have no reason to fear what man can do or what the future holds; we know Him who has conquered death and who now holds our future.

The prophecy of Zechariah is not quoted in its entirety by any of the Evangelists; none record the opening words, **Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem.** Israel could not be called to rejoice while she was rejecting her King. That part of the prophecy is even yet to be seen. Not until 'she' has first mourned as one mourns for his only son, Zechariah 12<sup>10</sup>, not until Israel repents, Acts 3<sup>19</sup>, not until their sins are put away, will the spirit of joy and gladness be given unto the descendents of Israel.

The words **just and having salvation** are omitted from each of the Gospels. This is an important proof of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. It was not in justice, but in grace, that the Lord Jesus came to Israel the first time. He **came to seek and to save that which was lost.** He appeared **to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.** But when He comes the second time, God's word spoken and recorded by Jeremiah shall receive its fulfilment **Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.** Salvation is omitted because Israel as a nation would not have salvation.

Zechariah foretold that Israel's king should come **lowly, and riding upon an ass.** Matthew mentions the lowliness of Christ, though in the KJV it is rendered **meeke**, Matthew 21<sup>5</sup>. But this word is left out by John because it is the design of the writer to emphasize the glory of Christ.

The fact that the Lord Jesus was seated upon **an ass** brings out His glory as a man. As the Son of David according to the flesh, **He was made under the law** Galatians 4<sup>4</sup>, and He perfectly kept the Law in every detail.

Israel as God's peculiar people used the ox for ploughing and the ass for riding upon, or carrying burdens. The King of God's chosen people was distinguished from the monarchs of the Gentiles; He rode an ass while they had chariots and horses.

It is remarkable that the first recorded sin of Solomon was concerning this very thing: **And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen,** 1Kings 4<sup>26</sup>. It was as one obedient to the Law, that Christ purposely selected an **ass**, an ass that had never been tamed or ridden by man.

**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.** When Jesus was

received back into glory He sent forth the Holy Spirit, then they remembered that these things were written of the Lord and that these things should be done to Him.

The apostles were not immediately given all knowledge in relation to the New Covenant; they did not understand these things at first. The Word of God is often fulfilled by those who have no idea as to what they do or say. There are truths in God's Word which we only discover by diligent searching and prayer. We are sometimes surprised at the revelation of something that in the past was hidden but became obvious when it was revealed by the Holy Spirit. The disciples remembered what the Lord had said and what the Lord had done and the spiritual application as pertinent to themselves and the disciples that would follow.

When Jesus was glorified then they remembered and understood the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, its power, glory, and victory. The Disciples of Christ, believers, are enabled to understand the scriptures by the same Holy Spirit that inspired the scriptures to be written. The Spirit of revelation is to all the saints a spirit of wisdom, Ephesians 1<sup>17-21</sup> **That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:**

The disciples compared the prophecy with the events, and came to a correct conclusion as to the meaning and application of the truth revealed. **Then remembered they that these things were written of Him** by the prophets. We do correctly when we compare what is said and written about the Lord Jesus Christ, comparing it with the Word of God and giving it credence as it fully agrees with God's Word.

**17. The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.**

**18. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.**

**19. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.**

It was in the raising of Lazarus that the glory of the Son of God had been manifested John 11<sup>4</sup>. They who witnessed that miracle reported it in Jerusalem, and now it was known that He who had power to restore the dead to life was nearing Jerusalem, many came forth to meet Him. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, **Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.** Unbelievers exaggerate to make their false claims more credible. Here is an evidence of the truthful consistency of the independent accounts which the different Evangelists have given us of this incident. The leaders of the nation and the Pharisees were envious of His popularity; they feared for their own hold over the people; saying the whole world was intent on following the Lord. Clearly it was crowds at Jerusalem only, and the 'crowds' limited to those who had heard of the raising of Lazarus and other miracles the Lord Jesus had performed. The questions I ask today are why with so much evidence is the truth still rejected? Why is the testimony of so many first hand witnesses rejected? Why is it so hard to believe? The Apostle Paul gives us an answer to these questions; **Satan has blinded the eyes of those that believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine into their hearts and they believe.**

**20. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:**

**21. The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.**

**22. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.**

**23. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.**

**24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.**

**25. He that loveth his life shall lose 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 my Father honour.**

**Certain Greeks;** there are three major suppositions concerning these Greeks; that they were proselytes who came up to worship the true God at this feast; that they were in fact Jews, who lived in Grecian provinces, and spoke the Greek language, or that they were Gentiles, who did not know the true God but heard of the miracles

and of the magnificence of the temple, came to offer sacrifices to Jehovah. This was not uncommon, many of the Gentiles, Romans and others, sent sacrifices to the temple at Jerusalem. Jerusalem was overcrowded during this feast time; Jews from many nations gathered at Jerusalem and stayed on for the festive season, the Passover and on to the Feast of Weeks. Luke tells us, in the first chapter of the Book of Acts of at least 16 different nations represented when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples at the commencement of the church. There are two points which tend to the possibility they were Syro-Phoenicians. In Mark 7<sup>26</sup>, we are told that the woman, who came to Christ on behalf of her obsessed daughter, was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by nation, and the fact that these men sought out Philip, of whom it is said that he was of Bethsaida of Galilee a city on the borders of Syro-Phoenicia. That Philip sought the counsel of Andrew his brother, who also came from Bethsaida in Galilee, John 1<sup>44</sup>, and who would be most likely to know about these neighbouring people is also confirmation.

That these Greeks were not idolatrous heathen is evidenced by the fact that they **came up to worship at the feast**, as though it was their regular yearly practise, or they had been influenced to the point of believing that Jesus was more than appeared on the surface.

**Came to worship;** it is needful to look at the variety of activities called worship, in the Bible, and in this modern generation of religious festivals, holy days, church functions, and the postures adopted and the dress codes advocated at times when Believers, or Christians of the multitude of denominations meet together in church buildings, halls, homes, in the fields, and barns, or in secret to avoid persecution by antagonistic authorities. Persecution may also come without physical violence and sometimes it is harder to withstand such trials.

Abraham took his son to Mount Moriah to worship; he went with a knife to slay his son and sufficient wood to offer Isaac as a burnt sacrifice. King David washed and dressed and went into the House of the Lord alone to worship after his son by Bathsheba died. The blind beggar healed by the Lord Jesus, John 9, bowed at His feet and worshipped. In Jeremiah 7<sup>2</sup> we read, hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. And in Matthew 2<sup>2</sup> Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. From these references and many others it is evident there is no specific laid down for believers to adopt when worshipping. Neither can worship be limited to singing, praying, meditation or preaching or any other Christian activity.

Worship is an attitude of the heart and an agreement of the mind and a determination of the will to give to the Lord the glory that is due to Him. Worship may be silent or vocal, alone or with others, but it is always giving to God what is rightfully His; in praise, thanksgiving, obedience, and in recognition that in all things and in all circumstances finally the glory, praise and thanksgiving belong to God alone. Worship is an attitude of the heart and mind determined to acknowledge God is the source and that everything works together for good to them that love God and therefore we correctly recognise without the Lord we can do nothing and are nothing. Worship is putting God first in all aspects of our lives; is to know and believe and live so as to portray Jesus Christ is Lord. Worship may be in the ministry of the Word of God, worship may be in the course of our employment, doing all as unto the Lord. Worship may be congregational or alone, in the family circle or with friends in an informal meeting or in a church gathering. Worship is being in communion with God on His terms.

**Sir, we would see Jesus.** Those that would see Jesus by faith, He is in heaven, must see Him in those He has redeemed. The responsibility is on believers to so live that the Lord Jesus Christ is seen in them. We who claim to be redeemed by His Blood are the only ones who can show Jesus to needy people. We do this by being the persons God wants us to be, in speech, manners, relationships, pursuits and all holy conversation. If for some reason we feel inadequate to speak of the Lord or we are new to the faith and the query is difficult then we can do as Philip and seek help from someone we trust and we know has the information and inclination to assist. Our primary goal is to make the Lord Jesus Christ known and for us to remain in the background. When a man or woman, boy or girl asks about the Lord we can with confidence speak well of the Lord Jesus and let the Holy Spirit do the work of convicting the person asking the questions.

**23. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.** The word hour is used to denote a brief period, a fixed, definite, determined time. The appointed, fixed time is at hand that is it is so close it is come. This period in the life of the Lord is designated as the 'hour', the time when as the man Christ Jesus, He is to become the sacrifice for sin.

**The Son of man** is the title which Jesus gives to Himself, signifying His union with man as a man, and the interest He had in the welfare of man and the work He was to do for the salvation of man. The title **The Son of God** is used because as a man He was humble, poor, and despised; but the time is come when, as a man, He would receive the honours due to the Christ, God manifest in the flesh, even through His death and resurrection.

**Be glorified;** be honoured by the testimony which God would give to Jesus at His death, His resurrection, and His ascension to glory. The Church is to give the glory to the Lord Jesus Christ even as God does; all power and glory reside in the Son and it is appropriate we believers give the praise and glory to the Lord who by His grace and in love has redeemed us.

**24. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone.** As a grain of wheat unsown, kept in the barn, or silo can never multiply nor increase so is the Word of God when it is left in the unread bible. But sow the seed in the field, put it in the earth, and it multiplies, it increases, and brings forth a plentiful harvest. Even so is the Word of God when it is buried in the heart of a believer; it brings forth fruit unto eternal life. If Jesus had not died, He was still the eternal Son of God, but there would be no Church, no body of believers in the world. His death and sufferings made the Lord Jesus Christ fruitful to the extent these two thousand years later there is still fruit ripening on the vine. The seed, the grain of wheat, planted in the heart of a Child of God will still be the means of a plentiful increase, a harvest of souls for the Lord and glory for His name.

The Lord Jesus Christ did not entice followers by promising temporal blessings; He did not deceive them with a vain hope and expectation of happiness here and now, but tells them plainly, that all His disciples must prepare for sufferings. Moreover they were not to think their life too dear to lay down for Him when called to do so, willingness to do this is confirmation we have everlasting life. **25. He that loveth his life shall lose it, but he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal.** Since the Lord Jesus Christ is to those who believe the resurrection and the life, we learn from these verses what this involved for Him. He will be glorified by being the firstborn among many brethren. How? Through death, for **Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.** Life could only come to us through His death; resurrection life is ours through the death and resurrection accomplished by God in Christ. **Except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God;** and except Christ had died none could be born again. The new birth is the gift of a new life, the life of a resurrected Saviour, a life which has passed through death, therefore beyond the reach of condemnation and judgment. **The gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord,** Romans 6<sup>23</sup>.

He that so loves his present life, without the Saviour, indulging in the fleshly pleasures and appetites, making only provisions for the flesh, is shortening his physical life. Such a person will surely lose the life he is so fond of, suffering in the flesh from ills associated with over indulgence; he will also forfeit eternal life. Whosoever is in love with the life of the body and the indulgences of the flesh, visual, culinary, social shall lose his life and all the pleasures of the flesh. Forsaking the Lord and His salvation for the pleasures of the flesh is a price not worth paying.

**Abideth alone,** or produces no fruit, it produces nothing to harvest. So Jesus indicates that it is only by His death that He will be glorified in the salvation of men. Hebrews 2<sup>9</sup>, **We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour."** Philippians 2<sup>8,9</sup> **He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him,** and Hebrews 12<sup>2</sup> **Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.** The Cross, more precisely the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross has become the birth place of many. We see in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ the death we should have died and in His resurrection we have life and are able to live as He desires, giving to God the glory for planning so great salvation and designing the Church with such a perfect foundation and structure and with mortar, *called love*, to bind it all together.

Death to self is taught by the Word of God; where the flesh has not the dominant role in one's life. Reckoning one dead to the demands of the flesh; not giving in to the lusts and cravings, being disciplined in one's use of time and talents; submitting to the Lord in all things is descriptive of the believer dying that he may bring forth fruit to the glory of God. No Child of God is alone.

**25. He that loveth his life;** Jesus in effect said I am about to give up my life for the salvation of men; but I shall receive it back with honour, by my resurrection from among the dead. I expect my disciples, to be willing to lay down their lives for the truth. If they do, they shall receive their lives back again with everlasting honour.

Loving this life more than loving the Lord is the major deception of nominal and emotional Christianity. Many join the visible church for the benefits or comforts it affords; entering into the religious activities for personal and present reassurance and encouragement. That amounts to loving this present world, loving this life. The pleasures of this world are an abomination to life in Christ, to the Christian the world become less and less attractive and time with the Bible more and more desirable.

**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 my Father honour.** Christ is our master to instruct us and to use us and assign us our work. We who desire to serve Christ must be His disciple or scholar, to be taught by Him. We must be His obedient

servants employed by Him and obey the Lord as our Master. The Lord Jesus then promises we shall be with Christ, in eternal fellowship with Him; and we will be honoured by the Father of the Lord Jesus now and in the future glory of the Kingdom.

If any man assumes the title Christian, and enters into the service of the Lord Jesus Christ let his manner of life and conversation correspond with his profession, through antagonism and sufferings consequent upon this assurance, that all his sufferings shall end in eternal joy for the Lord has promised; **Where I am, there shall my servant be, and him will my Father honour.**

All who will be Christ's servants must be His followers in doctrine, and example. Christ's servants must not expect better in the world, than Jesus Christ their Lord received before them. The servants of Christ shall at death see Him as He is, and be with him where He is for the promise remains; **Where I am, there shall also my servant be.**

God will honour those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ, follow in obedience, in love, in doctrine, in duty. Jesus said, **If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.**

**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. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.**

**29. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.**

**30. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, 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 me.**

**33. This he said, signifying what death he should die.**

**34. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?**

**35. Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.**

**36. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.**

**27. Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say?** This was the start of the Saviour's travail before the *new creation* could be born. Jesus was aware of the awful death He was to die; the death of which He had just spoken. Foreseeing the depths of degradation He was to suffer during that 'hour' it is no wonder His soul was troubled. We look back and see the prelude to Gethsemane; it reveals to us something of the inward sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. His anguish was extreme; horrors, grief, dejection, are all included in the word **troubled**. The prospect of being **made a curse for us**, of suffering the wrath of a sin-hating God when He himself was free from sin was an extreme burden to face.

The Lord Jesus does not suggest He choose a more comfortable path, His query is **what shall I say?** Though His holy nature was appalled at the prospect of being **made sin**, His perfect and holy nature was revealed in that He did not ask for a removal of the problem, that such a cup might pass from Him. He bowed to the Father's will, saying, **But for this cause came I unto this hour.** The bitter cup was accepted; Jesus knew precisely what was in the 'cup', of which He was to drink the full amount.

**28. Father, glorify thy name;** Christ looked at death as the wages of sin, and He deliberately went into it that His Father might be glorified. This was ever before the Lord; the path the Lord Jesus trod was straight and direct; leading from the womb to the tomb. It was the path that led directly to the Cross. The Father responded directly to the prayer of His Son.

**Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified, and will glorify again.** The Son of God was glorified at the grave of Lazarus as the giver of new life to the dead, and now He is glorified as Son of Man by this voice from heaven. The Father uses the future tense, **I will glorify again.** This the Father would do in bringing again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep. He was **raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father**, Romans 6<sup>4</sup>.

**29. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.** The people that heard did not perceived what was said. The failure of these Jews to recognize the voice of their God teaches us how persistent sin causes blindness and deafness. We also learn that the Cross of the Lord

Jesus Christ brings healing to blind eyes and clarity of sound to deaf ears. The same applies in this modern day; we may often speak plainly about the Lord Jesus Christ and the people we address have no idea what we are saying or why we talk of someone they believe is dead. They hear the words but do not comprehend the meaning or the personal relevance.

**30. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.** Three times the Father spoke to the Son when there were Jews to hear what was said; at the beginning, in the middle, and near the end of the earthly life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Each occasion pointed forward to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ in a particular manner. At the Jordan Christ was baptised, He symbolically went down, into the place of death; on the Holy Mount Moses and Elijah talked with Him of His decease Luke 9<sup>31</sup>; and here, the Lord has just announced that His hour, the time of His death, was at hand. Notice the first time the Father's voice was heard was at Christ's consecration to His ministry as a prophet; the second time in relation to His death, His priestly work, offering Himself as a Sacrifice for sin. This third occasion is after Jesus is hailed as king. He was shortly to have the title **the king of the Jews** fixed above Him upon the Cross itself.

**This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.** The reason why God the Father spoke with an audible voice to Christ Jesus was to confirm the person of the Lord in the eyes of the people. His soul being troubled, Jesus was comforted by His Father publically; and the people had confirmation of Jesus being the promised Messiah. This voice came not because of me, He said; not only or chiefly because of me, but to confirm your faith in the belief that I am the Son of God, by whom the Father has glorified, and will further glorify His name. The Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ could say I have glorified my name in sending forth my Son; I have glorified my name in my Son being the express image of Me. Shortly the Father will be free to say I have glorified my name in the demonstration of my power in raising my Son from among the dead. Added to this I bring glory to my name when men and women, boys and girls believe Jesus is God manifest in the flesh and that there is a full and free redemption by faith in Him.

Why the people did not recognise the voice of their God is because of sin. Sin makes us deaf to the voice of the Lord, sin makes other voices more insistent, more demanding of attention and in many instances distorts the meaning and intent of the speaker. Conversely God cannot hear us no matter how demanding we are or how much in need of Divine assistance if we harbour sin in our lives or our thoughts. The Psalmist wrote 66<sup>18</sup>, **If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.** The Lord Jesus Christ could understand His Father's communication for there was no sin in Him; the Father could hear the prayers of His Son as He was perfect, pure, and holy in all His ways.

God still speaks to mankind as a race, a nation, as a tribe, a family and to each individual. The voice of God is muted by self-interests and the reason we find it hard to hear God speak remains the same. Sin is the same problem; brought into the world of man by Adam. The singular victor over sin is the Lord Jesus Christ and He will give the victory to all who trust and rely upon Him. To hear clearly the voice of God it is mandatory we first go to the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. There we find our personal sacrifice for sin and believing so we hear God say your sins are forgiven you for I have laid your iniquity on My Son.

**31. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.** This pending judgement has reference to His approaching death; judgment is related to all that would be accomplished by His death. It cannot mean the final judgement of the world for Jesus says He did not come to judge the world, 12<sup>47</sup> and 8<sup>15</sup>, and He has clearly declared that there will be a future day when all mankind will be judged. Consider the Lord as saying, Now is approaching the climax, the crisis, when it will be determined who the true ruler of this world is. There has been a prolonged conflict between light and darkness, between God and the Satan. Satan has effectually ruled as the prince of this world, seemingly the victor as he has the majority of followers; my death and resurrection will destroy his kingdom, will break down his power, and will be the means of setting up the kingdom of God over man.

The death of Christ would be used to establish the authority of the law and the kingdom of God, Romans 8<sup>3,4</sup>. This it did by showing the Law of God was the one standard acceptable to God, His hatred of sin, and His desire for man to leave the service of Satan.

The death of Jesus Christ was the decisive cause to break down the kingdom of Satan, and set up the kingdom of God over man. By the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was fulfilled the prediction of Genesis 3<sup>15</sup>, **I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.**

Note specifically judgement does not pre suppose guilt, though in the case of mankind there is no escape from the truth that all have sinned. To judge is to look impartially at both sides of the issue and make a conclusion as to the truth. In relation to man there is none righteous, all are judged and found guilty; the weight of evidence

against each of us is such that no one of us can conclude we are without sin. Indeed the whole world is found guilty before God. But there is one that has never sinned; when He bore the penalty for our sin on the Cross; God punished His Son for our sin; Christ died for our sin, He died taking the punishment for us so we are free. The wrath of God was poured out on Him and we can find freedom from the penalty of sin by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. We can know He has done all the Law and a holy God required, freeing us from the wrath of God. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

There are numerous Judgments in the Bible mentioned related to God and the sins of man; in this instance we see the Lord Jesus Christ personally taking the penalty for the sins of the world.

The sins of believers have been judged in the person of Jesus Christ **lifted up** on the Cross. The result was death for Christ, and is justification for believers, who can never again be put in danger of judgement for sin. Romans 5:9; 8:1; 2Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; 1Peter 2:24; 3:18. The condemnation of believers was placed on the Lord Jesus Christ and the innocence of the Lord Jesus Christ is reckoned to all who believe Jesus is the one and only acceptable sacrifice to God, the righteous judge. As it was the plan of God and He chose the method and the sacrifice, so it is the mind of God revealed in the salvation of all take God at His word and believe.

**32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.** Unfortunately the drawing power of the world has moved the vast majority away from the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ to many other attractions, various things that appeal more to the flesh than the spirit. Preaching the Cross and who died on it and why is the only true gospel ministry. All other Christian works have their basis in the work the Lord Jesus Christ did at Calvary. The work of salvation finished on the Cross when the Lord Jesus Christ cried **“it is finished”** and that was the start of the building now called the Church. All who are drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ come first to the Cross where they find He bore the penalty for their sins.

**I, if I be lifted up from the earth** is a direct reference to His crucifixion; but **will draw all unto me** looks to the resurrection side of the Cross, for a dead Saviour is unable to draw anybody. Christ is the magnet, Christ crucified. The crucifixion has given to the Lord Jesus His attracting power; and it is the resurrection of the Lord which convinces us of His life-giving power. It is not Christ without the Cross; nor is it the Cross without Christ; both together teach us the truth of eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus said **I will draw all unto me**. The word ‘men’ is not in the original. The all plainly refers to all who are drawn to God through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ; the life, death and resurrection. The promise, **I will draw all unto me** must mean that our Lord after His crucifixion would draw men of all nations to Himself, to believe in Him and to follow Him. Once crucified, He would become the centre of attraction, and draw to Himself multitudes of all peoples and countries, to serve and follow Him. The Lord Jesus Christ was teaching salvation would not be limited to Israel; His saving power would reach out to the lost of all peoples, tribe, tongues and nations.

**33. This he said, signifying what death he should die.** The effect, and fruit, of Christ's death is declared as His drawing all men unto Him. He was lifted up from the earth, He was raised upon the Cross, He was made a curse for us by being hung upon a tree. Since the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious resurrection, He draws all men unto Him in the preaching of the gospel. By the preaching of the gospel, Jesus calls and invites all sinners to come to Him for cleansing from the guilt of sin and freedom from the punishment due to each one of us because of sin. The Lord Jesus Christ offers the benefits of His death and resurrection life to all. The great tragedy is that so few, compared to the billions that will not believe, believe to the saving of their souls.

By His death He gathers to Himself a people out of the Gentile as well as the Jewish world; this new people, new nation is called the Church.

All are unwilling in themselves to come to Christ, the pull of the flesh is strong, and they must be drawn, and will be drawn to Him when His perfections are advertised and the victory He has won over sin and death and hell are made known through the preaching of the Gospel.

The merits of Christ's death, and the proclamation of the gospel, are the way sinners are drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ. Not a few, a very great number, of Jews and Gentiles, persons of all nations, are drawn to Christ to believe He is the Saviour. By the preaching of the gospel, they are called and invited to Him and enjoy and share in the benefits of His death and resurrection and the promises related to a living Saviour. Believers also have the lively hope of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to take to Himself all who have believed, out of this sinful world and out of the grave if death has overtaken them.

Christ being lifted up upon His cross draws all men unto Him; He has completed all that is needful for all men to believe on Him.

All who will not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ choose for themselves damnation and are without excuse when called before a holy and righteous God.

**What death he should die** is described in a number of places in the Word of God. The death of Jesus was to be propitiatory, sacrificial, substitutionary, it was also agonising, slow, public and demeaning, humiliating; knowing this the Lord Jesus went voluntarily to the Cross there to bear; and I say it with countless others, **my sins in His own body on the tree.**

**34. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?** The people argued the Old Testament which speaks of the eternal nature of the Messiah, that He should be a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek, Psalm 110:<sup>4</sup>, and a king for ever Psalm 89:<sup>29</sup>, that the Promised One should have length of days and His years be as many generations Psalm 21:<sup>4</sup>; 61:<sup>6</sup>, the people assumed after reading these and other scripture verses that the Christ would live forever. In that assumption they were correct but it left out the most important fact; the Christ must die and He would be raised from among the dead to live for ever. The people knew much of the Word of God, the teachers had taught well; but without the Holy Spirit guiding them they had no spiritual understanding of the Scriptures related to the Lord Jesus Christ. Unbelievers are without the one basic essential for understanding of the Word of God, or indeed hearing God, the Holy Spirit.

These Jews did not take into account the texts which speak of the Christ's death and sufferings. They knew from the Law that the Messiah abideth for ever; but they never 'heard' the Law saying that the Messiah should be cut off, Daniel 9:<sup>26</sup>, or that He should pour out His soul unto death Isaiah 53:<sup>12</sup>.

We create our own difficulties when we do not consider the complete Word; mistakes arise and we try to defend our hypothesis by partial application of the Word. An incomplete scriptural argument leads to false doctrines and false practices.

**35. Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.**

**36. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.** The Lord Jesus Christ informs the objectors of a truth they found hard to understand; He tells them He obliquely He is the light of the world, and they would do well to walk while they have the light with them. Practical experience tells us a light is needed to walk without stumbling and to avoid obstacles in the way. We can only walk in the way of the Lord when the light of the Gospel of Grace, the Gospel message that tells us Christ has removed all the obstacles in the way, all the obstacles that stop us coming back to God are gone, the pathway has been cleared.

Christ is the light, a doctrinal light, a personal light, the gospel light. Christ dispels the darkness of ignorance; the darkness of sin, the darkness of a mind blinded with selfish ambition. The Light of the Gospel of the Glory of God brings freedom, joy, peace and comfort, dispelling the darkness of sin and the prospect of eternal damnation.

The Light was only visible for a limited time, unfortunately the people preferred darkness to Light; the Apostle Paul tells us because their deeds were evil. The time to enjoy, experience the Light and to walk in the Light is now; it is a limited time, it is a short time.

**Walk whilst ye have the light.** Walk; let your life be governed by the precepts taught in the Word of God, walk according to the guidelines and commands of the gospel. We need the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we read and meditate on the Word of God, He will guide us into the truth.

**Walk whilst ye have the light** lest darkness overtake you is the instruction of the Lord Jesus; the darkness of ignorance leads to eternal damnation.

*The Apostle Paul takes up this thought of walking as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ telling us the first step of a walk with the Lord is obedience to Him in baptism, Romans 6:<sup>4</sup> Therefore we are buried with the Lord Jesus by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. He goes on to say, there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, Romans 8:<sup>1</sup>, so we see the walk of a Christian is a continuing activity. The Apostle Paul then says; Let us walk honestly, as in the day, Romans 13:<sup>13</sup>; while John in His letter tells us to walk in the Light as He is in the Light. The Apostle Paul tells us in 2Corinthians 5:<sup>7</sup> we walk by faith, not by sight. In the epistle to the Galatians 5:<sup>16</sup>, Paul informs us of the benefits when we walk in the Spirit, when we walk by faith, for then we do not fulfil the lust of the flesh. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit, Galatians 5:<sup>25</sup>.*



*When we realise we are His (God's) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them, Ephesians 2:10, then we can walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, Ephesians 4:1, and not walk as the gentiles, Ephesians 4:17 who walk in the vanity of their mind. We, the redeemed are encouraged to walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, Ephesians 5:2. We are now children of light, Ephesians 5:8 and should walk as such. Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that---ye ought to walk and to please God, 1Thessalonians 4:1.*

Walking is a form of motion we learn as toddlers, developing a gait that is often special, a motion that will identify us from a distance. The Lord Jesus Christ tells us to walk in the Light, the light will reveal to each of us the Way, show to us where to place our feet, make clear the stumbling blocks obstructing the path; we will develop a gait that will identify us as children of God; children of the Light.

**36. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.** Christ has spoken. John introduced Jesus in the first chapter of this Gospel as the Light of men, 1:4 Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the Light of the world, that His followers should not walk in darkness, but have the Light of life 8:12. He also said while He was in the world, He was the Light of the world 9:5 His death was fast approaching, Jesus had preached among them, He had worked miracles for them to see and marvel at, all He said and did attested to His divine nature. The people refused the evidence of the miracles and the spoken word; no wonder **He departed, and did hide himself from them.** From this time those who sought Him intended evil; none sought Him as the holy one of God, the Messiah.

**36. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.** This statement brings the public ministry of Christ to a close in this Gospel. Chapter thirteen is a new section; from the beginning of 13 to the end of 17 the Lord is alone with His apostles. In chapter 18 He is arrested and led to judgment.

The history of our Lord's public ministry is closed; it ended in verse 35. The communications now are with the Lord's disciples prior to His dealing with the sin of man and the awful agony of body and soul about to commence.

**37. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:**

**38 That the saying of Esaias 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. Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,**

**40. He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.**

**41. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.**

**42. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:**

**43. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.**

The miracles were wrought for the express purpose of demonstrating that God was in Christ, that the observers might believe in Christ, and escape the coming wrath. The miracles were excellent evidence that Jesus was the Messiah, yet the majority of the Jews of that day, and the majority of Gentiles this day did not or will not believe. How clearly the Apostle Paul expressed this in saying to the Corinthians **the god of this world has blinded their minds less the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine in unto them and they should be saved.** They were blinded by religious prejudice, and refused to consider any evidence that contradicted the doctrines and practices they were taught.

Here is proof of how far man has moved away from the ways of God. The miracles of Christ were various and answered all the questions man could pose; Jesus healed the sick, cast out demons, walked on water, turned water into wine, and raised the dead. He performed miracles openly before many witnesses. Yet **they** even all they that saw and heard **believed not on him.** All who heard the teaching and witnessed the miracles ought to have received Him as the Messiah and Saviour. It is the same today; the great majority of the nation of Israel and of the Gentile world refuses to acknowledge His claims. And though the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ proves His claim as the Son of God yet few believe.

**Esaias the prophet,** Isaiah, addressed this problem hundreds of years before; saying **who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?** The arm is a symbol of power; it is used in the bible for the power of God, Isaiah 51:9; 52:10. God delivered the children of Israel from Egypt with a high

arm, with great power. It means God's power in defending His people, in defeating His enemies, and today in the power of the Gospel to save. Used by John it clearly refers to the power displayed by the miracles Christ Jesus performed. The power and majesty invested in the Lord Jesus Christ was revealed, was made known, understandable and believable through the miracles. Though the power of God was displayed, yet the people did not see and understand it was God working in their midst.

**40. He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.** The rejection of the Lord and His claims confirms the word of the prophet; it does not mean that the Pharisees rejected Christ in order that the prophecy of Isaiah should be fulfilled. Isaiah's message was rejected by the nation, and the prophet put to death. The same nation rejected the gospel message; the Jews in the time of Christ rejected the Prophet and His message. The language of Isaiah fits both events, and no doubt it was intended so by the Holy Spirit.

God's act of hardening was consequential upon their sinning and their rejection of the messenger and the message. The message and the messenger were rejected and God replied to the nation, you have chosen this path so I will ensure you walk in it. Man chose his pathway determining to leave out God and therefore God confirmed them in the way they chose, hardening their resolve.

**41. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.** The scripture passage the Apostle refers to is, **Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.** Isaiah 6.<sup>3</sup>.

From this passage we have a conclusive argument for the divinity of Christ. He whom Isaiah saw lauded by seraphim, and praised as most holy by them, was, is, the true and eternal God. Such acclaim belongs exclusively to Jehovah, God blessed for evermore. But John says it was the glory of Christ that Isaiah saw in his vision, it was Christ whom he called, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts: therefore Christ is God, blessed for evermore. John the Evangelist was not speaking of the Father, but of the Son, and quotes these words out of the prophecy of Isaiah, telling the people what Isaiah saw and spoke of.

The faithlessness of these Jews was foretold by the prophet Isaiah, Lord, who hath believed our report, our preaching? The gospel is still rejected; few believe the reports of the redeemed of the Lord. The words of the Lord were questioned as to their veracity and the miracles of the Lord were questioned as to the authority by which they were performed.

The Apostle John quotes these final words of the Lord's public ministry revealing to us in a small measure how difficult it is to receive the truth when it is tampered with by religious leaders. Too many leaders in modern Christianity want the praise for themselves; *see what I have done, see how the Lord is using me; look at the extent of my ministry; read my books; join my flock; give to this ministry the 'Lord' is doing through me in this place; see what we can do for the Lord, the Lord is in the work we are doing. The Lord must be in this ministry, look at the numbers we have and the buildings we erect!* Egoism and egotism are prominent in the religious world; detracting from that which belongs to the Lord God alone.

The Lord will not give His praise to man; it is of no moment what man has done or will do. In fact all that man does falls short of the standard God sets. Consider the Word which sets forth the right method and ministry; **It is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure,** Philippians 2:<sup>13</sup>. The onus is on each believer to wait patiently on the Lord for guidance and instruction and then to speak and act only as He directs; His directions are made clear by the Word of God and prayer. What I think is best must be checked by the Word of God and sanctioned by the peace of God before speech or action.

**42. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:**

**43. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.** Though many of the Jews were hardened, would not hear Christ's ministry or consider His miracles, there were some, among the chief rulers that did believe on Him. They were convinced that he was the true and expected Messiah. We must not be discouraged at the obvious lack of response to the Gospel. Even where the world and the flesh are prevalent the ministry of the Word will not be completely in vain. Though many of the chief rulers had a secret belief that Christ was the promised One, the fear of being put out of the synagogue, the fear of man, shut the mouths of the Pharisees. They did not confess Christ openly lest they should be put out of the synagogue.

The fear of suffering ostracism and of their reputation kept these 'believers' from owning Jesus as Lord and confessing Him to be the Christ. **They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God;** they valued honour and prestige among men, more than the approval of God. Believing as these did left them short of the power there is in believing and doing what the Lord Jesus requires of all who profess to be saved.

If we seek the praise of men we threaten the peace and security of our own souls. **The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.** Proverbs 29:<sup>25</sup>.

**44. Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.**

**45. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.**

**46. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.**

**47. And if any man hear my words, and believe 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 words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.**

**49. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.**

**50. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.**

**44. Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.**

**45. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.** Here the Lord Jesus emphasises the importance of His person and doctrine; touching His person He explains His divine nature, His oneness and equality with the Father; His uniqueness. The argument is he that believes on Jesus does not believe on a mere man, but on Him that is truly God, and truly man; therefore He being true God, one in essence, equal in power and glory with the Father, to believe in Him was believing God the Father sent Him, that the Lord Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, that they are one in essence.

To 'see' the Lord Jesus Christ, who He is, is to 'see' the one who sent Him. The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. By faith we see our Saviour, by faith we see God sent His Son to be the Saviour, by faith we see our sin laid on the Lord Jesus Christ, by faith we see God was in Christ redeeming the world, bringing believers in the Lord Jesus Christ back to Him. (God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself). The Father is seen only in the Son; believers can know the Father, by seeing the Son; what they see the Son to be, that the Father is in Him; for, says the Lord, **he that seeth me, seeth Him that sent me.**

John gives us in verses 44 to 50 a summary of the teachings of Christ. He takes us back to the words of the Lord; he that believeth on me believeth not on me, but on him that sent me, 12:<sup>44</sup> with 5:<sup>24</sup>. He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me can be compared with **He that seeth me seeth him that sent me.** If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also, 8:<sup>19</sup>, agrees with 10:<sup>38</sup>. One of the vital truths occupying a prominent place in the Lord's ministry is seen in the revelation, No man had seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son, He has declared (revealed) Him, John 1:<sup>18</sup>.

**46. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.** Jesus is probably referring to what John the Baptist had said, recorded in the first chapter, **and the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not,** 1:<sup>5</sup>. Before the coming of the Saviour, the sun of righteousness, into the world, all was darkness; the light of the glorious gospel of Christ dispels the darkness; but it only profits those whose eyes are open to receive this light of the sun of righteousness. The Light of the Gospel is shaded or completely obscured by sin. **And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.** 3:<sup>19</sup>. Jesus has said **I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life** 8:<sup>12</sup>. He also said **As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world** 9:<sup>5</sup>.

**47. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.**

The Lord Jesus has said that men love darkness rather than the Light because their deeds are evil. The judgment which precedes the condemnation against all unbelievers, all who reject Him, by rejection of His Word and the offers of salvation put to them in the preaching of the gospel, is explicit, eternal damnation. At Christ's first coming, His purpose was not to judge the world, but to save the world; He is the true Light. All those who came into contact with the Lord Jesus Christ, when they compared His life, His words and works with their own, found themselves convicted of sin; the Lord did not need to specifically condemn each sinner, His life and words and manner were sufficient witness to them. The Light shined in the darkness and the darkness was not dispelled. The Word of God, the word preached to sinners and the lives of those who believe and are saved, rejected by unbelievers, will be the testimony against them. The light coming from believers may be obscured or shaded, dimmed and sometimes extinguished when the Child of God is caught up in the ways of the world.

Christ and His doctrine, His words, are inseparable, to receive His teaching is to receive Him; and to reject the Truth as recorded in His Word is to reject Him. Partial acceptance leads to heresy, to cults, to false teaching and erroneous practices which in turn lead to damnation for the followers of concepts and precepts not fully

consistent with God's Word. This is not a condemnation of new believers, babes in Christ, for all who love the Lord Jesus Christ sincerely will go on to know the truth as it is in Jesus.

**48. The word that I have spoken; the same shall judge him at the last day,** Jesus said. The Word of God is now the standard set for believers to live by and to proclaim. Unbelievers will have a believable testimony as to the relevance of the Word of God today by observing the lives and hearing the speech of all who believe. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God and the Child of God who lives according to the Word of God, to convict the unbeliever of sin and righteous and judgement. It is the Holy Spirit in each Child of God that bears testimony to the truth. Did not the Lord Jesus Christ say He, the Holy Spirit, should not speak of Himself, He would testify of me, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

Each person indwelt by the Holy Spirit has the truth and can be a good example, a good testimony to the veracity of the Word of God and the work of God in the life.

There is to be a **last day. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up,** 2 Peter 3:<sup>10</sup>. The last day is appointed as a day of judgement. **God has appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained** Acts 17:<sup>31</sup>. The Word of the Lord will judge sinners in that Day. His Word is the true Word, the Divine Word, a Word suited to all mankind, a Word sent forth for the express purpose of the salvation of man. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. In the last great Day the Word shall judge the all men, the secrets of each heart will be revealed. In the day when **God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel,** Romans 2:<sup>16</sup> says the Apostle Paul, nothing will remain hidden. The secrets of all hearts will be secrets no longer.

**49. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.** We have now an example to follow; an example of humility and of obedience. In chapter three and verse thirty the Lord Jesus said, **He must increase, but I must decrease.** The Lord Jesus Christ sought nothing for Himself, He came to seek and to save the lost, He came to do the will of His Father, and He came and was the acceptable sacrifice for sin. So the Lord Jesus Christ became nothing that the honour and glory should be given to the Father. The words of the Lord Jesus Christ were not ambiguous, what He said was what He meant, the words used did not have two meanings. It may be we do not understand clearly what was said, if so the fault is with us and cannot be attributed to the words spoken by the Lord or recorded by those God appointed to keep a record for us..

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ gave precise and detailed instructions to the Lord; the words to use and the meaning to convey. We who hear the Lord Jesus speaking today are often confused as to the precise meaning; the fault is with us; we are contaminated by selfish motives and the pollutions of the world. We are prone to go with the majority assuming they cannot all be wrong. But the majority turned their backs on the Lord Jesus Christ, they all forsook Him and fled at His hour of trial. When the children of God seek to be accepted in the community then it is likely their faith will be compromised, their testimony weakened or negated.

**The Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.** There is an intimate and mysterious union between the Father and the Son. The sinfulness of the Jews, the awfulness of their sin in refusing the words of the Lord Jesus were an insult to the Father Himself, for the Lord Jesus Christ spoke only what the Father instructed Him to speak. To-day, **he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son,** 1John 5:<sup>10</sup>.

**50. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.** Again the Lord Jesus Christ declares a truth which when applied with faith brings eternal life and when ignored brings condemnation. The gospel message is not that God has given an invitation for men to respond to if they so choose. God has given us a **commandment**, and if we disobey we are in danger of eternal damnation, an imminent, threatening peril for we do not know when we will be called to face the Judge of all the earth. The commandment is that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, 1John 3:<sup>23</sup>.

This **commandment is life everlasting** to all who receive it by the obedience of faith. Adam brought sin and death upon him by disobeying God's commandment; and upon all his progeny. We receive life, escaping the punishment due to us because of sin by obeying God's commandment. The Apostle Paul puts it simply saying, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.** Acts 16:<sup>31</sup>.

1. Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.
2. And supper being ended, the devil having now 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 was come from God, and went to God;
4. He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.
5. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.
6. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter 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 know 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 washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.
11. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.
12. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?
13. Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.
14. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.
15. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.
16. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.
17. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

That which opens this section and introduces the final week before Gethsemane is the Lord washing the feet of His disciples. The first thing to note is that it was water and not blood which was used for their cleansing. The New Testament does not teach we need to apply the Blood again and again or of sinning Christians needing to be washed repeatedly. The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanses us from all sin 1 John 1:<sup>7</sup>. The provision, made for the cleansing of the believer from defilement in the course of life in this world is water, **that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word**, Ephesians 5:26. The Old and New Testaments teach *blood is what God demands, water is what saints require* to remove impurities contracted in the world: the one affects our standing before God, the other our state; the one is for cleansing so we may stand before God, the other is for personal cleansing to live righteously before man.

**1. Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew**, or as some translate, Now Jesus having known, before the feast of the Passover, that His hour was come. The Hour refers not to a sixty minute period of time but to a definite length of time covering a specific activity of much more than sixty minutes. His hour was come. It is sometimes called his enemies' hour (Lu 22:53), the hour of their triumph; sometimes his hour, the hour of his triumph, the hour he had had in his eye all along. The time of his sufferings was fixed to an hour, and the continuance of them but for an hour.

**Jesus knew that his hour was come**; He knew from the beginning that it would come, but now he knows the time has come. We know not when trials will come so we need to be prepared. It was prior to His departure that He washed His disciples' feet; His own head was anointed by Mary against the day of His burial, so the disciples' feet were washed. We may learn there is defilement as we travel in this world, the media and general concourse places us in compromising situations and we need cleansing.

It has generally been taken for granted by commentators that Christ's washing His disciples' feet, and the discourse that followed, were the same night in which He was betrayed, and at the same sitting at which He ate the Passover and instituted the Lord's Supper; sometimes called the Breaking of Bread, the Holy Communion or the Lord's Table. A Friday crucifixion does not fit with the timing of the Hebrew calendar or with the words of the Lord Jesus Christ in relation to His being 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth. The Old Testament type the Lord Jesus uses is of Jonah, **Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.** Jonah 1:<sup>17</sup>. The Lord Jesus Christ then said

**For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.** Matthew 12:<sup>40</sup>. As the evening proceeds the day, as in the creation account, so the reckoning of the three days and three nights must be according to the scriptural pattern. That puts the Lord Jesus Christ in the heart of the earth for the same period of time.

Immediately before, for on the next day Christ was to die as the true Lamb. The Passover Feast itself was eaten at the close of the fourteenth day of Nisan Ex. 12:<sup>6, 8</sup>; but **the feast**, which lasted seven days, began on the fifteenth Numbers. 28:<sup>17</sup>, this therefore was before the feast of the Passover, before the death of the Lord, before **he should depart out of this world unto the Father**. At the close of Christ's public ministry, we are told **He departed and did hide himself from them**; from the nation. Nationally the people with their leaders had rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, now we see the Lord Jesus taking aside the disciples to instruct and encourage them. In chapters 13 to 17 we find Jesus in close fellowship with His disciples, revealing to them He was about to leave them and go to the Father. He had told them **the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many**, Matthew 20:<sup>28</sup>. Now His public ministry is over and He is soon to give His life a ransom; to meet the demand of the Law on the behalf of all who would believe. His crucifixion is typified by the sacrifice the Israelites were instructed to offer yearly in remembrance of their delivery from Egypt.

Jesus loved these disciples (and us) not only unto the Cross, but **unto the end**. His return to the Father would not curtail His love for His own; exalted to the right hand of His Father in heaven He is still occupied with the interests of His people, and in building the Church.

**The end** is a reference to a certain time; it can be to the end of the Lord's earthly ministry, the end of the current world economies, and the end of Israel being the exclusive testimony to God working among men. It may be related to the - **Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.**, 1Corinthians 15:<sup>24</sup>.

All that is recorded to the close of John 14 was done and said before the feast of the Passover, at the supper in Bethany, two days before the Passover. It is of great importance to note Christ Jesus sacrificed is the antitype of the Passover Lamb; we are informed of this truth by the Apostle Paul, **Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us**, 1Corinthians 5:<sup>7</sup>.

**2. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him**; rather while they were at supper. The devil, the leader or prince of evil spirits, having put it into the heart of Judas; the fiery darts of the wicked one are aimed at and hit the target, the heart. In the travels of Satan as he goes about as a roaring lion he notices our weaknesses and aims the temptation directly at our vulnerability. Satan inclined Judas to follow the hidden desires of his heart; he tempted Judas to betray his Master for financial advantage. We do not know precisely how this was done, but we know that it was greed in the heart of Judas finding a kindred spirit with Satan. Satan tempts us to give in to our sinful lusts, our selfish inclinations our unlawful aspirations. He presents his objectives in such ways as are most likely to cause us to succumb to his enticements. In the case of Judas it was the love of money; and Judas was deceived into thinking he had an advantage; not realising he was entering into a pact with the devil, an agreement of eternal damnation, banishment from the presence of God.

Verse 2 informs us of the **heart** of Judas and how Judas was influenced by evil desires placed in his heart by the devil. Verse 18 shows how the hearts desires are worked out in the life of Judas, how he lifted up his **heel** against the Lord Jesus Christ. Judas took the morsel offered by the Lord Jesus into his **hand**, verse 26. That he was about to do the will of Satan did not deter him. The Lord Jesus, knowing what was in the heart and mind of Judas, and the determination of Judas to follow the path of financial gain, instructed him to do quickly what he had already determined to do.

It is important we note the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in this situation. There is a traitor among the chosen twelve whose influence could affect the rest of the disciples. The Lord knows and offers a way of escape to Judas but the call of wealth, ill gotten gains is stronger in Judas. In the world, and now in the Church there is a pervasive doctrine preached, a false doctrine that the Lord will have His people wealthy, that poverty is a lack of faith and trust. The teachers of that falsehood live in luxury for the congregation is taught the more they give the greater will be the blessing they receive. When we limit giving to the Lord to finances we have lost the true spirit of giving, the Lord Jesus Christ wants the whole person, body, soul and spirit in agreement with Him. The error in doctrine taught generally is that the Lord blesses according to our attitude and practice in the giving of our finances; that is not so. True He will not overlook the sins of His people, nor will He bless a sinning believer. Repentance and faith is the basis for blessing; repentance for thinking and doing anything contrary to the Lord and His Word and faith in the promises and word of the Lord. We love Him because He first loved us

and we give ourselves to Him because He gave Himself for us. Judas wanted for himself and took for himself what was not his; he stole money, and lied.

The Word of God teaches us much more than money is subject to covetousness and theft; including reputation, people, position in the church, a good name and possessions. Families are disrupted and businesses are destroyed by theft. Theft is a betrayal of trust. Sin remains sin no matter how we disguise it or what name we give it; sin is an affront to our holy God who has purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

Why the Holy Spirit caused John to record this portion about Judas just here is not relevant to our study, suffice to say it emphasises the contrast between righteousness and evil between the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ and others following the dictates of the flesh.

**3. 4. Jesus --- girded himself;** all between these three words have meaning relative to the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the humility of the man Christ Jesus. Isaiah prophesied concerning Him saying **Himself** took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses. He was clothed with righteousness as with a garment; all who looked on the Lord Jesus Christ, heard Him speak, taking note of His miracles could know and believe God was in Christ. The sad truth is that most that see the Man in this modern world see only a servant girded with a towel.

**3. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;** was not taken up with the importance of His role. No man ever had a greater responsibility. He came from God to fill a certain need, to do a specific work, to set an example of humble obedience through difficult and trying conditions. The Lord Jesus Christ knew, omniscience, He is the fountain of knowledge, all things were made by Him and all things are sustained by Him. We are informed by the Apostle John of this basic truth, Jesus came from God; there was a man sent from God. Jesus went to God after completing the work His Father gave Him to do. We can specify this work; it was to redeem, it was to seek and to save the lost, it was to set an example of humility, it was a work done while totally reliant on His Father. The Lord Jesus Christ was confident that after going through all the trauma, trials, travail and tribulation He would be welcomed back into the presence of His God and Father.

**4. He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.**

**5. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.** It is probably before the meal had commenced; the feet get dirty while travelling and the people were taught and practised the habit of reclining at meal times without the grime of dusty roads clinging to them. It seems strange to me, though Jesus was clearly the leader yet none offered to wash His feet. We all have trouble taking second place until the Lord Jesus works His grace in us, till His example becomes a reality in our own lives. He tied a towel about Him so appeared in the character of a servant; prepared for humble service. What a vast difference is this act of the Lord Jesus Christ from the present day practice in some Christian religions. This was not a ceremonial act, it was a necessary deed.

We can learn from this it is likely we will be defiled as we live and work day to day. We have an example when we consider Lot for it is recorded of him; **and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds ;)** 2Peter 2:<sup>7,8</sup>. The world intrudes on the Lord's people in so many ways, family pressures, education, sports, advertising and possessions and in other areas of life.

Jesus came in the form of a servant, performed the work of the lowest servant by washing the feet of His disciples. Notice Jesus knew that His hour was come when He should depart out of this world, v1; He loved His own unto the end v1; and because all things had been given into His hands, and He was returning to God therefore He arose from the table and girded Himself with a towel. The Lord Jesus Christ, as the servant of God, is still ready to clean the feet of His disciples; the defilement we contact on our journey to heaven Jesus can wash away. He can repair the damage done, He can mend the broken heart, He can wipe all tears from our eyes, and He can restore that which He took not away. When we in humility confess we have fallen short of the standard God has set then the Lord in grace forgives; He washes our feet. Only then we are enabled to walk with the Lord.

This action presents a complete picture of His whole work of redemption. He knew He was equal with God, yet He chose to come from the right hand of the Father, from the glory, gird himself with our nature. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and He poured out His soul unto death, gave His life a ransom for many, supplied the blood, the fountain where we find cleansing.

**6. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter 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 know 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.**

Simon Peter was impetuous in action and word. If Peter had submitted to the Lord we would have lost a beautiful example of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The wisest action of a Child of God is to submit to the Lord and His word. The Lord approached Simon Peter as a servant and Peter questioned the Lord. A true disciple would obey without question, would allow the Lord to do what is needful. Peter, if he had stopped to think, could have learned a lesson then and not had to learn it later. Self confidence is opposed to reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ; self confidence stops the Holy Spirit working in the believer.

**Peter says to Him, 'Lord, dost thou wash my feet?'** Peter could not know what we now know, it was not yet revealed. To question what the Lord was doing was an error we may all fall into when we walk by sight and not by faith. All Jesus had spoken and each act He performed demonstrated He was God manifest in the flesh. Even so we may see in Peter's reply a response of heart in agreement with his understanding of who the Lord is. The reply suggests Peter knows Jesus is worthy of honour and praise and is way above such humbling tasks as are performed by servants. Peter was surprised by the Lord stooping to the task of a lowly servant. The lesson taught by the humble task the Lord was about to perform made a lasting impression on the Apostle Peter.

The example of the Lord Jesus is to be emulated; as the children of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we have a responsibility to do as our Saviour teaches, following the example He set. Though He was Lord of all He also was the ultimate servant of His Father.

We need to learn from the Lord Jesus Christ how to honour God, and learn to love and live according to the teachings and example of our Lord and Saviour. Peter should have looked within himself, questioned his thoughts and waited patiently to see the outcome and reason for this example of humility. The ways of God are past finding out and till we accept the teachings of the Word of God we can go horribly wrong. God the Father will have the Son honoured; and the Son is honoured most when He is believed in and followed in faith and humility.

In this chapter we see the heart, heel and hand of Judas opposed to the Lord for selfish gain. Contrasted with Judas we look at Peter and his response to the Lord Jesus; he wants his feet, hands and head washed. Peter may be saying prevent me from going to a place where my testimony may be compromised; do not let me enter into any activity where the name of the Lord will be brought into disrepute; and fill my head with thoughts of the holiness of God so my life will be governed by and be an example of your grace at work in an individual.

## **7. Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.**

The Lord Jesus Christ is saying this is an earthly example of the work which I shall perform for my people when I return to my Father. You cannot see the significance now but you will when the Holy Spirit has come. Peter ought to have known the words and actions of the Lord had a relevant meaning; if not now but in the future. Like us, Peter was void of understanding for the Holy Spirit had not yet been sent from above. The Lord Jesus appears to be saying, Peter, this gives a picture of the work which I will be doing for my people when I return to the Father. You may not see the significance of it now, but you will later, when the Holy Spirit has come.

Instead of submitting to the Lord and allowing the Lord Jesus to perform the service of a slave, a bond servant, he compounds his error saying unto the Lord; **Thou shalt never wash my feet.** We must not be hasty to condemn Peter for not immediately allowing the Lord to do what He purposed. Peter said he would not submit, yet he did, and that very quickly when the Lord Jesus said what the symbolism meant. Is it not true of us, that we say we will submit to the Word of God and yet interpret the same to suit ourselves? It has been said, *we do not use Peter's words, but we act them*, as in the cases when we know what is right, when we know what the Word of God teaches yet still pursue our own agenda.

The Lord replies with a comprehensive answer in a few words, **if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.** My part with the Lord, the part of all believers begins with being washed, cleansed from all sin. There is no *water and soap* existing to use for the washing away of sin and clearing the conscience of guilt. Peter, the Lord Jesus says, this external act of mine in washing your feet, signifies something more than removing road grime, its significance is in cleansing the soul from the defilement of sin and the conscience from guilt. The Lord is saying an unclean person cannot have communion with me nor a part in the work I will do through those whom I make clean by the sacrifice I will shortly be.

See how speedily Peter changes his tune when the Lord Jesus confronts him with the reality of a failed or terminated relationship. **Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head;** Peter in this moment knows he can have a full and meaningful rapport with the Lord Jesus on the basis of submission even though the details are not clear. Peter has reached a conclusion; he wants to be clean in his walk, his work and his thought life.



See in verses 6 – 9 how this disciple, later the Apostle Peter, is mentioned. Jesus addresses *Simon* Peter, the man he has called to follow Him, the man given a name which he must live up to. Peter answers as a man unrelated to the Lord, from a purely human level, knowing the superiority of the Lord. As a man Peter has the standards of a man, a fisherman. The Lord Jesus Christ sees beyond the limitations of Peter's understanding and intellect and goes directly to the spiritual implications of the act of washing the feet. Now *Simon* Peter has a clearer picture of what the Lord Jesus wants, *Simon* Peter wants the spiritual cleansing and power the Lord Jesus Christ is offering. He is prepared in his heart to follow the Lord Jesus.

Christianity is more than a Sunday program; someone who genuinely loves the Lord Jesus Christ will want to spend time with his Lord. He will want to learn as much about the Lord Jesus as he can, he will spend time and effort to understand the Word of God, he will desire to be with others who have a yearning to know the Lord Jesus in a more intimate way. The Child of God will speak often of his Father and of his Saviour; he will want to be with others who are like-minded. This believer may also choose to live in close proximity to the place of fellowship; arrange his working life so there is no hindrance to attending the meetings arranged for the benefit of the saints. **Then they that feared the LORD spoke often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.** Malachi 3:<sup>16</sup>.

How much time do I lose in travelling? Do I take the opportunity while in transit to listen to enlightening recorded messages or read informative books? Is there an opportunity to testify to the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ to a fellow traveller? Head, hands and feet occupied in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ are being used in the best and most rewarding way when we are occupied in His service. Personally, privately or testifying to the saving and keeping power of the Lord Jesus Christ is a spiritually satisfying pastime.

**10. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.**

**11. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.**

**12. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?**

**13. Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.**

**14. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.**

**15. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.**

**16. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.**

**17. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.**

**He that is washed (bathed) needeth not save to wash his feet;** ceremonial washing could not keep the feet from being defiled on the way back to the residence. More than the obvious practical truth is intended in the words of the Lord Jesus here. We are cleansed from the defilement of sin by exercising faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Living in the world and with unbelievers in the schools, shops, and workplaces; in the government departments and even sometimes in the home results in the 'feet' becoming dirty. Contamination comes from without and within. The background to this thought is of one returning from public baths to his house. His feet would get dirty and require washing, but not his body. So the believer is cleansed as far as the law requires from all sin by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but needs to come daily to confess so as to abide in unbroken fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

Christ cannot have communion with a believer until he confesses and seeks forgiveness from the defilement contacted by the way. The Lord Jesus is ever ready to hear and forgive, to cleanse and restore to fellowship. The saints, the servants of God who are already washed and cleansed by the blood of Christ from the guilt of their sins have the work of renewing and sanctifying begun in them by the Spirit of Christ. They ought therefore to be daily monitoring their motives and actions, and labouring constantly to keep in contact with the Lord Jesus Christ.

**11. Ye are not all clean.** The Lord Jesus knows what is in the heart and mind of each one. This is a most sobering realisation; the Lord knows what is in my heart and in my mind; He knows my thoughts afar off. As He looked on the disciples He could see the one who would betray Him; the burden of guilt Judas was going to feel was more than matched by the love the Lord Jesus had for him. Judas did not want to bathe or wash, his mind was made up, his preference was to seek wealth and a position of power to go with the funds he would

amass. The uncleanness the Lord is speaking of is in the heart and mind of the traitor. Judas was washed ceremonially, his feet were washed but the heart of this man was black with desire for wealth; no example or pleading would deter Judas from following the path he has planned; a path of deception and the accumulation of wealth.

**Know ye what I have done to you?** Consider what I have done, says the Lord to the disciples; here I am seated with you after showing I have the heart of a servant and doing the work of a servant.

The provision made for our cleansing should not make us think that all is permanently right with us related to our standing before the Lord. My feet are washed now I am clean, now I am fit for eternity, now I can do as I please; Consider Judas, his feet were washed yet he still turned from the Lord Jesus to follow his own agenda. The Lord pronounces His disciples clean, clean through the word He had spoken to them. He washed them himself and then said, **you are clean**; but not all of you; they were all washed, even Judas, yet not all were clean. Many there are in the Churches; they have joined the fellowship, have agreed to the doctrines; all to no avail if the Lord Jesus Christ has not dealt with the question of sin in their lives.

Even among those who are called Disciples of Christ, and profess a relationship to the Lord and are in the fellowship there may be those who are not cleansed by the Blood of Christ. Proverbs 30:12, **there is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.** Can this apply to a denomination, a local church, a sect, a member in the church I am part of?

The Lord knows those that are His, and those that are not, when Christ lets his disciples know that they are not all clean; it is for them to search their hearts, to check the basis of their faith.

Is it I Lord; is it I among the clean, in the congregation of the saints, yet not washed in the Blood of the Lamb? Am I the one hindering the blessing because of sin not confessed? Am I to be banished from the presence of the Lord for all eternity; the deceitfulness of sin victorious in my life?

**Ye call me Master and Lord. If I then, your Lord and Master:** The disciples looked to the Lord Jesus Christ as their Master, their Rabbi, their teacher and then as their Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ turns the phrase around putting Himself as their Lord first, then as the teacher they should learn from. Jesus Christ is our Master and Lord; He who is our Saviour is our Lord and Master. He is our Master, our teacher in all we need to know to live before God in this world, to live as a Child of God in this world and He is our Lord, our ruler, the one who has final authority over us. It becomes the Disciples of Christ to own Him Lord and Master in reality and truth; not looking to our local minister as the final authority; always looking beyond the immediate impression presented by man, to see the Lord Jesus and His purpose and intent.

**Ye also ought to wash one another's feet.** This is a practical parable, the Lord would teach us to be lowly in heart and walk humbly. Not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought, to think less of ourselves and consider all saints as the redeemed of the Lord and the brethren of the Lord Jesus. Christ Jesus their Lord and Master had often taught his disciples' humility and they are reminded in an unforgettable way.

**To wash one another's feet** is to do the lowliest task for our brothers and sisters in the Lord as unto the Lord. In the context washing the feet after travelling clears the dust and dirt contracted on the journey so to wash one another's feet is to bow down to the lowly task in assisting a brother or sister to rid themselves of the contamination of the world, thereby assisting our brethren to maintain a clean and hygienic position in the family and church. The duty is mutual; we must not be too proud to accept help from our brethren or to proud to help our brethren.

**You ought to wash one another's feet;** the Lord speaks of a duty. The pollutions of sin are ever rubbing off on us during our pilgrim journey. We cannot make satisfactory restitution for one another's sins, nor can we bear the penalty for another; only the Lord Jesus Christ could and has done so. We may help by identifying the problem and then making it known to the 'sinner' privately, and then praying and supporting where necessary. In the first place we must wash ourselves; we should then continue to avoid contamination; when defilement does occur, when our feet get dirty we should go immediately to the place of washing. We must reprove a sinning brother considering ourselves less we also stumble; and do what we can to bring them back to fellowship with the Lord. This is washing one another's feet.

**For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.** The force of these words of the Lord is this: I have shown you how Christian love operates. Christian love seeks the good of fellow believers, and will perform any service to achieve that end. When true Christian love is exercised the despised and lowliest services performed with grace display the love of the Lord Jesus. There are some services which are even more repulsive than the washing of feet, many believers in the medical services will attest to that, occasionally the service of love may call for such lowly services. Washing the feet of a brother or sister is a service of love the Lord Jesus expects all the saints to undertake in the same manner as He displayed. Clearly

taught from this passage of the Word of God washing the feet is not a soap and water exercise; it is a work of prayer and an exercise of Christian charity.

**17. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.** True happiness is the result of knowing the will of God, and in obedience to Him. A man is not truly happy with knowledge or in doing what gives pleasure to the senses; happiness, the joy of the Lord, comes from obedience to the Lord Jesus; growth in Christ, developing a Christ like attitude and manner. In short happiness is conformity to the will of God. **The joy of the Lord is our strength**, Nehemiah 8:<sup>10</sup>.

The Lord Jesus said **whoso heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them**; teaching us it is not knowledge, rather Christian activity based on knowledge and in line with the truth results in contentment, peace, happiness. It has been pointed out the Lord Jesus did not say, Happy are ye if these things be done to you, but **Happy are ye if ye do them**.

We would be really happy if we thought more of others and less of ourselves. Thinking of others and how they may be benefited by prayers or actions, however much it may cost in time, effort or finance will bring real joy to the heart and soul. It was self-sacrificing love which the Lord Jesus Christ displayed throughout His earthly sojourn. That same love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

**18. I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.** I have made my choice; I saw every thing that is to happen, or can happen. I have chosen Judas, not as a evil man, nor because he would betray me; I plainly saw that he would abuse my trust, give in to the desires of the flesh and deliver me into the hands of my enemies. This would be to his detriment, bring ruin upon himself, but I must leave the choice of each one make without coercion. The scripture is fulfilled; Christ applies to Judas what David had said of his rebellious son Absalom, Psalm 41:<sup>9</sup>, one of the clearest examples of this traitor.

**I know whom I have chosen.** This word is applied to Judas in one place, John 6:<sup>70</sup>, **Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?** So it must have a different meaning here. Judas was one of the chosen Apostles; Jesus had chosen Judas to be an apostle, and had treated him as He treated all the other apostles. Here it refers to the heart, and Jesus implies that, though Judas had been chosen with the twelve, that did not guaranty purity of heart and life. The remaining eleven would be saved and enjoy a life with the Lord. It was not the fault of Jesus that Judas was not saved, for Judas had the same teaching, the same association with the Lord Jesus, but his love of money gained the ascendancy, and clouded his judgement and destroyed him. We see stated in the Word of God love of money is the root of all evil. In one word, covetousness; covetousness is not evident till it shows in the life and activity, it always manifests itself by accumulating something for oneself, be it money or possessions.

**19. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.** The Apostles would see by that prediction Jesus had knowledge of the heart of Judas and could foretell future events therefore Jesus must have been sent by God. This evidence of the foreknowledge, the omniscience of the Lord bolsters the faith of the Apostles, maybe not immediately but surely as they look back after the resurrection.

**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.** This verse confirms and informs us, with verse 16, of the unity of the Father and the Son. It tells us each Child of God is indwelt by the Father and the Son. It shows how intimately united the Son is with His Father, his apostles, and all who receive Him as Lord and Saviour. They who receive those sent by the Lord receive the Lord Jesus, and they who receive Jesus as Lord received God as their Father.

So Judas who was about to betray Jesus was also about to betray God and His cause.

Christ will not think badly of other saints over the sin of one, He will stand by His own and support them. We cannot know what is in the heart of men, but we can be sure the Lord Jesus Christ will not give a word to a preacher that exalts the man.

**21. When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.** Jesus had said 13:<sup>10</sup>; **you are clean, but not all.** Now it is evident there is a traitor in the midst. We see here that one in twelve was deceitful, had a hidden agenda, a selfish motive. If that percentage is brought into the present day then we can reckon 85 in every thousand, or four in a congregation of fifty may have an ulterior motive. As it was with Judas so it is with one who joins the church with ulterior motives. The Apostle Paul exhorts the church through Timothy in the second letter 2:<sup>19</sup> **Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.** It was one in twelve but it was *only one in twelve*; Jesus knew all twelve and loved all twelve equally, the fault was entirely in Judas. There is a high risk of a 'bad apple' in every basket of fruit; a Judas among the saints in the church; it will be so till we are

drawn into the presence of the Lord when the Church is called unto Him; only the 'dead in Christ' will respond to the call. That will be the final sorting; all the redeemed of the Lord, from the inception of the church to the last call will rise to meet the Lord Jesus and then be forever with the Lord. Judas had succeeded in concealing his dishonest and immoral plans from his fellows. His conduct gave the other apostles no reason to suspect him. To what lengths cannot hypocrisy go! Matthew tells us that when Christ announced to the Twelve that one of them should betray Him, "They were exceedingly sorrowful, and began every one of them to say, Lord, is it I?" We do well to remind ourselves that what the Lord Jesus suffered at the hands of sinners at Calvary upon the Cross was the climax of His sufferings. Throughout His life He suffered, vexed by the conversation of the wicked, at the hands of Satan, the Pharisees, and His friends and the scribes. **They all forsook Him and fled.** He was sorrowful seeing one of the apostles deliberately turning away from Him. Judas was determined to go down the path of selfishness; the Lord Jesus determined to follow the path of selflessness. No wonder the Lord was **troubled in spirit** as He saw and anticipated such deceit, treachery, and greed in one of His chosen.

**22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.**

**23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.**

**24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.**

**25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?**

The disciples looked at each other; most knowing it was not them; they looked at others seeking a clue as to the identity of the traitor. Do we know ourselves well enough to say whatever befalls me I will not forsake the Lord? The outward appearance gave no indication of what was in the heart; what was being planned. Neither speech nor behaviour had revealed Judas as the traitor in their midst. The majority of the disciples present had confidence in the Apostle that leaned on the Lord as they reclined at the table. Peter therefore indicates to John, requesting him to ask the Lord Jesus who it is that is purposing in his heart to betray Him.

Why don't you ask the Lord, Peter? Have you no confidence in yourself? Do you doubt yourself; have you no faith, no assurance in the Person you are following? Did you not moments ago ask the Lord Jesus to wash you completely?

The highest honour any man can attain to is to have it said of him that he is loved by the Lord Jesus Christ, 23. This is an honour all may enjoy, but none can have without the Holy Spirit in their heart. This honour is bestowed on all who exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. True it is that Christ loved the world and gave Himself for it! I know Christ Jesus loved me and gave Himself for me so in Christ I enter into an elite congregation.

The fact that **the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake** is proof Judas had succeeded in concealing his dishonest and immoral behaviour from his fellow companions. His outward conduct gave no occasion for them to suspect him. Matthew tells us that when Christ announced to the Twelve that one of them should betray Him, **They were exceedingly sorrowful, and began every one of them to say, Lord, is it I?** Matthew 26:<sup>22</sup>, notice they were doubtful of their own hearts and motives. The disciples trusted the word of the Lord Jesus more than their own hearts. They said **Lord, is it I?** See if there is such wickedness in me, show me my own heart and reveal to me my motives and desires. Judas dared to ask, **Master, is it I?** Matthew 26:<sup>25</sup> a clear proof that he was unsaved, for no man can say **Lord Jesus but by the Holy Spirit**, 1Corinthians 12:<sup>3</sup>.

Throughout His ministry Jesus must have treated Judas with the same grace, the same kindness, as the other apostles.

John asks the question of the Lord Jesus, Who is it? Who is about to betray you? Who among us, having seen the miracles, heard the gracious words proceeding out of your mouth can now turn traitorous? Ten of the disciples looked on the others with doubts about their fidelity, their loyalty and devotion. One asked the Lord who the traitor was and the other knew in his heart the planned deception. As the prophet said; **the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?** Jeremiah 17:<sup>9</sup>. The Lord knows the hearts of His disciples and graciously keeps the knowledge of Judas' planned treachery from the majority while letting the guilty party know his sin is evident to the Saviour. I suggest the question put to the Lord concerning the identity of the betrayer was said quietly; not heard by others at the table. The answer to the question would have been heard by John and possible by Judas. The Lord Jesus would not embarrass Judas by a public confrontation; He did allow an opportunity for Judas to reconsider his commitment to the selfish agenda planned in his heart and mind.

**26. Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.**

**27. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.** The word translated sop is a piece of Matzoth, a portion of unleavened bread. The word dip, in the original, is that

word which we have translated as baptize. It means Jesus dipped it into the communal container which all at the table used. In this instance it was an opportunity for Judas to reverse his decision. It was not an unusual thing for the master of a feast to favour one of those at the table in this way. There had been many occasions in the past three years where Jesus had presided at the table so it did not attract the attention of the others. It was an indication to John who the betrayer was, and a hint which Judas understood. The Lord Jesus Christ knew the mind of Judas was made up, that the evil intent of His betrayer was determined. Jesus did not command him to betray him, but the Lord left him to his own plans and the execution of them. Jesus gave him to understand that He was well aware of his planned deceit, and Judas was instructed to do quickly what he desired.

I feel Judas knew the Lord Jesus had full knowledge of his evil intent; in saying **what thou doest, do quickly**; he was to do it at once. God calls upon us all to act decisively in relation to Him and the Gospel. Deliberating about wicked deeds is a prelude to acting them out. Jesus knows all our plans, and the plans and intents of the wicked.

May it be that our plans are in accord with the Word of God, are planned as blessings for the Child of God, will further the building of the Church of God.

The Lord Jesus calls on His people to act under the full conviction that He knows all there is to know about us even our inmost thoughts.

When a man can sin knowing that God sees it all, it shows the heart is fully set to do evil, and that there is no restraint, nothing to deter him.

**28. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.** The words of the Lord Jesus became clear to the Apostle John as the minutes passed; Judas knew and left the table of the Lord to continue with his nefarious business. **No man at the table knew** for certain though some supposed there were legitimate reasons for the departure of Judas at this time.

**29. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.** The word of the Lord is not always evident to all, one may understand immediately and another needs more time and instruction. It is so as we study the Word of God today. The Lord has set some in the church as teachers to instruct us who are slower in comprehension than others. What the rest of the apostles thought was not condemnatory of Judas, in fact they did as the Apostle Paul instructs the saints in the epistle to Titus 3:<sup>2</sup> **speak evil of no man.** As a man thinks in his heart so he speaks; the speech is a clear indication of the thoughts of a man, what is in the heart. The other disciples, if they had understood when the Lord said one of you will betray me, did not connect the words with a traitor in their midst.

We can learn a lesson from these disciples, they continued with the Lord Jesus without pride destroying fellowship: It was not a case of we're not as bad as he, we don't speak as he does, and we don't visit the places he attends, and we keep our families walking the straight and narrow path. Whether ignorant of the facts or deliberately not letting the facts intrude; it is best to keep our conversation free from rancour and free from condemnation of fellow believers. We will never recover a wayward Child of God by talking about them to others or condemning them for their lapse of faith. Judas had the chance to repent but;

**30. He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.** Judas set off to Jerusalem from Bethany, which was about two miles; succumbing to the influence of the prince of darkness, motivated by the dark thoughts in his heart and mind, in the time of darkness, he set out to do this work of darkness. It was early in the night, what is recorded in the following chapters took place in the same night.

Are not all the evil deeds perpetrated in this world begun in the darkness, hearts and minds where the light of the glorious gospel of Christ has not shined in?

There was no chance of Judas changing his mind; the path he chose had no light shining on it; Judas was shrouded in darkness and each step he took led him deeper into the darkness. Judas had refused the offers of salvation heard over the past years as he travelled with the Lord Jesus and the other disciples.

This is so sad; sad also are the many cases today, many evangelists, gospel preachers, personal witnesses, testifying to the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ go unheard. The message is unheeded by the many, disregarded, and the messengers classified in derogatory terms. Satan has his emissaries in all strata of society, those who follow him choose to do so; there is no coercion, there may be influence, but the choice is personal, no other person is to blame for the sinners fall.

**31. Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.** The Lord calls His death His glory. **Now is the Son of man glorified**; now is the time at hand when I am to die, and shall by my death finish the work of redemption my Father sent me to do. Man's redemption required the completion of that work to glorify God. God the Father was glorified in the death of His Son, Jesus

Christ. The glory belongs to God the Father for planning and executing the salvation of man, for giving His Son as the sacrificial Lamb, for raising His Son from among the dead so that the redeemed can boast in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God the Father was highly glorified in the obedience, sufferings and death of His only Begotten Son. It is true that the sufferings of Christ were humiliating, reprehensible in themselves, yet the sufferings and death of Jesus was the way to His glory, and his Father's glory also. By them He redeemed a lost world, trod under foot Satan, triumphed over sin and death; and the Father was glorified by His Son's obedience to His will and in finishing the task He was sent to do.

**32. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.**

The life and death of Jesus Christ would lead to the honour and glory of God, the perfect plan of God would be evident, and show His goodness, His truth, and His justice; then God the Father will show He approves of the work His Son has done. 'If' here is not a word used as doubtful; it is better translated 'since' for it is a declaration of the truth.

**God shall also glorify him.** God will honour the Christ. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, will make it abundantly clear Jesus is accepted as the perfect Son, the perfect Sacrifice, and the perfect Saviour. Jesus here confidently anticipated that His Father would show His pleasure in what He was about to do in obedience to His Father's will. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke of the work as if it was accomplished. The Father showed His approval in the miracles that attended His Son's death; in His resurrection, ascension, exaltation, and now 2000 years later in His continuing approval in the success of the gospel.

God will always demonstrate His sanction of those who live so as to promote the honour of His name in declaring Jesus to be the Christ of God, the Saviour who will save to the uttermost all who will come to God by faith.

**Straightway**, there was no delay; the resurrection was the immediate approval of God, plain for all to see.

It is the living Lord Jesus Christ who is able to save today all who come unto God by faith in 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 to you.** Little children, an expression of tender concern; the Lord Jesus has a heartfelt interest in the welfare of His disciples. As He was about to leave them, as yet they know not how or why, He endeavours to lessen their grief by showing He had for them the interest which a loving parent feels for his children.

The word children is often given to Christians as implying that God is their Father, and that He maintains toward them that special relation of one born into the family, Romans 8:<sup>14,17</sup>. The term also makes clear their need of teaching and guiding, as children benefit from the wisdom and experience of the parent. The Lord Jesus uses it here as an expression of tenderness and affection; teaching us we are brought into the family of God; assuring us that God is our Father. John in the epistles bearing his name does the same so we learn there is one family of which God is the Father and we are adopted into that family of God when we believe. The children will grow into *sons* and *daughters* as they grow in knowledge and experience; taking on the characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ. Children by new birth, sons and daughters of God by development of the nature and ways and desires of the Lord Jesus Christ is the plan of God for those 'born again' by faith in the Saviour.

**Yet a little while I am with you;** the Lord made it clear to the disciples He was about to leave them, did not conceal the fact His departure was nigh. He was soon to leave them; the time for the Lord to leave this physical world, by death to be taken from them was very close. The departure of a loved one by death is always an emotional experience; it is well for Christians for they have the presence of the Saviour, promised and experienced, and the prospect of being with Him to soften the blow of bereavement. They also have the assurance their loved one is with the Lord Jesus, His promise was **I will never leave you or forsake you.**

Where He went they could not come; the Lord Jesus went into the darkest place; shortly He would pray; **My God why hast thou forsaken me!**, the disciples could not follow Jesus, the work He had to do was His alone, no one could help Him or lessen the burden in any way.

**Ye shall seek me; but whither I go, ye cannot come.** We have a promise from the Lord Jesus Christ that if we seek we shall find; the material has given place to the spiritual. Seeking the Lord is an exercise full of wonder; we seek the Lord as we read the bible, as we pray, during fellowship with the saints. We meet the Lord Jesus at the throne of grace; where the gospel is preached, at various times as we are united in praising the Lord for His goodness and mercy. We could not go to the Cross with the Lord Jesus Christ; we can go to the Cross where the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified and there find He has completed the work the Father gave Him to do. We do not seek physical remains; we do seek, and find, our Saviour seated at the right hand of the Father.

**34. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; 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.** This subject now introduced by the Lord Jesus seems at first glance to be an aside; not connected with the previous words. This is not an eleventh commandment as some have suggested; to be added to the ten given to Moses. It is the way for the saints to live in fellowship, with God and each other. With the cross before Him the Lord Jesus is saying love is the tie that will bind the saints together with Him. Love that puts first the best for the loved one, not considering the pain and anguish to oneself in the expression of that love is the example the Lord Jesus Christ puts before us.

The example I set is the standard for all who will claim my name and own me as Lord. I am going to the cross and will be crucified, not because I have done wrong; I am perfect in all my ways; I go to Calvary and will be crucified because my Father demands a sacrifice for sin. I will be that sacrifice; I have no sin, am pure within and without so God, my Father, will be fully satisfied. This devotion and sacrificial activity will be the standard for the future to show what love is, the **new commandment** is for those who will follow me, my example of love and obedience, giving their lives as a sacrifice. My love is sacrificial, self denying, my love is focussed on the best for others; in total obedience to God, my Father.

This is what the Lord Jesus Christ is teaching His disciples and expecting to see in all who follow Him, all who claim Jesus Christ as Lord.

This commandment was new because it had never before been set down as the distinctive characteristic by which any nation or tribe of men had been known. Nor had this sacrificial love been taught as a standard for any religious group or for that matter any nation or tribe. The Jew was known by his adherence to the Law of Moses, by his dress, his dietary laws and religious practices. Other societies and nations had their particular codes and standards. Jesus is teaching His followers are not to be known by worldly standards of wealth, or learning, or athletic prowess, or military might; they were not to dress in a way that would call attention to them. The mark of the follower of the Lord Jesus Christ was to be the expression of love for one another. **If ye have love one to another** it will be seen by all around for the love the Lord speaks of is not private and personal; it is a love reaching out to God in thanksgiving and to man with a desire to bring others into the blessings of sins forgiven and fellowship with God.

The new commandment put all the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ on the same ground with the same standard and the same motive. What is called in today's idiom, a level playing field. Christians are here taught by the Lord Jesus Christ to stand by each other in trying situations, be careful not to offend a brother, maintain a testimony pleasing to the Lord, also to deny themselves in the promotion of each other's welfare.

This command or law was new in regard to the extent of this love, for Jesus immediately adds, **as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.** His love for them was strong, unabated, constant, and He was shortly to show His love for them in death. **Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.** This was a new expression of love; and it would show to the world the love of the Lord Jesus Christ is far superior to the 'love' the world speaks of in such common terms. Christ's love shows the genuine affection we ought to have for Christians, and how ready we should be to suffer the trials and afflictions, and endure hardships, to benefit those for whom the Son of God, our Saviour, laid down His life. The Lord Jesus Christ expects us to express our love for other believers even as He showed us His love for us.

The Apostle Paul tells the Corinthians just what kind of Love the Lord Jesus is speaking of. It is not the sentimental emotional love of the poets or that of the fiction writers, nor is it the sensual love so prevalent in the minds of the western world. The first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter thirteen, defines the love the Lord Jesus is telling the disciples to emulate; the type of love He exhibited; a love that is totally obedient to the will of God and separated from all the emotional hype of the of the world.

Written over one hundred and fifty years ago; *perhaps, of all the commands of Jesus, the observance of this is that which is least apparent to a surrounding world. It is not so much that they are divided into different sects, for this may be consistent with love for each other; but it is the want of deep-felt, genuine love toward Christians even of our own denomination; the absence of genuine self-denial; the pride of rank and wealth; and the fact that professed Christians are often known by anything else rather than by true attachment to those who bear the same Christian name and image. The true Christian loves religion wherever it is found--equally in a prince or in a slave, in the mansion of wealth or in the cottage of poverty, on the throne or in the hut of want. He overlooks the distinction of sect, of colour, and of nations; and wherever he finds a man who bears the Christian name and manifests the Christian spirit, he loves him. And this, more and more as the millennium draws near, will be the peculiar badge of the professed children of God. Christians will love their own denominations less than they love the spirit and temper of the Christian, wherever it may be found.*

**36. Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.**

**37. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.**

**38. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.**

Peter responds to the word the Lord Jesus referred to earlier, 13:<sup>1</sup>, now more directly. Humanly speaking there is no place you can go to where we can't follow you. My determination is to accompany you. The reply of the Lord Jesus Christ tells us He knows the heart and the determination of the natural man, He knows our vulnerability and our strengths. In his own strength Peter thought he would have gone with the Lord Jesus unto death and says so.

The Lord answers Peter, reading the heart of the man, knowing the vulnerability, the likelihood of Peter to change his mind when the pressure was applied, when his safety and security was threatened. Peter lost sight of, lost confidence in the Lord Jesus when he saw the priests and people were arrayed against the Jesus Christ. **Thou canst not follow me now** says the Lord Jesus to Peter, your own strength will fail you, your determination is not sufficient to stand against the flesh and the Devil, the fear of suffering and humiliation at the hands of religious men is too great as you are now without the spiritual strength imparted by my Spirit. The time is coming when you will follow me, until that time you only have the strength of a weak man. Later you will be endowed with power from on high; power and resolution to stand the attacks both physical and spiritual, right now be patient. **The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak** said the Lord Jesus Christ, Matthew 26:<sup>41</sup>.

**Thou canst not follow me now**, the work I have to do can only be done by me, it is the work my Father has entrusted to me as there is no other among men able to give satisfaction to God. This work demands a perfect man, a man without fear, a man uncompromised, a man willing to bear the penalty for sin with all the suffering and rejection consequent with the sinful nature of fallen man.

**Why cannot I follow thee now?** Peter probably thought the Lord Jesus intended to go on some long journey, a pilgrimage which would be fraught with dangers and difficulties, be very tiring. Maybe Peter thought he could be a bodyguard on the journey the Lord was about to undertake. Peter saw no reason why he couldn't travel with the Lord Jesus, not knowing it was his Lord's final earthly path to the Calvary. The Cross was before the Lord Jesus, friendship and protection of a friend was before Peter. Peter did not comprehend or imagine the Lord's meaning as to why he could not follow Him now.

**I will lay down my life for thy sake.** Peter was sincere, but did not know how weak he was, how strong the desire to avoid confrontation leading to bodily harm controlled him. Peter was at this time willing to die, but when the Lord Jesus was taken he was not able to stand with the Lord Jesus. Why? He was speaking from his own thoughts and understanding, he was full of bravado, he had not yet learned what it is to be totally dependant on the Lord Jesus and His Holy Spirit. When we are weak then we can enjoy the empowering of the Lord and have strength to withstand the attacks of the devil. The Apostle Paul records the Lord said unto him, **My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness**, 2Corinthians 12:<sup>9</sup>. The Word of God teaches us that when we know we are weak then we can find the Lord Jesus is faithful to give the necessary strength to stand and to fight.

My strength in the Lord's work comes from total dependence upon Him. I must realise it is the work the Lord Jesus wants done, that He wants that work done in a certain way and at a certain time. I will spoil the 'building' if I let my personality, my ideas; my methods interfere, intrude or if I endeavour to direct the saints in the work according to my understanding.

Christ must first die for Peter, before Peter can die for Him. Let us not think we can do any good thing, something to please God, without the immediate guidance and assistance of the Holy Spirit. Peter's denial preceding the cock's cowing should be a warning to all of us who have confidence in our social standing, our education, our families or our financial position. Having confidence in the flesh will not aid in the work of the Lord; indeed it is the greatest hindrance. Sincerity and the best of good intentions are no substitute for the power of God. We may have the desire and the ability, without the Lord we are useless in His service. We can do nothing for God but with Him we can do all things. The Lord Jesus Christ died and His death and resurrection was the foundation stone of the building. Peter has yet to learn this; only when he has died to self can the Lord Jesus use him.

There is another problem Peter has to overcome; he has confidence in the flesh. He is ready to take up arms in the fight. Peter wants to go to war; he has not yet learned the fight is spiritual and is not won with weapons



forged by man. The Apostle Paul will tell us later **the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual, and mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds**, 2Corinthians 10:<sup>4</sup>.

The opinion that the Messiah was to be an earthly prince, and that his kingdom should be of this world, was deeply rooted in the minds of the Jews. The disciples had been raised with that teaching. Believing Jesus to be the Messiah they could not comprehend His departure prior to the kingdom being established. The disciples shall certainly follow their Master, and be forever with the Lord; but the time is not yet come. They must patiently wait for the Lord Jesus to complete the work of redemption, they shall follow Him; even unto death if so called by the Lord Jesus to testify in that way.

**Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?** The Lord Jesus can see into the heart of Peter and in effect says, Peter you say more than you can do; your own strength will fail, and your confidence in your own resolve will deceive you; I know your heart better than you know yourself. I foresee that before the cock crows you will deny me three times.

It would be better to die with Christ than to live without Him. And surely it is not worth dying while doing Christian works if the Lord Jesus has not commissioned us to do them. What we do in our own strength will have a reward in this life; only what the Lord Jesus Christ does through us will reap a reward in the life to come. Judas was with the Lord Jesus, doing good works with Him, handling the finances for Him, but he was a liar from the beginning. Good works will not secure a place for us in the Kingdom of God. Good intentions fall short; what then can I do to find peace with God? Faith is the answer; faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; faith in the Lord Jesus Christ giving satisfaction to God; He is the propitiation for our sins.

## **Chapter 14**

1-4. Christ comforts his disciples with the promise of a secure and safe place with Him in heaven. His leaving them is to prepare a place for them in heaven,

5-7. Thomas questions the Lord concerning the way to the Father and the means of travel,

8-14. Philip queries, not understanding Christ and the Father are one; that Jesus is the Mediator between God and man; and whatever is asked in His name shall be obtained for the glory of the Father.

15-18. Jesus promises them the Holy Spirit as the Comforter and Guide, by whom they will know the truth,

19-21. Jesus shows them He is shortly to leave them, they will not be left powerless, and they will have life from God,

22. Jude (Judas) asks a question, how Christ is to manifest himself to the disciples, and not to the (world) Jews?

23-26. Christ answers informing the disciples the revelation is to be made to those who love God, the Holy Spirit teaching, revealing the truth,

27-29. Jesus leaves His peace with them, and encourages them to face all that may come,

30-31. He tells of His approaching death,

**1. Let not your heart be troubled: ye 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. I go to prepare a place for you.**

**3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.**

**4. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.**

**5. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?**

**6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

**Let not your heart be troubled** by any of the people, places and circumstances that perplex others. Finances, family, workplace, neighbours, property, health and religion can be left in the care of God. You have faith in the God of your fathers; so exercising the same faith in the Son of God will remove from you all doubts. Believe in me, have faith in me; trust in me; rely on me for I have come from God to show you the way of righteousness and peace. I will lead you in the paths of righteousness for my own names sake.

Peter has searched his own heart and knows the word the Lord speaks applies to him. He sees in himself the weakness the Lord Jesus has revealed; how the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. So Jesus addresses Peter and His disciples, and tells them not to be troubled at His leaving them, nor to be disheartened because of what He said concerning Peter denying him. If they rested their confidence in God He would protect them. They

would see Jesus mistreated as the prophecy of Isaiah foretold, His sufferings, death, and His resurrection the proof He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

**Ye believe in God, believe also in me**, Place your confidence in God and in me as the Mediator between God and man, do not stop believing in me, continue to believe in me even though I go to the Cross; and expect God to accompany you through all the difficulties you will meet on the way. My Father will not forsake you, He will not leave you. But expect all the blessings through me; I will secure them for you.

The disciples began to lose all hope of an earthly kingdom; they were discouraged, by the general antagonism against the Lord Jesus. Christ promises them a spiritual and heavenly inheritance; as yet the disciples did not see how that was possible. The Lord Jesus Christ is promising them a special prepared place in heaven. The disciples can now look beyond all the turmoil and travail of this life and see a future that is secured for them. The beginning of a walk with the Lord Jesus Christ, even though He is going away, starts with the first step of faith; we walk by faith and not by sight; the disciples are now coming to understand that principle, there is still a long way to go.

You are my disciples and followers, said the Lord. My chosen and separated; do not let the sorrows of the world or the local problems destroy your peace. Let your hearts rest in the promises I have given you. Others will be fearful. Others will worry about the political situation and the things that are happening to the earth; others will engage in wars and yet others will exalt themselves. Keep your minds fixed on me, the Son of God, my aims are constant, my work none can hinder; I will be your strength in times of trouble.

Believe in God, and His perfections, believe also in me, and my relationship and fellowship with my Father. Believe in God, that He is most holy, and just; that He is the sustainer of the universe. Believe the work I am about to do will secure your future. You do not have to understand, simply believe.

They did believe in God, that belief was their religious heritage as Jews; for which Jesus commends them and goes on to say if you would have confidence in troubled times, **believe also in me**. Don't let the affairs of the world interfere, destroy your serenity; seek your peace in the Son of God.

Through Christ we enter into a special relationship; by believing in Christ as our Mediator between God and man, our belief individually in God and His Christ ensures our salvation. This is the will of God, **that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honours not the Son honours not the Father which hath sent him**. John 5:<sup>23</sup>.

The apostles already believed in Jesus as the Messiah, and as the Saviour, but their confidence rested in the Man walking and talking with them daily. Jesus was about to be taken from them forcefully and would no longer be visible in the sense He was physically present. He whom they had **seen with their eyes and had handled with their hands**, 1John 1:<sup>1</sup>, was to be crucified, buried, raised and glorified. Now Jesus says you believe in God, who you cannot see; you believe in His love, you are conscious of His care and provision, believe also in me in the same manner; have the same faith in me. You must have confidence in my love, and care, even though you can no longer see me with the eyes of flesh. This comfort remains for us who believe and live in the twenty first century. Peter tells us in his first epistle, **Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory**, 1 Peter 1:<sup>8</sup>.

**In my Father's house are many mansions**. It is commonly understood that in heaven there is ample room to receive all who will come to the Lord Jesus for salvation, all whom He redeems. Therefore the disciples are assured they will not be excluded; this is comforting to the disciples. Perhaps this passage has a meaning which is not so common. Jesus was consoling his disciples, who were discomfited at the thought of His departure. To comfort them, to reassure them, the Lord states the universe is the home of His Father therefore there is room for all.

Whether on earth or in heaven we are in His locale. In that vast abode of God there are many dwelling places; the earth is one of them, heaven is another. On earth, relative to the church the Lord Jesus promises to be where any two or three of his redeemed are together. When the Church is raptured then the Lord Jesus will also be there. Whether here or there believers are in the house of God. In Christ we are in the house of God, the mansion prepared. It is a cause of rejoicing that we are occupying any part of His dwelling-place. Jesus says He is about to leave, but He is only going to another part of the dwelling-place of God. The Lord Jesus Christ is with the disciples in their temporary abode; He is going to prepare a permanent dwelling place for them.

The Lord Jesus Christ is with each of the redeemed and each of the redeemed will find a permanent dwelling place with God. **My father's house** is the name given by the Lord Jesus Christ to the place where we find our spiritual home now and the home we will inhabit later, when the Lord Jesus calls the Church to Himself.

**I go to prepare a place for you**. By His going the Lord means His death and ascent to heaven. The thought here is of one who is on a journey, going early to find and prepare a place to lodge in for those who will follow,

and make provision for all future needs. Evidently Jesus means that He, by the work He was yet to perform on the Cross would secure their admission to heaven and obtain for them the blessings of eternal life. The Lord was talking to the twelve in the upper room. As the Word of God cannot be rescinded or negated what He has said to the disciples applies equally to believers of all times since the resurrection. The Lord Jesus Christ went to the Cross willingly; there He prepared the place where sinners can go to find cleansing from the penalty and guilt of sin. Once we have been to the Cross, seeing there the sin of the world placed on the Son of God, our sin included, then we can enter the place prepared. We go there by faith now and in reality when the Lord Jesus calls us to be with him.

The place referred to is not reached with any recognised mode of transport. There is no scientist to conceive of a means whereby we can reach the destination promised by the Lord Jesus Christ. The place the Lord Jesus Christ has prepared is not built with the hands or ingenuity of man. There was a man on the earth many years ago named by Mary and Joseph, Jesus, called Emanuel, He alone could show the way, and clear the path to the Place prepared for those who would place their trust in Him.

**That where I am ye may be also** is said by one who was not then in the place of which he was speaking. In reference to His human nature Jesus speaks of His going to His Father; and in reference to His divine nature, speaks as if He is with God. This was a comfort to the disciples as it is a comfort to us hundreds of years later. Though the Man Christ Jesus was about to leave them, He would not always be absent for His intention is that we should be with Him and the arrangement is made accordingly. He would come again and gather all His redeemed to Himself, and they will be forever with Him, Hebrews 9:<sup>28</sup>, this is promised at His appearing. All Christians will finally be with the Lord Jesus in the place He has prepared. In the meantime He indwells each believer by His Spirit; the Holy Spirit, sometimes termed the Spirit of Christ or God's Holy Spirit.

**Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know** states the Lord. He had often told them he was to die, and rise, and ascend to heaven, they should understand, believe me He says, even if not knowing how, Matthew 16:<sup>21</sup>; Luke 9:<sup>22</sup>; 18:<sup>31</sup>; 24:<sup>53</sup>. The way of the Cross leads to the dwelling-place which Jesus was going to prepare. The way which the disciples were to tread was to obey His precepts, imitate His example, adhere to His word and follow Him, John 14:<sup>6</sup>. The way the Lord Jesus Christ teaches us is by example, to obey God fully even though the pathway is dangerous, fraught with obstacles and opposition. The Lord Jesus Christ has walked the path He would like us to tread; in fact He promises to be with us each step of the way.

**We know not whither thou goest**, said Thomas; contradicting the Lord. Though Jesus had told them of His approaching death and resurrection, yet it seems the disciples still did not understand Him. When He raised Lazarus from the grave it was evidence of His power over death but there was no comprehension until after His resurrection. The disciples were still expecting the Lord Jesus to set up a kingdom in opposition to the Roman Empire, a temporal kingdom. Thomas was thinking of the situation where the Lord Jesus Christ would rule an earthly kingdom. They thought Jesus was an earthly prince so did not understand why He should die or how that would be the start of a special work, to inaugurate a kingdom over which Jesus is supreme; a kingdom not to be ruled with earthly wisdom or with physical power.

Thomas confessed his ignorance with his question so the Lord Jesus patiently explained His meaning. Thomas's question and lack of understand shows how religious bias can hide the truth making it nigh on impossible to believe salvation is the free gift of God. Had Thomas laid aside his opinions and simply believed the word Jesus spoke there would have been no difficulty. Faith is easy and natural when biased opinions are removed. We are all raised up with a bias and taught with the bias of our teachers, not always with error; the teacher may have learned from the Lord Jesus Christ and understand what the Word of God teaches regarding our relationship to God.

We do not have a chance of knowing the truth until we listen to the voice of God speaking to us from His Word, the Bible. If a sinner is willing to receive the plain truth of the Bible, many difficulties are removed; but with minds full of mans opinions and plans, mans errors, pride and self assertion it is not likely men and women will hear with the ear of faith or receive into the heart by faith the message of the Gospel.

**I am the way**; the Lord Jesus Christ is assuring the disciples that they and all others were to have access to God only by obeying the instructions, following the example, and relying solely upon the word and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Way of the Christ is the Way of the Cross. The Way of the Cross is the Way of the Crown. The way the Lord Jesus Christ walked was ever in obedience to the will of His Father. The Way the Lord Jesus Christ walked, the attitude He displayed of His relationship to His Father was purposefully to bring glory to God. He was not mindful of His own position among the religious leaders or the government other than to be sure the Law of God was not broken.

He is the leader and the guide to the lost, the teacher of the ignorant, and the single and unique example to all who would have a relationship with God. **Thou hast the words of eternal life** said Peter 6:<sup>68</sup>; also **Christ--suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps;** 1Peter 2:<sup>21</sup>.

**The truth;** Jesus is the source of truth, truth for the salvation of men originated with God and was planned from the beginning; The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ planned to show mankind the Truth in His Son. Truth presents things as they are. The life, the purity, and the teaching of Jesus Christ are the perfect representation of the things of eternity and divinity and humanity the world has of man has ever had or could have. The opinions of men vary according to religion and education and nationality, but the doctrines of Jesus present the facts as they exist in the eternal plan of God. It is implied that Jesus is the source of all truth; that by Him the prophets spoke and wrote, and that by Him all truth and only truth is communicated to men. The natural man cannot know God or understand the things of God without divine assistance. Jesus Christ came into the world and revealed His Father; God who cannot lie was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. Ergo the truth is the Lord Jesus Christ.

**The life,** life is manifest in many ways; the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking of life as directly related to and derived from His Father. Life in this context is in contrast to an existence without God, spiritual death. The many peoples able to communicate in some way have physical life; a sporting life, an academic life, a home life, a working life etc. The Lord Jesus Christ is speaking of a life in harmony with God, a life which leads to an eternity with the Father; a life free from the burden of sin, a life which transcends the problems of the flesh. The Life imparted to the Child of God, believers, is everlasting life. This life begins in a person when faith is exercised in the Lord Jesus Christ; faith, believing Jesus is the only acceptable sacrifice able to satisfy God; God who has purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Having *saving faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ means I have relinquished all attempts to please God and rely totally upon the work of the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation; then and only then is new life given to me. This is life everlasting for it neither is human life nor is it passed on through religion or paternity.

**No man cometh to the Father but by me.** To come to the Father is to obtain His favour in salvation, to have access to Him in prayer, and finally to enter into His presence permanently. No man can obtain any of these blessings except by the meritorious work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Coming to Him, the Father means coming in the name of the Son of God and depending on His merits, our access to God is solely through the Lord Jesus Christ. We are by nature ignorant of God's plans and the Lord Jesus Christ alone can guide us into the Father's presence. We are sinful, we are blind, we are lost, and only Jesus Christ can free us from the penalty of sin, give sight to blind eyes and save us. God has appointed Jesus as the one Mediator, and has purposed that all blessings shall come to the redeemed through the Lord Jesus Christ.

**7. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.**

**8. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.**

**9. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?**

**10. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.**

**11. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.**

**If ye had known me,** as I revealed myself to you in my words and good works there would be no doubt as to who I am. The Lord Jesus was suggesting their lack of understanding meant they were not fully aware of His plans, His character and how the foundation of the Church was to be laid in the Lord's obedience unto death. The disciples still retained the Jewish national idea respecting a temporal Messiah, they did not yet understand that He was to die and be raised from the dead; that knowing the Lord Jesus as the Son of God and as the Saviour was the intention of the Lord Jesus.

**Ye should have known my Father also.** If you knew me as my words and actions have declared and the plans of my Father respecting my death and resurrection you would not be troubled by what I say. If your Jewish prejudices about the Messiah were laid aside and you were to understand what the prophets had prophesied concerning me you would know and understand why it is necessary for me to die. The purposes and plans of God in my death at the hands of religious Jews are the best and the only way my Father can reveal His love for all mankind. A correct knowledge of the character and work of Christ is the same as a correct knowledge of the counsels and plans of God. It is most important we leave aside all man's notions and accept without prejudice the plan of God. Knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour is starting to know God as the Father

of our Lord Jesus Christ and as our own personal God. Further knowledge is gained as we progress in holiness, desiring and seeking God in His word and in personal communion with Him.

**From henceforth**, from this time, from my death and resurrection you will understand the plans and counsels of God. Not by a natural comprehension that I AM, but that God is my Father and I AM the Son of God.

**Ye know him** and will have a balanced view of His plans when you see them fulfilled in me; in my death and resurrection, when I have sent the Holy Spirit to be with you. The Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth; is the affirmation given by the Lord Jesus Christ. You **have seen him**; have seen the Father in Jesus Christ, His Son. His express image is His Son, and the brightness of His glory, Heb 1:<sup>3</sup>. Seeing the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God we see God the Father, verse 9. Man cannot look on God and live; the Lord Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh thereby making it possible for man to see God.

In the closing verses of chapter 13 the Lord Jesus addresses Peter. Thomas asks a question of the Lord early in chapter 14, the Philip puts a request to the Lord a short time later. Why Lord; how Lord; and show Lord; these three requests to the Lord Jesus though asked with a genuine desire to know the truth but miss the point in what has been previously taught.

We are prone to take from the Bible what suits us and our peculiar need at the time. This type of Christianity breeds cults and brings divisions among the saints. Essential to a walk with the Lord, a walk not missing steps, not stumbling is to submit to the Word without adjustments that make believing easier or communion with the saints less confrontational.

**Lord, shew us the Father**, Philip here would like some outward and visible manifestation of God. God had manifested Himself in various ways and divers manners to the prophets and saints of old; Philip is asking for a similar revelation. He wants to walk by sight and does not yet know the saints of this new dispensation will walk by faith; believing God was manifest in the Lord Jesus Christ. It was right to desire evidence that Jesus was the Christ; such evidence had been abundantly displayed in the miracles and heard in the teaching of Jesus.

I have been a long time with you said the Lord Jesus to Philip. There is no excuse for church goers, no excuse for those children brought up in a home where the parents are believers. The longer we are exposed to the Gospel the more inexcusable we are. The Lord Jesus expected Philip to have gained some relevant knowledge. Christ expects that our understanding of divine things should be in some measure according to the time we spend hearing the Word of God and or listening to the ministry of the Word of God. The Lord expects us to grow in grace and knowledge, He expects us to grow and show others the significance of a vital faith.

Personal experience goes a long way in proving the truth. Personal experience agreeing with the Word of God is irrefutable. Personal experience based on the senses or on hearsay is unreliable.

Our minds are conditioned to accept only what we see with our eyes and understand with our limited intellects, and what we have been taught by personal experience. Peter would rely on personal experience and strength of body, and weapons made by man. Thomas would not rely on personal experience, on what he had heard even after spending years with the Lord Jesus as He ministered in Israel.

Philip wanted to see with his own eyes something spiritual and impressive he could understand. **No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.** John 1:<sup>18</sup>. And for today John speaks to us with the same words. **No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us,** 1John 4:<sup>12</sup>.

To Peter the Word of God says, without me you can do nothing. To Thomas the Word of God says Jesus and the Cross is the only way into the kingdom of God; seeing the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God we see the Father; we have access to the Father through the Son. To Philip the Word of God says the only way we can look on God and live is to see in the Lord Jesus Christ God manifest in the flesh.

**He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;** said the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other possible interpretation of this statement; it is categorical, definite and uncompromising. The Father being invisible, to see Him with mortal, bodily eyes is not possible. But the Father was seen, and we may see Him in His Son, Christ Jesus the Lord. The Son is the express image of the Father, being one in essence with Him. The Father and the Son are in complete agreement in all things. The mystery of the Godhead remains; God is Triune, three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God. the further words of the Lord Jesus Christ do not explain the Triune God but they do teach us to have faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

True knowledge of the Father cannot be obtained other than by true knowledge of the Son; and if the Son is known in truth, the Father is known also. We only know the Father just so far as we know His Son, no farther. Christ was more than a manifestation of God; He was **God manifest in flesh**. He was the Only-begotten, who fully declared His Father.

**10. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.** We, my father and I are essentially one says Jesus; those who have seen me have seen Him who sent me. My Father sent me into the world for a specific purpose. **We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world** 1John 4:<sup>14</sup>. My Father does the works through me; the miracles I have performed and words I have spoken are directly from my Father. We are not only one in nature, but one also in all that I do and will do for the salvation of man. I purpose and perform to bring glory to my Father. The works which I have done bear witness of my divine nature; the works and words are sufficient proof I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Such miracles as I have wrought could only be performed by unlimited power, by God, my Father God.

We are called upon to believe that Jesus Christ is God. We are to know God in Jesus Christ. We approach God only through the Lord Jesus Christ, in His name and through His ever efficacious sacrifice. God dwells in us by His Holy Spirit; by the Spirit of Christ in us we know God as our Father. This relationship began with the salvation provided for us when we accepted as our own and personal need, the Saviour provided by our loving heavenly Father. Each person of the Godhead has a specific role, yet as divine each person of the Godhead is not limited to a particular role.

Note, we are told specifically in various places in the Word of God that each Child of God is indwelt by God the Father, the Holy Spirit of God and by the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God. We are not called upon to explain this, simply to believe it.

**Believe me that I am in the Father, --- believe me for the very works' sake.** The works the Lord Jesus did while here on earth were done in the power of God. No human power could raise the dead, still the storm, and calm the troubled sea. No power or ability of man could reveal the motives of a sinner, or cure a leper or read the heart of a man. The Lord Jesus Christ calls upon us to believe He is in the Father. The works He performed is confirmation of His deity. The words He spoke are believable, if only for the fact of the miracles He performed; no mere man is capable of doing the same as the Lord Jesus Christ. His words were uttered with divine authority and His actions were accompanied with divine power.

The Lord Jesus calls us to believe His words; if there is reluctance in believing what He has said then let the works confirm the words He speaks.

Personal experience in each Child of God witnesses to the saving power of the Lord Jesus; paying the price of our redemption was something only the Lord Jesus Christ could do. We who are the redeemed of the Lord believe the word of the Lord and the works of the Lord. The Word of the Lord telling us how we can be saved and the Works of the Lord Jesus showing us He has power to save. The Word of God tells us Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; the work of the Christ Jesus in saving sinners was complete when He cried **“it is finished”**. At that time the Lord Jesus Christ satisfied His Father; He tasted death for every man. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ showed He was completely satisfied with the word and work of His beloved Son when He raised Him from among the dead.

**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 my 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 any thing in my name, I will do it.**

The miracles which I have wrought display the power of God, said the Lord Jesus Christ; but that omnipotent power can work greater miracles in numbers and outreach than I in my ministry limited to Israel. Those who believe on my name shall, through my almighty power, do greater miracles than those which I have executed. It is God who works in us both to will and to do His works.

The Lord Jesus Christ gives His miraculous power to His disciples. All believers have the potential, indwelt by the Holy Spirit; to do the works of God, though miracles are not always the way God chooses to display His omnipotence.

Perhaps the greater works that the disciples will do refer to the multitudes saved in the preaching of the Gospel, by the apostles; and subsequently by others who believed the message brought to them which they believed and conveyed. By the apostles the doctrine of Christ Jesus as Lord was spread far and wide. The Lord Jesus Christ confined His ministry mainly to Judea. It is a miracle of grace to convert the wicked heart of man from sin and sinful desires to abhorrence of sin and a desire for holiness; the disciples did this as the Lord Jesus worked through them. The disciples in preaching the Gospel of the grace of God reached into many countries and many more hearts. Their effectiveness in the Gospel was entirely due to the Lord Jesus sending the Holy Spirit, when He returned to be with His Father. Sending the Holy Spirit to be with those who believe in Christ Jesus for

salvation fulfilled the promise of the Lord Jesus which He made when talking to the disciples; greater works shall you do.

**Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name** to enable you to perform miracles, to preach the Gospel and reach the hearts of others may be granted to you in answer to your prayers. Prayer in my name claiming the promises I have made may see the result you look for.

There is a proviso inherent in this promise; we cannot expect a positive answer to our petitions if we are asking for personal reasons or self indulgence. The glory of God is at stake here and He will not give His glory to another or share it with another. When the Lord is pleased to answer my prayers it is so that He will receive the praise. We are permitted to ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ because God is satisfied with the work the Lord Jesus has accomplished. The Lord Jesus Christ is building the Church and He is very particular what bricks are used, where they are placed and the mixture of the mortar holding them together. It is the love of Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour that holds the stones in place and it is love for the Lord Jesus Christ that keeps the building from disintegrating. The Lord is the architect and the builder. The Lord will build according to His plans and strictly to His own design and program; finishing the edifice at the appointed time.

The Lord Jesus Christ makes a promise to do whatever we ask in His name. This obviously excludes all we ask for in order to satisfy our own lusts as James 4:<sup>3</sup> makes clear; **ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.**

Believing prayer gives to each child of God a resource unknown in all other religions. The prayer of a believer, a Christian, is heard by the maker of the universe, is considered in the light of eternity with the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ as the basis for an answer.

**15. If ye love me, keep my commandments.**

**16. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;**

**17. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.**

**18. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.**

**19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.**

**20. At 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 to him.**

**22. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it 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 words: 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 sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.**

**25. ¶ These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.**

**26. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.**

**If ye love me**, do not be overly concerned at the thought of my being separated from you. Physical separation is no barrier to my knowing your state of mind or the opposition you may face from religious leaders or from antagonists in the world around you. The way to show your devotion to me is genuine is to keep my commandments. Christ requires an obedient love, and loving obedience.

Love without obedience is hypocrisy, obedience without love is slavery. A love producing obedience to the Lord and his Word is genuine as the Apostle Paul teaches. Waiting on the Lord and working with the Lord, makes the best servant.

**Keep my commandments.** This is the only true evidence of love for Jesus; profession is not proof of love. That love for Him which leads us to do His will, to love each other, to deny ourselves, to take up our cross, and to follow Him is true love. The evidence we have that a child loves its parents is when that child is willing to do all that the parent requires of him. The disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ are required to show that they love Him above all others and all things by obedience to His requirements, and by continuing in His will in the face of ridicule.

**16. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;** Christ, by his prevailing prayer, His intercession ensures His disciples will have the blessing of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus speaks of a future event; so it is a promise of Christ's continual intercession on behalf of all who will yet believe; applying to all future disciples. Christ in heaven sends the Holy Spirit to each believer at the moment faith is exercised in Him for salvation. This promise was given to the disciples to console them; they were despondent at the prospect of His death/departure.

There is no thought of a partial blessing of the gift of the Holy Spirit; each believer has the Holy Spirit indwelling. Realising and experiencing the fullness of the gift is dependant on an individuals determination to be obedient to the Word of God

The author of the blessing is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; **I will pray the Father, and He shall give.** The Father, my Father, your Father, the God and Father of all comfort; He will give this blessing in answer to my prayer says the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no greater or more positive assurance for a Child of God than the word of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Another Comforter;** Jesus is to the disciples a counsellor, a guide, a friend and teacher while with them. He instructed them, corrected them and consoled them. Now He was about to leave them to an unfriendly world and antagonistic religious leaders. Another Comforter was to be given to console the disciples in His absence, to do for them what He would do if He had remained with them in person.

The apostles would be guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit, 14:<sup>26</sup>; 15:<sup>26</sup> and He would convince men of sin, of righteousness and judgement.

The plan of God included that Jesus should be raised from the dead, ascend to heaven and the risen Lord should send the Holy Spirit to continue the work of building the Church.

Jesus the man could not be personally and bodily present in all places with the multitudes who should believe on Him. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent, and can be with all redeemed. He is with them in person. The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, sent forth by the Lord Jesus Christ is with each believer regardless of their human status. It was evidently planned that each of the persons of the Triune God should perform His appropriate work. The Father in sending His Son, the Son, as the propitiation for our sins and the Intercessor and the Holy Spirit in revealing the holiness of God and leading the sinner to the Saviour and then into the presence of God.

The word translated Comforter is used in the New Testament five times. In four instances in this Gospel it is applied to the Holy Spirit, 14:<sup>16</sup>; 14:<sup>26</sup>; 15:<sup>26</sup>; 16:<sup>7</sup>. In the other instance it is applied to the Lord Jesus: **We have an advocate (Paraclete, Comforter) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.** 1John 2:<sup>1</sup>.

It is used only by John. Its proper meaning is to call one to help us, to give legal aid, as in a court of law. Then also to plead, to entreat, to pray or plead as an advocate does. The word may be translated either advocate, monitor, teacher, or helper. The Lord Jesus Christ tells us the work of the Holy Spirit is to comfort the disciples; to be with them in His absence and to minister in the place of the Lord Jesus until He returns to take the Church home to be with Him.

The Holy Spirit will teach us, remind us of truth; aid us in our Christ centred activities. It is by the Spirit that we are enabled to stand before our adversaries, and to speak boldly in the name of Jesus, Matthew 10:<sup>20</sup>. With the Holy Spirit our lives may be a testimony to the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**That he may abide with you forever.** Not that He should remain with us for a few years, or be chased out; neither to suggest the work in a believer may ever be finished before we are presented faultless before the Father in heaven.

The Holy Spirit is called, another Comforter. The blessing of the Holy Spirit dwelling with a believer is from God. The Holy Spirit knows the Truth and is able to comfort all Gods' children. He is with us. The Holy Spirit is a divine person, the Comforter in all things related to God the Father.

The Holy Spirit is a Comforter; an advocate, an intercessor for us; an encourager, and one that ministers to us the graces and mercies of Christ. As the Holy Spirit, His comforts are in accordance with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no greater comfort than to know that the creator of the universe, the redeemer of sinful man, the one who sustains all His children, is in fact God, the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will abide with Believers, the redeemed of the Lord for ever. The blessings of the Holy Spirit presence are powerful and knowable. The Holy Spirit is not limited to the emotions and feelings of men, His thoughts and ways for us know no boundaries, they are not limited by human shortcomings, they are everlasting solace and support.

The Holy Spirit is called the **Spirit of Truth;** partly in opposition to Satan, who is called a lying spirit, but mainly because the Holy Spirit teaches and reveals only Truth. The Holy Spirit leads all Believers into truth,



and seals and confirms truth to the hearts of believers. He is the Spirit of truth, in all aspects of the work of the Lord, in the saints, in the building of the Church, in the testimony and the example of the grace of God.

Notice the Lord Jesus Christ said "I am the Way, the **Truth** and the Life".

It is necessary to issue a warning now; the only reliable check we have against error is the Word of God. Our own feelings and the words of man are only trustworthy when they measure up to the Word of God. We may be confident the Holy Spirit will not teach believers controversial doctrines, confident that all He teaches will be true to the Word of God. We cannot expect the guidance or assistance of the Holy Spirit in following our own agenda or if we live with sin we have not confessed or sought forgiveness for.

The Lord Jesus says to His disciples **but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.** The world cannot receive or know the Holy Spirit. He who sent the Holy Spirit to be with us is the only one who does know Him for they, the Son of God and the Holy Spirit, are one with the Father.

**18. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.** The disciples of a particular teacher among the Jews called their teacher father; his scholars were called his children, and on the death of their teacher were considered as orphans. Christ calls His disciples children, beloved children, 13:<sup>33</sup>; now that He is about to leave them by His death, He assures them that they will not be left as children without a father, without a teacher. In a short while He promises to come again, rise from among the dead, and after his ascension to glory, the Holy Spirit would be sent to be their Comforter, Advocate, Teacher, and Guide to be with them for their earthly journey.

The presence of the Holy Spirit is not a guarantee of peace in the world, or that a Believer will not be persecuted for his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The promise is for the comfort of each child of God in all the trials sure to come upon those who will live a good Christian life in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. The promise gives the assurance of the presence of the Lord Jesus, by the Holy Spirit, through all the trials affecting His people while here; before the Lord calls His people home. The promise of the Holy Spirit abiding in each believer is also the enablement in the believer to withstand all the trials that will beset him.

**Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more;** the normal physical presence of the Lord Jesus Christ is shortly to end. The death of the Lord is imminent, the grave is a reality. The disciples are given this promise to comfort them some hours before the crucifixion to comfort them.

**But ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.** The Lord makes it abundantly clear that the natural man will not see Him after He is nailed to the tree, dies and is buried. What is an enigma to the disciples will be made plain, the Lord Jesus will live after He is crucified and death will have no more claim on Him. They who follow the Lord Jesus Christ into death, not necessarily physical, will live with Him.

As surely as I shall rise from the dead, so shall you, my followers. My resurrection shall be the proof you will share in the life I live. I, in my resurrection life will intercede for you at the right hand of my Father. You shall have live a life of peace here, peace with God, and know the blessing awaiting you is a life of glory with me for evermore. The peace you will know with me is not the peace of the world, no antagonism, no emotional disturbance, no warfare; it is an inner peace, peace with God. I'll tell you more after I am raised from among the dead.

The day is coming when you will **know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.** After my resurrection, you will be fully convinced of this important truth, that **I and the Father are one.** I will live in you by my Spirit, and you shall live in me by faith, and experience the truth of that unique union by my love in you and your obedience to my commands.

**At that day** refers to the time when my resurrection life shall be personally realised by each of you, says the Lord Jesus. The assurance that I live will be your confidence in all the work I call you to do. This refers to the time after the resurrection and the Lord's ascension to glory, and to the manifestations which in various ways He would make that He was alive.

**20. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.** A believer's spiritual life is derived from Christ. The Lord Jesus, by the Holy Spirit gives eternal life to the members of His spiritual body; quickening all His members. Because He lives, they shall live also. The Lord Jesus tells us our lives are bound up with His; we are 'in Him' our lives are inseparably bound up with Him. As the Lord Jesus Christ is with the Father so are we 'in Him'.