

Commentary on the Epistle to the John

written by Murray McLellan

The Gospel of John

II. Jesus' Self-Disclosure in Word and Deed (1:19-10:42)(Part 2)

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The ground of meaning in every section, as we have seen, is the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus, in this next dialog, continues to disclose Himself as the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises and institutions. As we read this portion of John's gospel, we will not see powerful miracles, but many in a town are converted through the testimony of one forgiven sinner. What a testimony to the truth that it is not signs and power evangelism that is needed - just the changed life and testimony of a saved sinner speaking of the Christ!

V. 1-3 "Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples). He left Judea and departed again to Galilee.

Knowing that His hour had not yet come, Jesus chose to avoid a confrontation with the Pharisees. (After this, He visited Jerusalem only occasionally, until the end of His ministry when He entered in triumph and stayed to die in triumph!)

V. 4 But He needed to go through Samaria.

He needed. There was an alternate route - one taken by most Jews in order to avoid the Samaritans. So why did He need to go through Samaria? There was one reason why Jesus needed to do anything? Luke 2: 49. (See also: Luke 4: 43; 9: 22; 13: 33; 17: 25; 19: 5; 22: 37; 24: 7; 24: 44; John 3: 14; 3: 30; 9: 4; 10: 16; 20: 9) So this is a must need that is part of that compulsion to do His Father's will - to be the Redeemer, to be the suffering Servant, to have fellowship with His people. It is the gospel work He must do. The Samaritan woman was not seeking Him, but He comes seeking her. She didn't know who He was, but He knew her. He knew all about her. She came for earthly things, but He gave her heavenly things!

Samaria came to be as a result of the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon. Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was a foolish and weak king, who took bad advice and governed the people poorly. As a result there was a large rebellion against him, led by Jeroboam, and the kingdom split into two parts. In the south, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to the house of David. Following this split, they were known as the kingdom of Judah. The other tribes broke off and declared Jeroboam to be their king. They became known as the kingdom of Israel. The new capital of this northern kingdom of Israel became the city of Samaria. To prevent the people of Israel from drifting back to the house of David, Jeroboam established a new worship center to replace Jerusalem. (Read 1 Kings 12: 25-33) Jeroboam established his home in Shechem and set up worship centers at the northern and southern extremes of the kingdom, with idolatrous golden calves - the very idols that had caused God to say that none of the earlier generation should enter into the promised land. For this reason, Jeroboam was always known thereafter as, "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin."

So the province of Samaria was the descendent of that original northern kingdom of Israel; a kingdom built on blasphemy, idolatry, and rebellion against God. It is not difficult to see why the religious Jews shunned both the people and the place itself.

Centuries later, when the Assyrians conquered the kingdom of Israel, and later when the Babylonians controlled the region, most Israelites were taken captive. The region became inhabited by outsiders who, contrary to God's laws, inter-married with the remaining Israelites. Those who returned later had mingled their blood with the nations among whom they had been placed. Therefore, by Jesus' day, it was a region of

mongrels and half-breeds. They were regarded with the deepest disdain by the Jews who could trace their pure bloodlines back to Abraham. To the Jews, the worst thing about the Samaritans was that they were part Israelite. They were a living declaration of apostasy, sin, and lawlessness.

V. 5 So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

When we read and compare Gen. 33: 18-19 and Josh. 24: 32, we see that Sychar is in the same location as ancient Shechem. It would seem that Sychar and Shechem are one and the same. Isn't the Bible a sufficient source of all we need to understand the Scriptures?

Shechem was a place of great historical significance. This was the first identifying mark of the promised land (Gen. 12: 6-7). It is not surprising that Joshua gave his farewell address to the people from Shechem. Read Joshua 24: 1, 22-25. Shechem became one of the cities of refuge in Israel, where an accused manslayer could go to escape the avenger of blood. (Josh. 20; 1 Chron. 6: 67) Now we have Abraham's Seed come to this place - the seat of Israel's great apostasy. And really, was that not the state of Israel when Jesus came - sinful, self-righteous Israel that would at length murder the One who was sent to it, rather than acknowledge and repent of their sin?

One day long ago, Joseph was sent by his father to this location to see his brothers (Gen. 37: 12). So, too, now Jesus, doing His Father's will comes to Shechem - to Sychar.

Now we narrow the focus to a well - a particular well.

V. 6-8 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

(See also v. 12) Jacob himself met Rachel at an encounter at a well, at the sixth hour, when Rachel had come to water the sheep. That was not a chance encounter and neither is this! Here we have, at the same hour (6th hour is twelve noon when the sun is at its highest - compare Gen. 29: 7), two bridegrooms meeting two brides. One meeting led to the birth of a

nation - Israel. The other espousal leads to the birth of a new nation - the church. The church, like the woman of Samaria, in its original state is worthless, defiled, unlovely, and wicked. But He has chosen her for His bride! (See Song of Solomon 4: 15 and earlier context). Jesus has come to this particular well at this particular time because some sheep needed to be watered with living water!

It is hard not to notice the contrast between Nicodemus who came at night. We saw a "holy man" in darkness and now we are about to see an immoral woman in the light. The gracious God of heaven and earth is about to shine in her heart the glory of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ. In fact, the Son of Righteousness in this episode shines so gloriously in magnificent grace and mercy to such a sinful wretch that the sun pales in comparison!

We have set the stage. Let us now look to the action.

As we look again at our text in verse 6, we see "Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well." Jesus was wearied to the point of utter exhaustion. Why? Why did He labor on in the full heat? Why did He bear the heat and the burden of the day? It was to bring this woman salvation! He had not just travelled from Judea to meet this woman. He had come from heaven itself!

Jesus sat down, having finished His journey. Now He was in a position to bring salvation to this woman and the others who are far from God (v. 39-42). What about you? Where do you quench your thirst - from the well from which you will thirst again; the water which will not ultimately satisfy, or from Jesus - the fountain of living waters? (See Ps. 63: 1; Ps. 42: 1-2)

"And in that day you will say: 'O Lord, I will praise You; though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for Yah, the Lord, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.' Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." (Isa. 12: 1-3)

For that woman and for many of her fellow citizens, that day had arrived!

What are you thirsty for? What is your greatest need? Is it forgiveness and cleansing from your sin and acceptance with God? Oh, Jesus can satisfy that thirst! This is Jacob's well. It is not called Israel's well. Jacob is the deceiver, the scoundrel - you worm, Jacob. Israel is the prince. I am so glad He tells us He is the God of

Jacob. That God is my hope and salvation!

Let us continue to gaze on this man, sitting by the well, who is Christ the Lord. We see Him ask the woman for a drink. This is not the last time He would need refreshment. What a picture provided of His hour to come - when on the cross when He would cry out, wearied and exhausted, "I thirst." (John 19:28) At that moment, some nearby took and filled a sponge with sour wine and put it on hyssop to give to Him. If they would have known who it was who asked them for a drink, they would have asked Him for living water!

In Gen. 24:42-43, we see a parallel where Abraham's servant was not really after a drink of water. He had another mission. He had something to give to the woman - a husband and an inheritance! (See also 1 Kings 17:8-16 where the prophet Elijah asks for a drink, and ends up supplying all this woman needs.)

Jesus' journey does not end at this well in Samaria. It ends at the cross. Nicodemus came to Jesus, seeking Him out, thinking he'd be accepted. Jesus came to this outcast, seeking her out. Notice that He didn't wait for her to ask. He came in the spirit of compassionate and friendly "aggression." Jesus' willingness to receive sinners is such an incredible truth which ought to be treasured up in our hearts and diligently impressed on others.

The Lord Jesus is far more ready to hear than we are to pray, and far more ready to give favours than we are to ask them. He has thoughts of pity and compassion towards the vilest of sinners, even when they have no thoughts of Him. All day long He stretches out His hands to bestow mercy and grace on the worst and most unworthy, if they will only cry to Him. The penitent thief on the cross, the publican, Zacchaeus, and this Samaritan woman are all testimonies of Christ's readiness to show mercy. You may have, up to this day, been as careless, thoughtless, and sinful as this woman whose story we have been studying. But yet there is hope. He who spoke with the Samaritan woman at the well is yet living at God's right hand and He never changes. Ask and He will give you living water!

May these studies enhance your understanding and appreciation of Christ and His gospel work. I hope you see that this woman stands for more than herself. She represents all of God's chosen redeemed people called by the gospel into faith, repentance, and new life.

A type is a piece of metal or wood with a raised

backward letter. Its purpose is not to be read but to have ink rolled on it and when pressed on paper, it makes a readable impression. The type itself is backwards and obscure. The thing you read is the anti-type, where it is clear black on white. The type serves to present the anti-type. The anti-type takes over from the type which has fulfilled its purpose when you see the clear message - the clear Word! The woman had revered the well (see v.12), but she was soon to revere and worship the One who alone could forever satisfy her true thirst and need.

The Samaritan woman's whole path is predestined. Had she decided to stay in bed later that morning, or get up earlier, or for some other circumstance, missed this encounter with Jesus ?. NO! That could not have been. This encounter was orchestrated long before the sun arose that morning! She made her choices freely, and yet all in accordance with the determined, eternal purposes of God and His immensely wise plan of salvation and providence. This was not a stroke of luck for this woman. It was the purpose of One who had set His love upon this woman before time began!

God was not holding His breath, hoping this woman would make the right choices and then being relieved when she showed up. No, God is sovereign - gloriously so! Thankfully so, for the sake of this woman. Thankfully so, for you and me!!! "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd." (John 10:16) "Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." (Rom. 8:30)

Jesus Christ found her out and like Lydia, He opened her heart to receive the things she heard. She had been blind. She had been dead. Now she saw. Now she lived! She heard truth and she believed it. This is the pattern of all conversions. "So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." (Rom. 10:17)

V. 9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jews wouldn't touch a Samaritan. That was a result of their wrong external and physical focus. It isn't that which goes in from the outside that corrupts, but what is inside - the spiritual reality. (Matt. 15:1-20)

It is so delightful to see that Jesus sanctifies what He

touches. Others who touch lepers become unclean. Jesus touches a leper and brings healing!

The woman is surprised that a man - a Jew - would condescend to speak to a Samaritan woman, and even condescend so low as to drink out of the same cup! (The phrase "have no dealings with" could be translated as "do not use vessels together with"). However, the condescension is even greater than she realizes. The glorious Son of God has come to die for such a rebel creature - to drink the cup of wrath she deserved - to bring her into everlasting fellowship - sharing the same cup of blessing!

V. 10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

The "gift of God" - God gives. (See John 1:9; 1:12..this is a gift!; John 6:32; 17:2; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9). Death is earned and deserved, but eternal life is a gift - unearned, undeserved, unmerited. The woman had the idea that salvation lay in right law-keeping works and sacrifices in right places (v. 20). She needed to realize that salvation is a gift.

Secondly, she needed, not only to know the gift, but also the Giver. (i.e. "and who it is who says to you?") He is the One who has come from Judea to speak to this woman. He is the One who has come from heaven to speak to this woman. He is the One who has laid aside the glory and honor of the only begotten Son of God, to suffer in the heat and burden of the day to speak the words of life to this woman. He is the One who made the waters in the first place. He is the One who separated the waters from the dry land. He appointed to the waters their limits. He is the One who caused the mist to rise up in the garden. He is the One who set a river in Eden which went out from there, forming four rivers. He is the One who spread the windows of heaven and broke up the fountains of the deep. He is the One who parted the waters for the children of Israel to go through. He is the One who gave water from the rock to keep Israel in the wilderness. Oh, if you only knew who it was who asked you for a drink. The winds and the waves obey Him! In truth, the gift and the Giver are one and the same (see Isa. 9:6; Isa. 49:6,8).

He would have given living water. (See Isa. 43:20; Jer. 2:13) The New Covenant has come! The prophets looked forward to a time when "living water will flow out from Jerusalem." (Zech. 14:8-9; see also Ezek. 47:8-9 where

we read of a healing stream. Remember ch. 3 - "born of water" [a cleansing] "and the Spirit"; see also John 7: 37-38! And 19: 34). The water is the satisfying eternal life mediated by the Spirit that only Jesus, the Messiah and Savior of the world, can provide.

As we read this passage, I think we need to give some considerations regarding our evangelism as we observe Jesus. We are not saying that these are absolutes, but some observations to consider. We need to ponder what Jesus did in this particular situation - not every time, but this time.

Notice that He asked her a question. He made contact. He was the one who took the initiative. Being a woman, she would never have said anything to Him, a Jew. He didn't start with a religious argument or even rebuking her sin. He didn't start by calling her to repent of her sins. He asked her for a drink. He humbled Himself to relate to her.

He also "salted" her curiosity to make her think. (i.e. "If you knew the gift of God ?")

Let us look for every opportunity to reveal the grace of God - to witness of the gospel. There are no accidental circumstances. Let us be ready always and cross any barriers to take the gospel to needy sinners.

If you are not a Christian, it is not because you know Christians and they're a bunch of hypocrites etc. That may be true, but that's not why you aren't a Christian. If you are not a Christian, you are ignorant of who Jesus is and what His so great salvation is. "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." If you knew the gift of God - you'd want it! If you really understood who Christ is, you couldn't help but want Him! If you knew what His grace was and if you had ever tasted it, you could not help but to want all you could get! Don't close your eyes to who Christ is. Don't plug your ears to His gracious invitation. Many do, because they don't want to know. How incredibly sad.

V. 11-12 The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" She ends up saying a lot more than she meant! (John 4: 14; 7: 37-38) Indeed the well is deep. There is no well deeper than the

love of God shown to sinners, in which we have eternal life, peace, and fellowship with God - forgiveness, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

Jesus appeared without any apparent resources to draw out water from the well of salvation. He appeared powerless. On the cross, He appeared powerless, but there He defeated the devil and overturned the fall and the curse!

Where do you get living water? It is obviously not from this well of Jacob - for Jacob drank here and died. Is a greater than Jacob here? Yes! Jesus is the fullness and substance of all the shadows. "in this place there is One greater than the temple?" (Matt. 12:6) "indeed a greater than Jonah is here?" (Matt. 12:41) "indeed a greater than Solomon is here?" (Matt. 12:42) One is there who is greater than Abraham - One who said, "Before Abraham was, I am."

Jesus is indeed infinitely greater than Jacob. Jacob had to cover himself to gain his father's blessing. Jesus covers us that we might be blessed! And He does so righteously - before all - in Him is no darkness at all!

V. 13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,

It is temporary. The old - Jacob - Israel - the old covenant - they are earthbound. Whoever drinks of the old covenant well will thirst again. (See John 6:48-50, 58, 63).

As valuable as Jacob's well was, it quenched thirst only for a short while. He that drinks of the living water that Christ gives shall never lose the cleansing and purifying and soul refreshing effects which it produces. The gift of grace and mercy and peace which Jesus is ready to give, shall be in the heart of him who receives it as an ever-flowing source of comfort, satisfaction, and spiritual refreshment that will never dry up - but continually flowing on unto life eternal.

V. 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." "But" shows the contrast. The new is better, like Hebrews declares over and over.

Isaiah 12:1-3 is an amazing passage to read in light of John 4.

"And in that day you will say: 'O Lord, I will praise You; though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for Yah, the Lord, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.' Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." (Isa. 12: 1-3)

In three places, as shown by the bold print, the Hebrew word "yeshuwah" is translated. This is the Hebrew word for Joshua or Jesus! Behold, God is yeshuwah! He also has become my yeshuwah! Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of yeshuwah! The well is indeed deep!

(See also the echoes of Isa. 49: 8-10; Rev. 7: 14-17; Isa. 44: 3-5; Isa. 55: 1-5 [for all peoples!]; His Word is like water - Isa. 55: 10-11; Joel 3: 18-21; Rev. 21: 1-6; Matt. 5: 6)

The next few verses show where this woman has been drinking and it hasn't satisfied!

V. 15-18 The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

Jesus appeals to her thirst for satisfaction and happiness in life. This woman had had five husbands and another and it didn't satisfy. She could not find the one to satisfy her. She did not have true and lasting happiness. Obviously, she was finding no permanent satisfaction in these relationships, so she had to keep going on to find a new "love". She could never be satisfied until she began drinking from the water He alone could give her.

What water have you been drinking from, and how has it left you thirsty? As Jer. 2: 13 tells us, the jars are leaking, and thus, you'll have to go back to refill them again and again. Jesus offered this woman living water - a relationship that would truly satisfy!

Sin has a subtle way of taking you in further and further. Though it promises to satisfy you, it never does satisfy eternally. Sin is like salt water that just makes

you crave for more. Stop spending your time, energy, and money on that which will never satisfy you. Drink the water that brings delight, joy, and life to your soul. Contrast Psalm 36:8-9 with Job 6:14-21. Sin has its season - and then the pleasure turns to despair.

Jacob's well had had its day (i.e. Old - shadows) but now the ultimate reality had come to fulfill that which was promised. Knowing God in Christ in the new covenant ? now that is satisfying! That is fullness!

It is interesting to note as we watch Jesus, how He commends her - "You have well said? and ?in that you spoke truly." Even though she didn't give Him the whole story, He doesn't say, "You liar!" He is not abrasively confrontational! How would you speak to an adulteress who is shacking up? How many would call her to repent with a harshness? Jesus is a much more gentle and skilled Physician. Jesus is leading her to the living water, every step of the way!

V. 19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

Indeed, He was the greatest Prophet! (Deut. 18:15-18)

Since she considers Him to be a prophet, she is hoping that perhaps He can answer the age old question?

V. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

Like so many in religion, she doesn't see her life and immorality as disqualifying her as a true worshiper - as one under condemnation and not acceptance. As long as one does the prescribed rituals etc. people feel they are somehow okay. There is a distinct separation of religion and life.

It seems to me that the intent of her questions is: "If you are a prophet, and you obviously are, how can I know the truth? (i.e. Which is the true church? How can I know what is true? Which religion is proclaiming truth?) How can I know what is right when I see all this confusion and hatred among people who claim to love God?"

Jesus continues to be very gracious towards this sinful and ignorant woman.

The mountain she is referring to is Mount Gerizim - the mountain of blessing. (See Deut. 11:29; 27:4-8,11-

15,26; 28:1-2, 15) The twin peaks of Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal dominated the skyline of Shechem. The curses were attached to Mount Ebal and the blessing to Mount Gerizim if one could keep the whole law perfectly. Praise God, there is another covenant - another way of blessing! Such places and times are types and shadows - which are done away with in Christ.

V. 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

"Woman" - compare John 2:4. Whether you are a Mary or a Samaritan, there is no difference.

"believe Me" - (remember John 3:31-36)

The hour is coming - that hour when the veil would be torn from top to bottom, ending the whole Old Testament system of worship. The Old Covenant worship had its services (see Heb. 9:1). We have escaped the earthly covenant. We don't gather to worship. Worship is no longer going to a certain place and doing things. It is an inward state! See v. 23-24. Worship takes place in the heart where God resides. It is that day spoken of by Malachi. (Mal. 1:11)

We don't turn to candles for light under the noon day sun. Let us not turn to old covenant practices when the new has come! In the old covenant, worship took place in a specific place, and for the most part, the people were passive. The priests did everything. A physical location is an irrelevant thing in the new covenant. The new covenant people of God as His temple are worshippers. They are a holy priesthood with spiritual gifts. Romans 12:1-2 describes a new covenant era "worship service." For the believer, every part of life is worship. The believer's whole life is to be a worship service. Heb. 10:24-25 exhorts us that when we get together, we are to use our changed lives and spiritual gifts to encourage one another to live lives of worship. So the getting together is preparing, equipping, and encouraging one another to live a life of worship. That's why when believers get together it is to be a time of mutual participation.

V. 22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

"Salvation is of the Jews" - see Isa. 11:10. Jesus tells this woman, "You Samaritans just worship according to

your feelings and intuition and sincerity, but not according to truth." Jesus gives her the truth in love. Some try to love with no truth and end up in sentimental compromise and never get to the gospel. (We've probably all been guilty of that at sometime.) Others blare out the truth, with no real love or compassion. Our Lord speaks the truth in love.

V. 23-24 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

The hour is coming (John 12: 23, 17: 1) and, in fact, now is here in the person of Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant where the temple of worship is His body. The gospel takes away places and times (i.e. no sabbath day or even a "Lord's Day sabbath) and nationalities (no more genealogy). There is a new creation of one nation of true worshippers! This is what His hour - His sufferings and death accomplished. To bring back these things is to nullify the cross (i.e. Peter in Gal. 2: 11-21 at Antioch).

To try to bring back times and places and nations (i.e. like old Israel) is to say that Jesus' death did not bring in a new and better covenant (Rom. 4: 14). To go back to a plan for ethnic Jews as a separate people is to put Christ and His cross to an open shame according to Heb. 6.

The woman brought up the term "father." (v. 12, 20) This woman was trusting in the fact that she and her people were descendants of the "fathers". Jesus points out that there is no need to be related to another Father. Jesus speaks about the beginning of a new relationship with God, where He is to be seen as your Father. That is the relationship that matters! Don't trust in your fathers after the flesh. Trust in the One who is the express image of the Father - the One who alone can reconcile you to the Everlasting Father. The New Covenant people of God cry out by the Spirit, "Abba, Father!"

"?for the Father is seeking such to worship Him?" Jesus is saying to this woman, "The Father is seeking you. He is seeking your worship." And dear reader, the Father is seeking such as you, to bring you to a consciousness of your sin and need, and a consciousness of the amazing love of His Son - our Lord Jesus Christ! As we see the willingness of the Son to save sinners (Luke 19: 9-10), here we see the Father's same willingness to save souls.

He does not merely "wait" for man to come to Him. He "seeks" for them.

Who do you worship? Do you worship the true and living God? Zeal and sincerity is not acceptable to God unless it be in truth. Unless our worship is directed to the true God in the way prescribed by Him, it is unacceptable. We must worship God based on His own revelation of Himself. There is no worship, nor coming to God, except through the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Redeemer.

Since God is spirit, His worship must be spiritual. You must have the Spirit of God (Phil. 3:3). In addition, His worship must be in truth, not in "shadow". (Spirit - strikes at hypocrisy; Truth strikes at idolatry).

V. 25-26 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."
Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

The woman believed that when Messiah came, they'd know the truth. Jesus is very clear when He replies that He is the Messiah. Literally, He replies, "I am who speaks to you." Jesus is the "I AM" who spoke with Moses from the burning bush. This time there is no burning bush. There is no "Take off your shoes." Not since Eden has God spoken face to face in this way.

Do we not see our Lord's mercy? Do we not see our Lord's remarkable wisdom? Do we not see our Lord's patience in this scene opened up before us by John? What shocks me in light of the revelation of Jesus Christ, is the obstinate unbelief of the ungodly and their determined perseverance in the way to ruin (Mark 6:6).

V. 27 At this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?"

They still didn't really understand the plan - Christ's purpose. They didn't grasp that the gospel tears down all barriers set up by prideful men who think they are something when they are nothing! If our theology doesn't allow us to sit down with a sinful Samaritan woman by a well to tell her where she can find living water, something is wrong.

There is a place to not ask "why" but just to wonder! Sometimes we have to hold our peace, knowing there are reasons, but it is not necessarily needful that we

know why. Let us trust in our Lord!

V. 28-29 The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

She left her waterpot by the side of that old well. (Same word as "waterpot" in chapter 2) She had great eagerness to bear witness before the townspeople. Her whole world had changed. All things had become new. She had new priorities.

She calls them to come and see. (See Rev. 22: 17) These are familiar words (John 1:46) ? "Come see a Man!" ? "Behold the Man!" (Zech. 6:12, John 19:5)

Would it be that we become so excited about the gospel that we leave our waterpot and the things we were going to do, to tell some sinners about Jesus Christ. There is a problem with all of us. We are often not excited enough about the gospel, nor do we always take enough time with people to consciously testify of the gospel. The only thing that will make us this way is to be so thrilled with Christ and His gospel that we overflow with Living Water. Then we will tell others, "You just have to meet Him. You just have to hear this good news!"

So many people have lives that are terribly mixed up - just like this woman. May we have the grace to relate and help them. May we point them to Jesus Christ that they might drink the living water that Christ can give them, and satisfy them forever!

We certainly do not see a "canned" approach to the gospel in this or other scenes in the Bible. We do not see such an approach by Christ or by the woman. For the woman, it grew out of her experience. It grew out of the moment and her concern for the people she knew. Despite who she was, she was able to witness of the Christ! She takes the gospel to the men of her city, not worrying about whether it is right or wrong. She is so excited that she just proclaims. She doesn't think through excuses of why she shouldn't - she just does.

Something she said and how she said it, was blessed of God unto the salvation of many. I find it interesting that she doesn't just tell them that this is the Christ, but rather she got the men to inquire and judge for themselves. She doesn't start a debate. If evangelism was a matter of winning a debate, many couldn't do it,

because they are not good debaters or arguers. All she did was invite people to meet Jesus ?"Come and see?"

If you happened to come across a car accident and a fellow lay dying, and he spoke to you saying, "You're a part of that church where you preach about heaven and being saved. Can you tell me how to be saved? Can you tell me how to go to heaven and to be sure I'm forgiven?" Could you do it? Could you take the Scriptures and preach to him Jesus?

As believers we want to share the gospel of Christ, because it is the best thing we've ever tasted!!

V. 30-34 Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."

But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."

Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?"

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

The disciples continually confused the spiritual with the physical. Even the twelve often thought in terms of the physical.

For Jesus, His "Father's business" took priority over His own bodily hunger. He found such refreshment in eternal purposes that for the moment he did not feel the physical hunger. Christ's satisfaction ("food") in doing the will of the Father led Him to seek and to save that which was lost - ultimately going to the cross.

V. 35 Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!

This could mean one of two things:

- You say it is four months until the harvest, but I say that now is the harvest already in the spiritual kingdom.

Or

- You say it takes four months before there can be a harvest, but, in the spiritual realm, it can be instantaneous. I say to you that it can be right now! You can sow the seed and almost instantaneously, there can be a harvest by the blessing of God. If this is the case then Jesus is saying, "I have just sown the seed and the harvest is already taking place!"

As we look out in our community, do we see the fields white - ripe for harvest or white with the cold snowy slumber of indifference and nobody is interested in the gospel? I wonder if the same could have been said about Samaria the day before?

Do you believe God can use His Word and draw people to Himself in a great white harvest? Then let us pray and labor, sowing the seed!

Do you believe that in your work and weekly schedule, God is providentially setting up meetings like Jesus and this woman? Are you asking God to do that and expecting Him to do it? Do you want God to do that? Are you ready for Him to do that?

Don't say that we have to have four months or this or that. If you know Jesus Christ, this week God may bring you to a well to talk to some poor soul He has prepared. They may have a heart plowed up to receive the seed of the Word, just as the Wind blows by!

V. 36-38 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."

The reaper doesn't have to wait. He is employed now, because the harvest time has already arrived. There is a day when sowing and reaping will come together (Amos 9:13).

It may be that you sow and another reaps. Whether we sow or reap, we are working in harmony towards the same goal. (In fact, in the reaping we see in Acts 8:4-8, I believe someone had sown earlier!) Even if you never see the fruit of your labor, you will be rewarded! (1 Cor. 3:8) Do not grow weary in doing good (Ps. 126:5-6). One single soul saved shall outlive and outweigh all the kingdoms of the world!!!

V. 39-42 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

Do you believe, "If God can save me, He can save anybody"? If not, you have not had a clear look at your own heart.

Can God use me, even as He used that woman? Let that be our goal and our prayer. This woman had never evangelized before. She'd taken no seminar, nor had she read any books. Do you have a gospel to preach? What we need is to have ready hearts that feel the power of the gospel we are sharing. It is not a matter of words spoken by a cold heart that is unaffected by the truth of which we are speaking.

Let us look for opportunities to be about our Lord's business. And let's be real. We don't want some method that's a phony as a three dollar bill.

H. The Witness of His Healing Word (4:43- 5:47) - [To Top](#)

(i) A Nobleman's Son Healed (4:43-54)

V. 43-49 Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in His own country. So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.

So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe,"

The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

We now have Jesus continuing the journey began in v. 3. The welcome of the Galileans was dependent upon miracles. This was so unlike the faith of the Samaritans!

(i.e. see v. 45, and 6:26, 66)

The focus then turns to a certain nobleman in a desperate situation. His son is sick and near unto death. He hears that Jesus is in the vicinity and so he seeks Him out and makes an earnest plea to Him. Jesus seems to give him a gentle rebuke, almost as if to push him away. However the man will not be pushed away, and he persists and cries again.

Sickness and death are no respecter of persons. They have no regard for one's station in life or one's age. This was a rich nobleman, and this was his young son at the point of death.

There can be a tendency for people to envy the rich. Yet, even a man like David was much happier in the fields as a shepherd than he was when he was a king in his palace. We must also learn that riches in and of themselves are not good or bad. Riches in and of themselves do not prove or disprove the blessing of God. It is not a sin to be wealthy. It is how we handle this that is important. When Jesus said, "How difficult it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God," He didn't mean that rich people are more sinful. What He was getting at, I think, is that the rich often have a tendency to be self-sufficient and proud, and can solve things in their own power. Money is not almighty. So do not trust in riches. Use your riches for the kingdom of God.

In our passage, this nobleman faced something that his riches could not help with - his son's sickness unto death. He could not buy life. It is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment. Those joined to the Lord Jesus are safe, whether we die young or old.

The first grave ever dug in the history of the world was not dug for an old man, but for a youth - a young man murdered out of hate. The first person who ever died was not a father, but a son!

The nobleman's desperate situation causes him to seek Christ. In Psalm 119:71, David wisely writes, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." Anything that makes us face reality and come to Jesus Christ is one of the greatest blessings that God can send into your life.

This man had heard what Christ could do and that is what motivated him to come to Christ. He didn't care what anyone else thought. He was desperate. Have you heard what Christ can do? Have you heard how He can cleanse the poorest and vilest sinner?

V. 50 Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives."
So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him,
and he went his way.

This man needed to understand the authority of Jesus.
Jesus was not just a miracle worker. Jesus' authority
was such that He could speak miles away and this man's
son was healed. This nobleman was about to grasp
something of the authority of this Man called Jesus.
Jesus did not have to "come down."

The man believed the word of Jesus without seeing any
deed! He heeded the rebuke. "Now faith is the
assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things
not seen." (Heb. 11:1; NASB)

He believed the word of Jesus. Can I take this promise
for my son, if he is sick? Has Jesus Christ irrevocably
promised to heal my son if I have enough faith? No!
That is not a specific promise to me, concerning my son.
It was to that nobleman and his son. The health, wealth,
and prosperity gospel is widespread, but it is not built on
the Word of God. That is not a specific promise to you.
Can any person take this verse and say, "God owes me
this"? No! Can God heal any sick person in the world
today? Absolutely He can. Does He miraculously heal
some people? Absolutely. Has He promised to heal every
person who has enough faith? No, He hasn't done that.
In fact, to believe that will bring you into horrible
despair, if you are not careful. Many are believing that
God has promised something that God has not
promised.

You can claim by the strongest faith in the world
something that God has not promised. God has not
obligated Himself to your faith, but to His oath, His
covenant, and promise. When Jesus said to this man,
"Go your way; your son lives," He meant it and that
man could count on that. But I can't generalize that and
make a doctrine out of it, claiming that I have the same
right.

There is a promise of His Word that I can give you,
though. "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be
saved." (Rom. 10:13) And "that if you confess with your
mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God
has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Rom.
10:9) No "if's" or "but's" about it!

But what must I do if I want to be physically healed,
now? Is there a promise I can go to in the Word of God?

The answer is no. God can heal and He may heal and when we are sick, the first one we should run to is not the doctor but the Lord. We ought to ask Him what He's teaching us and to show us if there's something in our life that is the basis of this. We ought to pray for His grace to sustain us in this.

We must also recognize that if we are sick, it is not proof of our sinfulness. If we are not healed, it is not proof that we don't have any faith. True faith is in specific promises and in the person of Christ Himself. It is not the preacher we believe, or the church - it is Christ. When I was in darkness and heard John 3:16, I heard the promise of Christ. I heard it as the word that Jesus spoke to me, and I believed Him, and I have been going on the Way ever since. (Remember the Samaritans in John 4:42.)

V. 51-54 And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, "Your son lives!" Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household. This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

What mercy! This man did not deserve such a blessing from the Lord of all.

The man's faith was shared. He wanted to make the truth known. He proclaimed it to his whole household and they believed.

However, as we shall see, this was not the response of the majority of those in Galilee. Though seeing two incredible signs, they did not believe, as did the Samaritans who had seen no signs (John 4:44).
(ii) A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda (5:1-15)
V. 1-6 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, [waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.] Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long

time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

[Note: the end of verse 3 and all of verse 4 are not in any of the earlier manuscripts. Some think it is an addition, reflecting what people thought caused the stirring of the water. I will leave you to study and draw your own conclusions as to the merits of these words.]

What misery sin has brought into the world. This should cause us to recognize how deeply we ought to hate sin. Sin was the original cause and fountain of every disease, and pain, and suffering in the world. These things are the fruit of the fall. Yet, with this before us, man still runs greedily after that which brings suffering.

Out of a great multitude of suffering people, Jesus singles out this one man.

V. 7-9 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.

Christ is the Friend of the friendless and Helper of the helpless! Jesus' powerful word heals the man. "Rise!" What an anticipation of that great day referred to in 5:28-29!

The man did not just stagger away. He was healed and strengthened such that he carried off his bed (or mat); thus showing the completeness of the cure.

John tells us that it was the Sabbath. Thus, he sets up the confrontation to follow.

V. 10 The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed."

By Old Testament standards, the man was not breaking the law, since he did not normally carry beds (mats) around for a living. The call to do no work on the Sabbath, was a call to do no customary work. The Pharisees carried it to its absolute extent. (i.e. as some do today with other scriptures, such as 'let a woman keep silent.' etc.)

Often man tries to bind consciences with something the Scriptures do not specifically state.

V. 11-14 He answered them, "He who made me well

said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'"
Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you,
'Take up your bed and walk'?"
But the one who was healed did not know who it was,
for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place.
Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to
him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest
a worse thing come upon you."
The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus
who had made him well.

Some tragedies and illnesses are the result of specific
sin.

Notice that the Jews are not interested in this man, nor
his miraculous healing. They are critical and negative -
focused on, what is in their mind, breaking the Sabbath.
(How much joy in life is swallowed up by a legalistic,
judgmental attitude where an individual sets up their
opinions and views to critique all others?)

(iii) The Claims of the Healer (5:16-47)

V. 16-17 For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and
sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on
the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father has
been working until now, and I have been working."
Discussion of the Sabbath -

God's First Work of Creation - Gen. 1:1-2:3

- Physical creation:

1. Work announced
2. Work finished
3. Satisfaction with the work (It was good.)
4. Rest in the finished work

The first Adam - natural, of the earth - given dominion.

Why did God rest? Was He tired? No, He had finished His
creative work or purposes. He had finished all He had
set out to do. See also Ex. 31:17 where we are told that
God rested and was refreshed! There was a rejoicing
and delighting in the completed creation. Mark 2:27 tells
us that the Sabbath was made for man; that man might
enter into God's rest and joy and refreshment in the
creation. Adam entered into God's rest. It was not just
once every 7 days. The 7th day Sabbath was a
picture/type first given in Ex. 16 in conjunction with the
exodus. Adam entered into God's rest and that rest
ended when he sinned.

After the fall, God went back to work - "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

God's first work after the fall ... "The Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them." (Gen. 3:21) (The same Hebrew word "made" as in the days of physical creation. God took up the work of preparing rest for His fallen creatures.

Notice the parallel in the new creation.

God's Second Creation Work - Spiritual creation (the new creation)

1. Work announced (Gen. 3:15) - the announcement of the intended work to remedy the tragedy of the fall.
2. Work finished (John 19:30) - God finished His planned work of redemption and re-creation at the cross.
3. Satisfaction in the work (Acts 2:25-36; Rom. 1:1-4) - God expresses His satisfaction with the finished work by raising our Lord from the dead.
4. Rest in the finished work (Heb. 1:1-4; 10:12) - God rested in what He accomplished through the work of His Son. Jesus sat down. Was it because He was tired? No, He rested because He finished the work His Father had given Him to do.

The last Adam - spiritual, the heavenly Man - given dominion.

In the New Covenant, we are refreshed in the rest of the completed new creation - Christ's finished work. We enter into and enjoy God's rest!

John continues to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. He is the fulfillment of the Sabbath. (In the Old Covenant - Sabbath was the sign - "remember the Sabbath". In the New Covenant - Lord's table - "remember ME".)

What place does the Sabbath have in our lives? Is Sunday the Christian Sabbath? Should you work on Sunday? Do we look at all passages and give them equal weight or does the New Covenant have the priority in a revelation that has progressively moved towards Christ as the fulfillment? Indeed John's point has been that we must give logical priority to the New Testament because revelation is progressive and the New Testament is the

pinnacle and consummation of redemptive history. Thus God the Father declared, "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" Jesus is preeminent over Moses and the Prophets. In fact, He is their fulfillment (Matt. 5:17, 17:1-8; Heb. 1:1-4; Acts 3:24; 13:32-39; Rom. 1:1-4).

If someone with no Bible knowledge came to you and asked how they could be made right with God, to which part of Scripture would you direct him/her to?

Did Adam practice a 7th day Sabbath in the garden before the fall? No, it would seem that every day for Adam in the garden was a Sabbath.

(No Sabbath day after the fall until Ex. 16:23; and then established as a sign for Israel at Mt. Sinai. - Neh. 9:13-14)

Sabbath - the sign of the Old Covenant (Ex. 31:12-18)
[The surrounding nations were never condemned for failing to observe the Sabbath, for it was the sign of God's covenant with Israel.]

How do we understand, "perpetual" in light of Col. 2:16-17? (Ezek. 20:12-20) It would seem that the "picture" gives way to the fulfillment which is everlasting (just as the Day of Atonement and other Old Testament types were "perpetual" - as they were fulfilled in Christ.

The Sabbath was extremely important to God - see Num. 15:32-36; Ex. 35:2-3; Ezek. 20:12-13; 2 Chron. 36:20-21.

1. The Sabbath constantly reminded Israel of the rest that Adam lost in the Garden of Eden because of his sin. He could compare his present life of hard work, needed just to survive, with the life where everything needed was provided by God, without pain and labor on his own part. In other words, the Sabbath was a weekly, constant visible reminder of the wages of sin!

2. The Sabbath also gave Israel a promise and hope of a coming Redeemer who would restore the rest that had been lost in Eden. The Sabbath was a picture of Christ and the rest that He would give.

The Sabbaths of Lev. 25 are great reminders of God's rest! Jesus is the true and final fulfillment of everything the Sabbath pointed to.

Yearly Sabbath (every 7th year directed Israel to trust God - as when they gathered manna. God would provide enough in the 6th year to live on and for seed for the 8th year). God was tutoring them that they do not live by their works but by God's grace! It pushed the Israelite from works to faith.

The greatest of all the Sabbaths was every fifty years - the year of Jubilee, when all the debts were cancelled and slaves set free.

You can imagine an Israelite who was in debt and had lost the family farm, now serving a harsh task master. He would rise early on the morning of Jubilee and eagerly await the trumpet of the ram's horn and the announcement that Jubilee had come!

This is exactly what our Lord did in Luke 4:19 when He said He came to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. He was putting the gospel trumpet to His lips and saying, "Jubilee has come! The Lord's great Sabbath has dawned!" All our debts are paid and we are totally free!

The Sabbath rightly understood takes you to the foot of the cross and to the resurrection, and causes you to gaze upon the ascended Christ - our Sabbath - let us remember Him - for He is holy and He has separated us to enter His rest!

Jesus, like the earlier Joshua, leads God's people into rest (Matt. 11:28-30). On the sixth day of the week, Jesus finished God's work of redemption (Mark 15:42). The rest of Joshua 21:44-45 was not the ultimate rest any more than the manna was the ultimate bread of life. It was a token and promise of a fullness of rest still to come (Heb. 3:1-4:11). There is no gathering manna today. God has provided plenty - trust Him. Cease from your labors and enter into the refreshing rest of God's perfect and completed work!

Fulfilled! That is why the stronger brother does not observe any day holier than another (Rom. 14:1-6; Gal. 4:9-11). The Sabbath no longer has significance as a day, but in the fulfillment of what it pointed to - Jesus, who gives rest - the One in whom we have ceased from our works. For those who rest in Christ, every day is a Sabbath - a redemptive rest of refreshment! (Contrast Rev. 14:11 with 14:13 and our ultimate rest and refreshment in the very presence of God!)

V. 16-18 For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father has

been working until now, and I have been working." Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

Jesus turns the Sabbath issue into a Christ issue. Who is He? The Son insists that He has the right to do what the Father does. Just like the Father, the Son works on the Sabbath. If God did not keep on in His sovereign governing, every Sabbath, the world would fall apart. Even the rabbis were aware of this, and so they wrote that God does work on the Sabbath but He does so without breaking the law. They "reinforced" the law with such restrictions as not carrying burdens above one's shoulders or beyond one's domain or home. So they said that God does not break the Sabbath because the whole universe is His domain. Also, since God is bigger than the universe, He never does anything above His shoulders. God lifts nothing to a height greater than His own stature.

Jesus' response to them is that "My Father ["My" showing a distinct and unique relationship that Jesus claimed as His own] is always at work. He doesn't stop for any Sabbath day." And Jesus claims the same exemption!

In verse 18, we see that the Jews recognize that He is claiming God's prerogatives. He is either God or a blasphemer!

V. 19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

The Son never acts independent of the Father. He cannot for they are one. Whatever the Father does, the Son does. Everything Jesus does is agreeable to the Father.

The fact that Jesus does all that the Father does presumes ability. If I saw Wayne Gretzky do something, that does not mean I can do it, for I am not equal to him in ability.

V. 20 For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.

Because the Father loves the Son, He shows Him

everything He does, and the Son does it all. The Son loves the Father and expresses His love in obedience, doing everything His Father shows Him. (Thus the redemptive work turns first and foremost on the love of the Father for His Son and the love of the Son for His Father.) The Son, by His obedience, reveals the Father, for the Son does whatever the Father does, and thus, He expresses the Father in His perfect obedience. Jesus cannot imagine doing something that is not the Father's will. Hence His prayer in the garden.

The God of the Bible, though one, is not simple but complex. The Muslim god, Allah, may be one, but he is not triune like the true God of the Bible. What Allah was supposedly doing before creation - gazing at his navel or whatever - we can only guess. He was not loving as our God - the one God who is a triune God - where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit loved one another in glorious fellowship.

Christ can do what His Father shows Him! In so doing, He discloses the Father to us. The greater works (i.e. "than these" - i.e. greater than physical healing) will include His giving life to the dead! (i.e. v. 24-30)

Notice the purpose of the greater works..." that you may marvel." (Take time to reflect on Jesus' greater works that cause you to marvel. This is a part of worship and God is seeking true worshippers!)

The Father admires the Son and calls us to enter into the wonder and enjoyment of admiring the Son who has performed the great work of our redemption - that though we were dead in trespasses and sins, He has made us alive - by grace we have been saved! Marvel at such a mighty Savior!

V. 21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

Jesus is not just God's "agent." He gives life to whom He will. The Son has the same power as the Father. There is no power that the Father has that the Son does not have, or He could not do all the Father does! (Contrast 2 Kings 5: 6-7)

Just as Jesus chose one man out of a multitude to heal - so He chooses those for whom He does a greater work; that of giving life!

V. 22 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,

The Persons of the Godhead have a distinction of roles and functions (i.e. the Father did not die on the cross). The Father delegates all the judgment to the Son, but the Son does not act independently of the Father, doing His own thing.

V. 23 that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

For the jealous God of the Old Testament Scriptures to say this means the Son is one with Him in all rights and privileges. All the worship and honor and adoration and praise that He has stated is exclusively His, He says to direct to the Son. He is to be worshipped as God is worshipped. In fact to withhold that worship from the Son is to withhold it from God the Father. To not worship the Son is to not worship the Father.

In the final count, God will not ask:

"What church did you go to?" or

"How hard did you try?" or

"How sincere were you?"

He will ask you first and foremost: "How have you responded to My Son? I have determined that all should honor My Son." Why? Because the Father loves the Son. To not honor the Son is to violate the Father's love for the Son.

V. 24-26 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,

The more you think about this, the more your brain hurts. For God to have life in Himself, must refer to the truth that God is self-existent. He has not derived from, nor is He dependent upon anyone or anything. He has life in Himself. Now, if He's granted the Son to have life in Himself, how can you speak of it as life in Himself? How can you grant "self-existence" and it be self-existence? If it is self-existence, how can you grant it? This is a hard saying for someone who can hardly understand time, nor hardly remember what I did two weeks ago!

If it said, "...so He granted Him to have life," it would have made more logical sense, but, of course, if it said that, the Son would not be on par with God. This must

be an eternal grant or decree where the Son was appointed as the dispenser and giver of life to all mankind (see 1 John 5: 11). It is not as if there was a time when the Father had life in Himself and the Son didn't and then the Son was eventually granted "life in Himself." This is not possible for then it would not be self-existence or life in Himself.

We know from John 1: 4 that "in Him was life and the life was the light of men." Indeed, Jesus is the dispenser and giver of life. We need to hear His word (v. 24), for His words are God's words! (See Deut. 18: 15-19) He alone can speak life to our dead hearts. In Him is life. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. We who are in Christ in whom is life, have eternal life and we will not come into judgment. The sentence of death and damnation has been removed from us even now. We have moved from the sphere of death (dead in heart and sentenced to condemnation) to the sphere of life! (See also John 3: 16-18).

Jesus alone can speak life to our souls. Hear Him! Hear His word! (John 10: 27-28; Eph. 4: 21) Lazarus was dead and in the tomb. Christ called him and Lazarus heard His voice and he lived! In like manner, though we were dead in trespasses and sin, Christ called us to resurrection life! (I believe that the phrase "and now is" lets us know that Jesus is speaking of the spiritual life He imparts to sinners who are spiritually dead.) How can the Son do this? Because He has life in Himself! He seeks out men and women from among the dead and "gives life to whom He will." Like the prodigal son, He can bring you from death to life (see Luke 15: 24). There is a huge difference between life and death.

V. 27 and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.

The Son of God also insists He is the Son of Man, and as such, He is the God-sanctioned Judge of all. He is that Son of Man in fulfillment of Daniel 7: 13-14. Being a man, it is totally appropriate and fitting that He be our judge. As such, He will judge us not only with omniscience but with the knowledge of experience. He was tempted in all points as we are and yet without sin. This gives Him the right to judge us. His righteousness will condemn all who fall short of His perfection.

V. 28-29 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth - those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

There is coming a day when Jesus will say, "Murray McLellan, come forth!" Do not marvel, for He has life in Himself. And Jesus will say, "Adolph Hitler, come forth!" He will rise to be condemned. Some will cry as in Rev. 6: 16, "...hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" Others, will admire Him, and enter into the joy of their Lord, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

All will "be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. 2: 12) Be assured, God "has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17: 31)

Woe to all who fancy that this world is all and that this life ends everything. They are greatly mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God the Son. Notice that those who have life are "those who have done good." True faith produces the fruit of good works. This is not the cause of salvation, but the mark of the saved.

V. 30 I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

Jesus can do nothing independent from the Father. This is impossible. His nature does not allow Him to do anything contrary to the Father. His will is to do the Father's will. There is total harmony between the Son's will and the Father's.

V. 31-32 If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true.

In other words, Jesus seems to be saying that if His only witness is His testimony or claims, then you could conclude that His witness is false. However His Father bears witness of Christ through:

- His forerunner, John the Baptist
- The miraculous works He has done
- The Scriptures which the Jews professed to honor

All of which testify that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. V. 33-35 You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. He

was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.

The Father's first witness was John the Baptist, who came into the world to bear witness to the true Light. He had publicly identified Jesus as the Lamb of God - the Spirit-anointed Son of God (Psalm 132: 17). Though John is likely dead by this time (notice the past tense used), they had rejoiced in his light for a time, being caught up in the messianic excitement regarding the promised kingdom.

V. 36 But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish - the very works that I do - bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.

As valuable as the testimony of John was, there was a far weightier testimony... the Father's testimony of His works which He gave Jesus to do - including the signs which all ultimately point to the climatic work of redemption achieved in the cross and exaltation of the Lamb of God.

If the enemies of our Lord could have proved that His miracles were only tricks or false claims, they would have been only too glad to show the world and to silence Him forever. The truth is, however, that Jesus' miracles were so many, so public, and so incapable of being explained away, that our Lord's enemies could only say that they were done by Satanic agency. Jesus' miracles were great in number and in power. They were public and visible and could bear any examination.

V. 37- 38 And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.

They never heard His voice (like Moses who testifies of His voice; Ex. 33: 11) - though One stands speaking to them!

They never saw His form (like Jacob who testifies of His form; Gen. 32:30-31) - though One stands before them!

They do not have His word abiding in them (like Joshua; Josh. 1:8-9) - though the Word of God was abiding in their midst!

Their unbelief blinded them to the reality that they were

in the very presence of the Son of God.

V. 39-40 You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

The third testimony of the Father regarding His Son was the Scriptures. Their tragic failure to grasp God's truth was nowhere more clearly manifest than in their approach to the Scriptures. Their problem was not that they didn't read or study it. They even made their boast in it. In fact, they diligently studied the Scriptures. Jesus insists that there is nothing life-giving about studying the Scriptures, if one fails to discern their true content and purpose. "These are the Scriptures which testify of Me," Jesus declares. [See John 1:45, 2:22, 3:10, 5:45-46, 20:9.]

D.A. Carson states it this way. "The Old Testament Scriptures by predictive prophecy, by type, by revelatory event and by anticipatory statute point to Christ, His ministry, His teaching, His death, and resurrection." Like John the Baptist, the Scriptures rightly understood, point away from themselves to Jesus.

Many of the Jews were like men searching for wealth and tossing the many gold nuggets over their shoulder into the garbage, because they were looking for riches in another form. Thus, they missed the very treasure right in front of them.

The Scriptures testify of the great and only Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is why I lost interest in a lot of the books on my shelf, after my redemption, for the name of Christ was not there. There is one book that testifies in fullness of Jesus. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10) and of all Scripture! This book is the voice of the Spirit speaking of Jesus, and He presents Jesus to us as the resting place of our faith.

Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of the Scripture. It is His glorious light that is diffused through every page. The first Adam comes before us at the beginning, as the introducer of death. With his name and doings, only death is linked. But in his place comes the second Man, the last Adam, the Giver of life - yeah, Life itself. And in all the Scriptures, the quickening, life-giving fragrance of His name is diffused.

If therefore some of the Jews refuse to come to Jesus

for life, that refusal constitutes evidence that they are not reading their Scriptures as they were meant to be read. In fact, they are deliberately standing aloof from the Fountain of Life. The world is dead and needs life. The Scripture speaks of life, and this life is in Christ. Yet, man will not come. He does not want to be made well. He loves darkness (John 3:19; Matt. 23:37).

Literally verse 40 states, "You do not will to come." The loss of a man's soul is always attributed in Scripture to man's own lack of will to be saved. It is not in God's unwillingness to receive. It is not in a lack of sufficiency of Christ's redeeming work and atonement. It is simply and entirely man's entire fault. Man's salvation, if saved, is entirely of God. Man's ruin, if lost, is entirely of himself. This is how the Bible states it.

V. 41-42 I do not receive honor from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.

They do not know Him, but He knows them! Jesus does not live with an eye for the honor of men (though they do ... v. 44). Jesus' single passion is to do what pleases His Father. He loves His Father, whereas they do not love God. A man may be convinced in his mind, but as long as his heart loves anything more than God, there will be no true faith.

v. 43-44 I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?

Many profess to worship the one true God, but they do not sincerely love Him. (That's why many will never leave the religions of men - they seek the honor of men.) If they had loved God, they would have loved God's Son. They are willing to receive false Christs, for the false Christs flattered them and honored them. But, as Paul points out in Rom. 2:29, a true Jew is one who is circumcised in heart and whose praise is not from men, but from God.

V. 45-47 Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you - Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

The very Moses whom they esteem so highly as the mediator of the Sinai covenant will be their accuser. Moses will be the first to accuse them of their failure to

understand the law covenant. They took it as an end in itself and not as a witness to Christ Himself.

We notice too that it is not in one specific passage, but in the books of Moses.

John is calling his readers to understand and believe in Jesus and the law of Moses in a way that many Jews of Jesus' day did not.

Closing comments: (for ch. 5)

In the Old Testament, Israel was the son of God (Isa. 11:1 and Ex. 4:22). But God makes a promise in Isa. 9:6-7 to give a greater Son. Jesus is the Son of God - the true Israel - the ultimate King.

In the Old Testament, Israel is the vine. But as God's vine it is a failure, producing bad fruit (Isa. 5; Ps. 80:14-16). Then Jesus comes along and says, "I am the true Vine!"

In our passage here in Chapter 5, Jesus reveals that He is the true Son - the ultimate Israel!

I. The Witness of Bread (6:1-71) - [To Top](#)

(i) The Feeding of the Five Thousand (6:1-15)

The episode of which we are about to read is the only miracle recorded in all four gospels. This sign which Jesus performs again testifies to the public nature of His miracles.

V. 1-2 After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.

These people followed, not so much because they wanted to obey Him, but like those of 2:23-25, they saw the signs. That was their focus. This multitude was not interested in a Savior from sin, or a Lord over their lives, but they were definitely impressed by a worker of miracles. These miracles were signs, but this was not understood by the crowd.

V. 3-4 And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews was near.

Jesus moved to the high ground on the east side of the lake (known today as the Golan Heights). The Jewish Passover celebrated the exodus from Egypt, in which each household would slaughter a lamb and eat it. In

the upcoming discourse in the latter half of this chapter, John is going to identify Jesus, in His flesh, as the bread of life which must be given for the world (v. 33, 51) - the bread which must be eaten if people are to have eternal life. The old Passover is superseded by the new Passover. The Old Testament manna is superseded by the real Bread of life. The movement from Moses to Jesus is John's continuing testimony.

V. 5-6 Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

Jesus already had His own plan!

V. 7-9 Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denari worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little." One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

So typically, the disciples are thinking in terms of the natural world. This was a very large number of people in contrast to such a tiny amount of food. This is given to heighten the miracle. Read 2 Kings 4:42-44 to see what God had done through Elisha - but a greater than Elisha is here!

V. 10-11 Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.

Jesus thanks God. He does not bless the food or say a blessing over the food.

This multitude was hungry, not having eaten for some time. They got as much as they wanted and were full.

V. 12-13 So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

Again we see that all were satisfied. It is not just that they each got a little bite, but all were completely filled.

This is not a lesson to get people to share their lunches. This is the sign that the Lord who declared ..."I will satiate (i.e. fill to the full) the soul of the priests with abundance, and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the Lord." (Jer. 31:14) ... and ... "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide and I will fill it." Ps. 81:10 (He is the Lord of Passover!) Unfortunately with a stubborn heart, Israel walked in their own counsels, when "He would have fed them also with the finest of wheat; and with honey from the rock I would have satisfied you." (Ps. 81:16)

Read also Neh. 9:15-21. Jesus is declaring by His works, "I am that God!"

See 1 Kings 17:8-16. Jesus is saying, "I am the Lord of Elijah!"

V. 14 Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

They recognized Him as the prophet spoken of by Moses (Deut. 18:15-18; Acts 3:18-26). However, they saw Him like a Moses, providing manna in the wilderness, but they did not see Jesus as the fulfillment of Moses.

Does not this miracle show that Jesus has power? Does it not give you confidence that He can build up that which is ruined and strengthen that which is weak? Our Master can create and renew. If He declares, "Let there be bread," there is bread! The disciples distributed the bread to the multitudes, but it was not their hands that made it increase and multiply and satisfy hungering souls. It was their Master's. It was His almighty power that provided an unfailing supply. Let us who have received the Bread of life, be faithful distributors of the food which our Divine Master has provided. Bring your loaves and small fish to the Lord and you will be amazed what He can do!

How like the gospel is this miracle. Weak and feeble and foolish as it may seem to man - the gospel of the cross of Christ is the power of God unto salvation! (1 Cor. 1:18)

V. 15 Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

They did not understand the nature of the kingdom. They saw Jesus like Moses, who delivered the people out

of slavery to Egypt. They were thinking that surely this one would help them escape the bondage to Rome.

They had seen His healing power and experienced feeding from food provided by His miraculous power. Surely nothing could prevent such a one to be the powerful Deliverer so many of the children of Israel longed for. They wanted to force Him to assume the role they had in mind for Him.

The truth is, Jesus' kingdom was like no other (John 18:36). Jesus knew His kingdom would triumph by His dying and rising from the dead. He would go to Jerusalem, not to wield the spear and bring judgment, but to receive the spear thrust and bear the judgment!

(ii) Jesus Walks on the Water (6:16-21)

V. 16 - 18 Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, got into the boat and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing.

The absence of Jesus equals darkness.

V. 19 So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid.

Read Job 9:8; Ps. 95:5a; Hab. 3:15 (Greater than through ... "on" and "above") Ps. 93:3-4

V. 20 But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."

i.e. Don't be afraid - I am your salvation! (See Isa. 41:10,14; 43:1-3a)

V. 21 Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.

Willingly - what an understatement! The effort of the disciples couldn't overcome the storm and get them where they wanted to go (Mark 6:48-52). When they received Jesus into the boat, they immediately got there without effort on their part. (Read Ps. 107:4-9, 17-31)

If people are so frail that they faint for lack of food, how will they bear the anger of the ruler of the seas? Oh to see a multitude, not seeking God, but seeking the food that perishes; a multitude without a shepherd. In fact, when the Shepherd came, they would not follow. Let us pray therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest - others who have

compassion on a multitude of a lost and perishing people. Let us tell them where they can eat and be filled! (2 Kings 6:24-7:20)

(iii) The 'Bread of Life' Discourse (6:22-58)

This discourse on the bread of life has an obvious link to the miracle of the feeding of the 5000. The other link, we shall see, is to that manna provided in the wilderness in Moses' day. As we move through this section, we will see that the Passover (as referred to in verse 4) shifts to a focus on the new and better Passover, continuing John's theme that Jesus is the Christ - the fulfillment of the promises.

Also, in Christ's discourse that follows, verse 63 makes it clear that this is NOT talking about the Lord's table or "communion" or physical bread. "...the flesh profits nothing..." There is no reference to the bread and wine of the communion table.

V. 22 - 25 On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone- however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place when they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks - when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?"

Witnesses saw that the disciples alone got into the one boat. The seekers of bread go to Capernaum to seek Jesus, and they are somewhat amazed that He's there already.

V. 26-27 Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled." "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

Had Jesus told them how He got there, they would have been totally impressed. Jesus gets right to their hearts. What knowledge of men's hearts our Lord Jesus Christ

possesses! He knows exactly why people do what they do. He knows the motives of your heart. His are the eyes that are a flame of fire (i.e. Rev. 1:14 - the Ancient of Days does not have dim eyes!).

The dialog that occurs in the following paragraphs took place in the synagogue at Capernaum (see v. 59). This may give us a glimpse of how teaching took place in the synagogue in a dialog kind of format.

These people who labored for the food which perishes, failed to see the significance of the signs. They saw the miracle but they missed that it was a sign testifying to who Jesus was. Even His disciples' hearts were hardened (Mark 6:52 and later in Mark 8:14-21). How much less did the crowds understand the parabolic significance of the sign?

Like the woman at the well, they are living for the pleasures of this world - things which perish with the using. Even the bread they ate in the wilderness was such that it perished with the using. It was a sign of something greater. Men and women should pour their energies into pursuing food that endures to eternal life, and water that wells up into eternal life (Jn. 4:14). The continuing dialog shows that the food is Jesus Himself! Jesus not only gives the food; He is Himself the Bread of Life.

We see a similar message in Mark 8:34-36. This is repentance unto life. It is to change one's master. It is to recognize Jesus as rightful owner (He bought and paid for His own). Your life is not given to you as a gift for you to do with as you please. Your life is bound up in Him - for whatever He desires to do with it. Christ can exalt you or put you in a prison cell to be tortured - whatever He desires. Your life (your opinions, your goals, your ideas) you subject to Christ, who has created and sustains and owns your life. You lose your life of these 70 years or so to Christ, for whatever He wants to do with it. In return, He forgives all your sins and you get to live with Him in absolute paradise for eternity. That is the cost (see Luke 14:25-33). To repent is to give it all up to Christ the Lord - everything - your family, your possessions, even your own earthly life. God may give it all back to you and more. He may also take it all away. To hold on means you have not repented. You do not believe in Him, and unless you repent, you will perish (Luke 13:5).

Three burning questions:

- Has this life been so radically changed that I now consider what God wants above what I want?
- Have I presented this life to Christ, its rightful owner, for whatever He wants to do with it?
- Am I totally trusting in Christ's work to make me acceptable to God, not adding anything of mine into the mix?

The answer to these three questions is an unconditional "yes" in the heart of a true child of God. It is no kindness or love to flatter professing Christians, who do not bear the marks of a repentant. Rather we need to call them to believe, as Jesus does in John 6:26-29.

The unbeliever always considers, "What's in it for me?" The unbeliever still foolishly claims ownership to this life.

Labor for the food which endures to everlasting life. God the Father "has set His seal on" Jesus Christ (v. 27). God has His own seal of approval and He has certified the Son as the giver of this food. The Son of Man is the only authorized and designated giver of eternal life. As Joseph was set apart and appointed as the one who alone could distribute food from Egypt and feed Israel in the days of the famine (see Gen. 41-42); Jesus is set up and appointed by God to relieve the spiritual famine of His people.

Oh, the sadness of multitudes laboring for the food which perishes. I would like to examine one more passage so that we do not lightly pass over this statement of warning by our Lord Jesus Christ. Please carefully read Luke 16:19-31, as what is written below in the next few paragraphs will relate to the truth given there.

Here (Luke 16:19-31) we have a striking picture of two men - one who labored for the food which perishes and the other who pursued the food which endured to eternal life.

Fix your attention on the rich man. Listen to his cry. Hear the voice of one who had received his good things in this fleeting life, who had fared sumptuously every day without providing for eternity, now crying for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue. He who labored for the food which perishes - he who had it in abundance - is now plunged into unspeakable, inconceivable, and everlasting torments. Hear the sighs and groans of the

damned soul in Hades. If you will not heed my voice, heed his. He speaks from experiential knowledge.

The rich man personifies all the thoughtless and unconverted who die in their sins. Can we truly grasp his regret for having neglected the great salvation! If this passage ended at verse 21, many, judging according to outward appearance, would have drawn a wrong conclusion. They would see the rich man as the happy one. But when you have read the whole passage - and have received the complete picture, you see that there is no one in a worse condition than he.

It is sad to see how most people neglect their precious souls, turning their backs on the glorious gospel, and giving little attention to the crucified and risen Lord of heaven and earth. The things of this present life are highly prized. Such is the blindness of their understanding, that people will venture the loss of their eternal souls for a moment's pleasure - for short-lived comforts - for the food which perishes. Be wise, dear reader, before it is too late, and repent, or it will be a dagger to your heart one day, to remember what a Christ, what a soul, what a heaven you have lost for a few pleasures; a little enjoyment of this present passing world.

How many look upon serious Christians as fools and deluded for pursuing the Christ of the Bible? The time will come when they will change their tune. Ask the rich man spoken of in Luke 16, who was the fool - he or Lazarus? He would soon tell you clearly. "The triumphing of the wicked is short;" (Job 20:5) but the afflictions of the righteous are but for a season. "And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:17)

Ponder the passage one more time. Behold the rich man clothed in fine linen, fed with delicacies, and faring sumptuously every day; but look a little farther, and this same man is clothed with vengeance, destitute in torments, and earnestly begging for a drop of water to cool his tongue. What a sad change. On the other hand, we behold a poor but righteous recipient of grace, with a hungry belly, naked back, and running sores, begging at the rich man's gate for a morsel to feed his belly. What a sad state, but short. Look again and behold this beggar gloriously carried, as in a chariot of triumph, by the angels to Abraham's bosom, shining in glory, clothed with beautiful garments, and his soul abiding with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of the Father! His rags are gone! His sores are healed! His soul is full of joy unspeakable! As the one did not

carry his wealth and goods with him into hell, the other left his coarse diet, filthy rags, and painful body behind when he entered heaven. The worldly man's portion was for his brief life (Rev. 18:14). The godly man's afflictions were for his brief life. (See Psalm 37:34-38).

What joy to be a partaker of Christ's salvation and to share in the everlasting communion of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Oh, what eternal rest in the soul-satisfying, soul-saving Christ, who came from the bosom of love, and gave Himself as the Way to everlasting glory. All you who see your need are called, invited, and persuaded to come to Him whose heart is open, arms spread, and who has room enough in His bosom to receive you; grace enough to pardon you; blood enough to justify you; treasures enough to enrich you; and pleasures enough to delight you for all of eternity!

Would you lose this Christ, this food, this pleasure, this heaven, this happiness, this fountain of living water for a vain drink out of a broken cistern? These are solemn realities. He who came from the heaven itself- from the bosom of the Father - reveals them to us. "Hear Him!" "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

V. 28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"

In verse 27, Jesus' focus was on the goal to which one should labor or work. They focus on the works and ask what God requires, that they might perform them. They do not have a sense of sin, unworthiness, helplessness, and hopelessness. They figured that if they just do the right work, they would earn any and every blessing of God. "Doing" was their only idea of the way to heaven.

V. 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

What God requires is faith - faith in the One He has sent! The "work" that pleases God is faith, for that is the way that exalts Jesus with all the glory and honor. It is not some abstract faith that pleases God. Faith must have its proper object - the true and living Christ of God!

V. 30-31 Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You?"

"Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

They get right back to their original agenda. They have ears but not ears that hear what Jesus is actually saying. They are basically asking, "Who are you that we should believe in you?" Perhaps they are saying that Jesus gave them earthly bread (i.e. v. 1-14), but Moses, their first redeemer, gave them bread from heaven. So maybe they want to see a sign at least as great as that. The bottom line seems to be that they want bread for their bellies. They want Jesus to prove His credentials by bringing down manna again.

There seems to be no limits to man's dullness, prejudice, and unbelief in spiritual matters. Here, fresh from the mighty miracle of the loaves and fish, they are no more ready to believe than before. No wonder Mark records that the Lord marveled at man's unbelief (Mark 6:6) Let us remember, as we carry forth the gospel, not to be cast down because our words are not believed and our effort seems to be in vain. We must not complain or think it strange that the people with whom we have to do are particularly stubborn or hard. Just look at the men to whom the Lord preaches. If He who was perfect and so great a teacher was not believed, it should come as no surprise if men do not believe us.

V. 32-33 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Jesus is telling them that they are putting too much attention on Moses. Moses is not on center stage; he was only the warm up act! The bread (manna) in Moses' day wasn't the ultimate and true bread. They were focusing on the wrong thing - the wrong bread!

Again, the word true is not used in opposition to "false". It was not that the manna was false, or that the bread to feed the 5000 was false. Rather, this is the ultimate reality - the true bread - the ultimate bread to which all the others pointed. However, just as their fathers had responded to the manna (see Num. 21:5), so too, the true bread was despised and rejected of men. Jesus alone nourishes, and He feeds us on Himself. Everything else is husks - vanity. He alone is true bread.

When Jesus says, "My Father gives you the true bread from heaven," He uses "gives" in the sense of "offers to you" or "presents to you."

The bread of God and the bread of heaven and the bread of life are referring to the same thing. (Similar to the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven.)

Jesus gives His life to the world - for all He represents. This great Savior is not just presented to Israel, but to the whole world. Remember in John 1:4, where we saw that in Him (the Word) was the life, and when the Word became flesh (1:14), life was brought down to us. In His flesh, given for us, we have life. The life is in the blood that the Man Christ Jesus shed for us (Lev. 17:11)! It is life full and abundant and glorious and everlasting. It is life abiding and unbroken. It is life undeserved and unearned. It is life which no power of death or influence of disease can affect or impair. It is life from the dead. Like Lazarus, the Word of God has called forth, "Arise, My love!" We now have spiritual life in Him. How different everything is to us now! It is life that looses our bonds and brings in the liberty. It is life that casts out the darkness and fills us with light. It is life that gives us eyes to see, and ears to hear, and feet to run in the heavenly way. We are partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). Don't get over it!

"And so it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit." (1 Cor. 15:45) Our food and life is the broken body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, given in sacrifice (see John 6:51).

V. 34 Then they said to Him, "Lord give us this bread always."

They still haven't got it. "Always" seems to imply that they want Him to keep repeating the miracle, but Jesus tells them that that is not how it works. He identifies Himself as the bread of life.

V. 35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

Now obviously, there is a sense in which even we as Christians thirst for more and need constant nourishment, but that is not what Jesus is dealing with here. He is dealing with salvation - in that sense when you have eaten of the bread of life, your hunger is satisfied - your thirst is quenched forever. (i.e. You only need to bathe once, yet you still wash your feet - John

13:9-10). When I came to Christ, I stopped looking elsewhere. My hunger has been satisfied. I don't go looking for another source of food. That is not to say there is no growth to come, but the basic, deep-seated hunger and thirst are gone.

Notice v. 35 tells us that the bread of life is received by people coming to Jesus and believing in Him - not by chewing on Him! Coming is believing. Thus, Jesus already reveals what He means when He later refers to eating His flesh and drinking His blood.

V. 36 But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.

Is He a failure then? No, verse 37 makes that clear. Christ sees their unbelief with sorrow, but not with anxiety or surprise.

V. 37-39 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

In the midst of unbelief, all His sheep will come in faith and be gathered within the fold.

Jesus' confidence is not in the positive responses of well meaning people, but in His Father and His Father's redemptive purpose. Jesus is not driving away His people. All will come and He will keep every last one, for that is His Father's will, and Jesus always does the will of His Father. This is a calling which cannot be revoked; an inheritance that cannot be defiled; a foundation that cannot be shaken; a seal that cannot be broken; and a life that cannot perish!

In these words we hear of the irresistible power of God's electing grace. Though he be unclean, a spiritual leper, who would have been shut out of the camp under the old covenant, will be received by Christ, and cleansed and kept. Jesus will raise them up gloriously on the last day. Not one of His lambs will be left behind in the wilderness. The life-giving Shepherd will raise to glory, in the last day, the whole flock entrusted to His charge, and not one of them will be found to be missing.

The last day is closing time. There is coming a last day of the last days. It will be the dawning day of the new heavens and the new earth.

V. 40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

The day of glorious resurrection is a theme presented to the saints throughout the New Testament Scriptures. What does happen at death? This topic is important because the joys and miseries after you die are trillions of times greater than in the few years on this earth before you die. In fact, the Bible compares this life to a vapor such as appears as you breathe on a cold winter morning and then vanishes (James 4:14). In great contrast, what follows this earthly life is referred to as "forever and ever." (i.e. Rev. 14:11) In addition, facing eternity has a great way of sobering us out of complacency. Do we really believe that to live is Christ and to die is gain?

The Bible does not give a large number of details concerning what happens right after we die. We are told that believers will be taken into the presence of Christ in heaven. Christ is in heaven now (1 Thess. 1:10, 4:16; 2 Thess. 1:7; Heb. 10:12), and believers will go to be with Him (Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:23-24). Heaven is a place of resplendent glory, and being with Christ in the glory of heaven will be far superior to our present earthly lives. As Paul stated in Phil. 1:23, being with Christ is far better. In 2 Cor. 5:8, he refers to being in heaven with the Lord as being "at home." One of the things that will make heaven so great, is that, being with the Lord, we shall finally feel that we are in our true home.

When we are in heaven, we will continue to look forward (as we should be doing already in this life) to the resurrection of our bodies from the dead. Disembodied existence is not God's ultimate and final and greatest purpose for us. As great as it will be in heaven after we die, God has something greater in store - being resurrected from the dead so that we will live soul and body forever in the new heavens and the new earth. While still alive, Paul stated that he was waiting eagerly for the redemption of his body (Rom. 8:23). This eager anticipation for our resurrection does not stop when we die. The saints will continue to anticipate the final fulfillment in the resurrection of our bodies.

It seems often that the hope of resurrection does not have the same place of power and centrality for the church today that it had for the early Christians. One of the reasons may well be of a wrong view of the age to come. When we talk about future and the eternal state, we tend to talk about heaven; and heaven tends to

suggest a place far away with non-material, disembodied spirits. However, the truth is, that the condition of the departed saints now, without their bodies is not the way it will always be. Yes, it is good for them now, but it is still an imperfect state and not the way Paul wanted it to be for himself. When we look at 2 Cor. 4: 16- 5:9, we see that something else gives the decaying man heart. As he focuses on the unseen glory, Paul's heart is greatly encouraged.

His first preference would be the second coming and his resurrection body without having to die. His foremost desire was not to simply die and be without a body. That would be good, but it would not be complete. Our final destiny is not a disembodied state in heaven, but it is to be with Christ in a renewed and transformed body on the renewed earth. There is sometimes a tendency to assume that the condition that the departed saints are in now without their bodies is the way it will always be. How often have we perhaps encouraged ourselves with good it is for them now, that we can forget that it is an imperfect state and not the way it will be, nor the way Paul wanted it for himself (Phil. 3:20-21)? Yes, to die is gain, and yes, to be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord, but no, this is not our ultimate hope. This is not the final state of our joy. Christ will raise us up on the last day! The true Bread gives resurrection life!

V. 41-42 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven?'"

The Jews start to grumble and murmur. They want a king to do their bidding, not one to rule over them with all authority (i.e. v. 15). They are offended by His claim of authority, as shown by the use of "this Jesus" (i.e. showing contempt).

V. 43-44 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

How do you come to see who Jesus is? "O, Lord, open our eyes," is not the cry of those Jews who complained about Him. They are confident in their own ability to decide and come.

It is the Father who inclines our will to believe. He secures our affections in drawing us in irresistible grace (Ps 110: 3; Ezek. 36: 26). This same word "draw" is used of Jesus in John 12: 32. We also see its use in John 18: 10 where Peter draws a sword. In John 21: 6, we see it used in the attempt to draw or pull in a net full of fish. A synonym shows up a few verses later when Peter drags the net to shore. In Acts 16: 19, Peter and Silas are "dragged" off to the authorities. In Acts 21: 30, Paul is seized and "dragged" out of the temple. This "drawing" overpowers the inclination and resistance of the object being "drawn" or "dragged".

The work of regeneration by the Spirit of God is certainly included in this drawing process. For later in John, He is the one who fulfills the "teaching" role of the fulfilled prophecy. He draws by illuminating the truth to our hearts.

There are some who will be content to say, "I decided for Christ. I made up my mind to be a Christian." But, oh, those who have seen the grace of God could never steal God's glory in this way. Rather, they love to credit God! Having chosen us before the foundation of the world and having sent His Son to redeem us, God did not then leave it to us to find our own way to Him.

The drawing of v. 44 is often referred to as irresistible grace. Nothing – not any circumstances – not the devil – can keep God's love from conquering us! Most of our fellow men in this world live in unbelief. Their entire view of the world and of life is based upon a rejection of the claims of Jesus Christ and disbelief in His Person and His work. Why? Why does the Christian heart long for Christ, while others hate Him and use His name as a curse? Why do we who believe long for God and His grace while others do not even have a sense of their desperate need? God. God's sovereign purpose. It is solely God's grace that makes any man to differ from another man (1 Cor. 4: 7).

If God the Father gives a person to the Son, that person will come to Christ in faith (John 6: 36-37; 17: 1-2). But that one would never come "unless the Father who sent [Christ] draws him" (John 6: 44). John 17: 24 shows the incredible privilege of those people. They are allowed to behold; to look upon; the glory of the Son! The unbeliever cannot figure out why this would ravish the believer's heart.

Some will argue against the doctrine of irresistible grace by saying that God can be resisted. They will turn to verses that make statements like, "All day long I have

stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people" (Rom. 10:21). Also, Stephen's declaration in Acts 7:51 is very clear. "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as did your fathers did, so do you." We agree that men resist God's gracious invitations. In fact, men always resist all of God's invitations and mercy. This would always be the case ... unless God conquers the resistance. Natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 3:11; John 5:40) ... UNLESS there's a "BUT GOD..." Unless there's an "unless!" Such is the testimony of Lydia while others were resisting by nature and by choice (Acts 16:14). I believe that is what happened to every Christian in this room. God may well have suffered with your resistance for years – your ignoring Him and dishonoring Him. Then in glorious grace the great King said, "It is enough! Fetch him out of Lo Debar! (See 2 Sam. 9) It is the season of my love." My Beloved spoke and said to me, "Rise up, my love, my fair one and come away! The winter is past ... the time of singing has come." (See Song of Solomon)

O, why do you love Him? How is it this One whom you ignored and resisted is now seen for the wonder that He is – the chief among ten thousand!" God Almighty has conquered our resistance and drawn us irresistibly to His beloved Son in love. Now we see the truth that He is indeed altogether lovely. The beloved Son has become our beloved Savior and Lord.

V. 45 "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

We now get a great lesson on how to understand that which was written in the prophets. Christ takes a truth foretold by the prophets in the Old Testament Scriptures, and explains its fulfillment in Christ and His establishment of the church – the people who come to Christ and are received, kept, and raised up at the last day for eternal glory. The "drawing" to Christ in verse 44 is explained. God "teaches" a people. He causes them to truly "hear." In granting them spiritual life, He reveals Jesus to them. This spiritual people come to Jesus Christ in humble repentant faith, with worshipping hearts, and praises on their lips for the One who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9-10).

Is the Church really the goal that God has been working toward since the entrance of sin? Is she the true fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham, David, and

Israel by the prophets? Is she the true Temple, the true House of God, and the true Holy Nation made up of Kings and Priests? Dispensationalism cannot see that we now live in the very days "promised to the fathers and the prophets." For them, the kingdom, the King, David's throne, the days of glory, the display of power, etc., must all be pushed into the future. However, Jesus and His apostles unveil a very different understanding of the Old Testament prophecies. They proclaim a glorious fulfillment in Christ – above and beyond what had ever entered the heart of man (1 Cor. 2:6-10).

The new birth which establishes a new holy and spiritual nation in Christ, is the fulfillment of this promise spoken of by several prophets in the Old Testament Scriptures.

In Isaiah 54:13, the prophet writes, "All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children." Jesus is clear. This will be fulfilled in His day – by and in Him. This is why the bread of life has come from heaven.

Who are the "all" of Isaiah 54:13? Is this promise made to all physical Israel? Jesus answers that clearly in John 6 – all who come to Him (John 6:37; see also passages like Acts 2:39; Rom. 2:28-29; 9:6-8; 11:1-5, 26-29; Gal. 3:7, 16, 29; John 3:1-8). The context of Isaiah also makes it clear. The Lord teaches us the sufficiency of the suffering Servant who was made an offering for sin in Isa. 53. Gal. 4:21-31 helps uncover the interpretation of Isa. 54:1. It is the children of promise who will inherit the nations (Isa. 54:3). They will be redeemed with the great redemption described in Isa. 53 by the Lord Himself (Isa. 54:5) and will be gathered in with everlasting kindness in a covenant of peace that shall never be removed (Isa. 54:6-10). This everlasting covenant for those who hunger and thirst is given freely (Isa. 55:1-9). In Isa. 54:11-12, we have the description of a foundation laid and a new and glorious building established (Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-8; Rev. 21:9-21). The church is the New Covenant "Most Holy Place" where the presence of God is manifest! The veil of the Old Temple in the old Jerusalem was torn in two from top to bottom, that day when the Lord laid on Jesus, the Lamb of God, the iniquity of us all. Thus, the way into the presence of God was now wide open for sinners like you and like me, through the veil of His flesh (Heb. 10:19-22).

Our peace is indeed great, as stated in Isa. 54:13. We are established in righteousness (Isa. 54:14) – the righteousness of Jesus Christ Himself (Rom. 3:21-26). Thus, we are accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6-7). We

are no longer enemies of God and fearing His wrath. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ! (Rom. 5:1-2)

Do not these truths of Isaiah echo again and again in the New Testament Scriptures?

Another old testament prophet who foretold these days was Jeremiah. According to Jesus in John 6:45, God will ensure that all He has given to the Son will hear with understanding and come to Jesus. Through Jeremiah, God promises to not make a complete end of Israel in judgment (Jer. 30:11). He will redeem a "seed" and they will be gathered to serve a risen King (Jer. 30:9-10). They will be His people and He will be their God (Jer. 30:22). In the latter days, Israel of promise will understand; being taught by the Lord (Jer. 30:24). These people will be delivered from judgment, in grace and will find rest for their souls (Jer. 31:1-2). Is this not exactly what Jesus reveals will be the case for those who come to Him? (See Matt. 11:20-30). All those the Father has given to Christ will come – drawn in lovingkindness in irresistible grace (Jer. 31:3!). Notice, it is this "drawn" people that are the "you" of the promises of the prophecy (continue to follow Jer. 31:4-30). It is the remnant according to the election of grace that "hear" the word of the Lord (Jer. 31:10). It is the New Covenant foretold in Jer. 31:31ff that will be the righteous basis of acceptance for this "drawn" people. All of these people will be taught of God and will know the Lord and be forgiven their sin (Jer. 31:34). This is precisely what Jesus is saying in John 6. Jesus will never cast off this New Covenant nation of redeemed people established through His blood (Jer. 31:36-37; compare with John 6:37-40).

A third prophet that makes reference to being taught by God is Micah. He speaks of a people who will be taught of God (Micah 4:1-2). This will be a New Jerusalem people who in the "latter days" (Heb. 1:1-4; Acts 2:16-17), the Lord will establish "on top of" the "old temple mount" (compare Micah 3:12, with 4:1). The peoples that flow into this exalted house of the Lord will include peoples from many nations (Micah 4:1-2) and God will teach them His ways. They will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever (Micah 4:5). This people will be made a strong nation, with the Lord Himself their King (Micah 4:6-7; Luke 4:16-21; Matt. 11:3-6). The Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion (Heb. 12:18-29). This Ruler will come forth out of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). He shall be peace for His people (Micah 5:5). Outside of Christ there is no peace for the wicked. Apart from the majestic Shepherd King, there is hunger,

desolation, and the sword (Micah 6:13-14). He is the Bread of life. Come, eat of the bread that satisfies and let your soul delight itself in abundance. He who comes to Christ shall never hunger and he who believes in Him shall never thirst!

Is it not wonderful to be taught of God? What grace that we hear and learn from the Father and as a result come to Christ! He has revealed to us the truth - in Jesus! (Compare Micah 7:18-20 with John 14:6; Rom. 4; Luke 1:68-79; Luke 24:44-47; and Acts 3:23-26).

V. 46 – 47 "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.

Jesus here clearly identifies His Father as the eternal God whom no man had seen nor could see. It is Jesus who testifies of the Father. Since Jesus is the only Man who has seen the Father, He alone is the Mediator of the knowledge of God. Jesus is the One who "narrates" God (John 1:18; 12:45). God teaches men in and through the Lord Jesus Christ – His own Beloved Son.

It appears that Jesus is identifying Himself, the Person now with them, as the Person who appeared to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. Thus, as the One sent from the Father, Jesus reveals Himself as the object of faith. He is the Gospel way of salvation (John 3:36).

V. 48 – 51 "I am the bread of life. "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

Here we see the inferiority of the old. That old manna was useful for preserving natural life, but could not bestow spiritual life. Thus the manna could not preserve life forever. All who were partakers of that bread ended up dead. The true and living bread imparts and sustains spiritual life and it banishes spiritual death. The one who is a partaker of this bread will live forever. "If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever." What an invitation – anyone! It does not matter what you are or what you've been. Eat this bread and you'll live forever.

Jesus is that soul-satisfying bread – not simply some doctrine, but Himself. (Even as Jesus is the New Covenant – Isa. 42:6; 49:8). Through union with Him we enter into life. Our soul shall not be hurt by the second death and our body shall have a glorious resurrection. This is the superiority of the true bread from heaven.

There is a world of difference between receiving a blessing and receiving the one who blesses. Jesus Himself is God's manna. God does not give us a thing called eternal life. Life is not floating up in space somewhere and does not pour into your life when you believe certain facts. Eternal life is a Person. The life is the Son. All of God's precious gifts are bound up in His Son. If you have the Son, you have everything (1 John 5:11-12). You lack nothing.

Even the physical blessings Christ gives will not ultimately satisfy. He alone can satisfy. The Israelites enjoyed the manna from the hand of God. The multitudes ate the gifts of the bread and the fish from the hand of Jesus. After a while, however, the hunger came back, the stomachs began to growl, and they had to seek the Lord for bread all over again. This pattern had repeated itself for ages. So Christ offered them more than another meal. He offered Himself as the final solution and fulfillment of all they hungered for!

Jesus also makes clear that believing in Him (John 6:47) is more than "intellectual knowledge;" we must "eat and drink" (compare John 6:53-54; 63).

In verse 51, Jesus foretells that He will give His flesh in atoning sacrifice for the life of the world. It is through His offering up His body as a sacrifice on the cross that sinners can have life. Christ's death shall be the ransom, the payment, by which eternal life shall be purchased for a world of sinners. Isaiah's suffering Servant (Isa. 52:13 – 53:12) reaches out to Jew and Gentile alike (Remember Isaiah 54 has just been quoted; see also Isa. 49:6). It is in the giving of His flesh in His voluntary sacrifice on the cross that the already presented "Lamb of God" will "take away the sin of the world." Oh, ponder such love towards hell-deserving sinners, that the eternal Son of glory took upon Himself a weak, frail human soul and body, so that He could suffer, weep, groan, bleed, and die. Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh. If Jesus would save sinners, he must drink their cup of suffering. He must bear their stripes – their sins – in his own body. Oh saints, He stood silent under our

accusations. He lay down under our curse. He bore our hell, and died our death. Does not amazing wonder well up in your soul? Does not the testimony of the Lamb slain that moves the hosts of heaven to praise (Rev. 5), cause you to praise Him who qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of eternal life in the kingdom of light and love?

Consider Christ Jesus, whose love to perishing sinners compelled Him to bear wrath in their stead. The nails that pierced His hands and feet held Him firmly on the bloody cross, but oh, His love was the strongest nail! When His Father bruised Him with all the infinite wrath of holy justice, He declared by His actions, "Though this wrath is not mine; I should not bear it; yet either I or My people must bear it. I will bear it for them." Oh, believers, behold how He loves you. Can you count the drops of the ocean? Then you may fathom the depths of His love towards us.

Some of you believe not. How will God respond to you for making light of such a Savior; for brushing off the supreme sacrifice of love of His own dear Son? Give glory to the Lord in coming to Him in repentance and faith. Eat of Him before your feet stumble and you fall in death; never to recover.

Perhaps some who, in the gracious providence of almighty God, are now hearing these words are trying to convince themselves that there is no hell – no hereafter. Yet, deep inside, despite all your self-convincing attempts, you know there is a hell. In fact, despite all the laughter of those who seek to ruin your souls, you know that God is true. Your own conscience tells you that God will punish you for sin. Be assured that you will find no happiness in trying to suppress the truth in unrighteousness. This is not the path to great joy, to resist those thoughts that would lead you to Christ. I plead with you to stop resisting. Bow your knee. Come to Christ and believe on Him.

If you are successful in your attempt to push the truth from your mind, and you continue on in your own way, your success will be the most awful disaster that can ever occur to you. It may be that this is the last warning you will ever have. It may be that the conviction you are now trying to put down may be the last you ever have, and the Lord will declare, "Let him alone. He chooses drunkenness; he chooses lust. Let him have them, and let him reap the wages in the everlasting fires of hell." Oh sinners, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Repent and escape from damnation before

you learn by experience what damnation really means. Why would you perish, when there is such a great Redeemer as Jesus? Today the Bread of life is held out to your starving soul. Take and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear and come to Christ, and your soul shall live abundantly (Isa. 55:2-3). Oh the joy of being drawn to Christ in irresistible grace!

V. 52 – 53 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you."

"Unless you ..." is similar to the statements, "unless you are born from above" and "unless you repent, you will likewise perish."

Blood is a symbol of violent death (even a sacrificial death!) [i.e. ; Gen. 4:8-11; 37:31-33; 2 Sam. 3:27-28; Ex. 12:6-7; Lev. 1:5]. When we read of someone having a man's blood on their head, it means they are guilty of the death of that man. Blood outside the body has been poured out. Thus it is a metaphor for a violent death. It indicates that you did not die in your sleep!

In Psalm 27:2, David speaks of the wicked who come up against him "to eat up my flesh." Did David mean they were cannibals or is he using picture language? I believe he is talking about wicked men who want to benefit or profit from his death. "Eating" would give them some kind of benefit from David's death. This perhaps gives us a small insight into what Jesus means by eating His flesh. It is connected to benefiting from His death.

David also uses the image of drinking blood. In 1 Chronicles 11, David was on the run from Saul. At one point, he was fighting the Philistines who had taken the town of Bethlehem. David remarks how he would love a drink from the well of Bethlehem. Three of his mighty men overheard this comment and took him seriously. They fought through the Philistine line and brought water back to David. David, however, would not drink it but poured it out on the ground. Then in verse 19, David replies, "Far be it from me, O my God, that I should do this! Shall I drink the blood of these men who have put their lives in jeopardy? For at the risk of their lives they brought it."

To David, the drinking of that water would be like drinking the blood of these men. Of course, he is not speaking of literally drinking their blood. What he is saying is that he would be profiting from their near death – their great risk of life. For him to drink would be to enjoy the benefits which came at the expense of their lives.

So when Jesus refers to eating His flesh and drinking His blood, I believe He is making a connection to enjoying the benefits which come from His death. We gain and enjoy great benefits at the expense of His death. We do drink of the water of life that has come from Bethlehem. It cost Jesus His life that we might take and drink of the water of life freely.

V. 54 "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Lev. 17:11 tells us that the life of the flesh is in the blood. Most certainly, true life is in the blood of Jesus Christ, shed for those the Father had given Him!

Jesus, as in verse 51, is declaring to sinners to take and eat and live forever. What a reversal of the curse, where we read in Gen. 3:22 that man is banished from the Garden lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever. This is not a command to not eat or you'll die. No, oh blessed thought, in the day you eat, you will live forever! Oh, poor prodigal starving on the husks, come eat and live.

V. 55 – 57 "For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me."

Augustine wrote, "Believe, and you have eaten." As food and drink sustain our lives, Jesus is teaching that we need to depend on Him utterly, moment by moment, in order to survive. Like branches in the vine, if we are cut away from the main branch and source of life-flowing sap, we will die.

In verses 50, 51, 53, and 54 we are told that eating and drinking result in everlasting life. In verses 40 and 47, we are told that believing in Christ results in everlasting life. Whatever Jesus means by eating and drinking, is the same kind of thing as Jesus means when he speaks of believing.

In this discourse we also see that "eating and drinking," "believing," and "coming" all lead to everlasting life (John 5:40; 7:37-38).

We are to feed on Jesus, the living bread, as He feeds on the living Father (see John 4:32-34). He does this by utter submission to the Father's will, and complete dependence upon Him. If we compare verse 56 with John 15:10, we see the parallel to keeping His commandments. True belief always results in obedience for the glory of His name. Christ lived every moment and breathed every breath to obey the will of the Father. To do the Father's will for the Father's glory, was His drink, and His meat. It was everything to Him. Can you imagine Jesus one day saying, "I'm going to have a day for myself today. What shall I do?" His agenda was the Father's glory and will. His focus every moment was to please the Father (John 8:28-29).

V. 58 – 59 "This is the bread which came down from heaven - not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

Here Jesus sums up the whole discourse. The manna provided no lasting benefit – not spiritually; not even physically – for they all died. The one benefit a hungry sinner could receive was to see the reality of the true spiritual manna – Christ Himself – foreshadowed in the fleshly type. In the eating of the true Bread, His life is transferred to the eater. Thus, this one will live forever. Just as we benefit and live physically from the "life-energy" received from eating plants and animals that have died, so too, we live forever from the life imparted to us through eating the One who loved us and gave Himself for us in the death of the cross.

(iv) The Response (6:60-71)

V. 60 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"

It is hard to get past hearts of pride, unbelief, self-satisfaction, and glorying in tradition. It is not just that it is hard to understand, but rather, it is hard to receive; hard to accept; hard to embrace; hard to take. The hardness of the heart is a far greater problem than the hardness of the message.

V. 61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?"

If this had offended them, how will it be in that moment on the cross when – oh scandalous thought – the Messiah would die in humiliating shame? What will be the response in that hour when He is despised and rejected by men, pierced for transgressions, and bruised for the iniquities of ungodly men? How you respond to this "scandal" determines your destiny.

V.62 – 63 "What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."

When men see the Son of Man, risen, and ascend to heaven, will this not prove who He is and where He is from? Notice also the connection between the ascent of Christ and the Spirit given. (See also Acts 2:33 and its context). Believing in Christ is believing His words (see also v. 68, 5:46-47, and Deut. 8:3!).

There is no profit for the soul in union with fleshly food or physical ceremonies.

V. 64 - 65 "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

Unbelief is the root of rebellion. Jesus knows His own, and to them it is granted by the Father to believe. Oh precious grace!

V. 66 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

If this happened to the greatest teacher, no teacher of the gospel should be surprised if it happens to him.

All is not gold that glitters. All blossoms do not come to fruit. And all are not Israel who are called Israel. Remember Demas; remember Judas Iscariot; remember Lot's wife. The phrase "went back" means to forsake or desert. It is to go back to what they had left behind. They proved by their actions that they were not fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62).

V. 67 – 69 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Peter knew he could not stand by himself. He had been taught of God (Matt. 16:17).

V. 70 – 71 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

Jesus knew that Peter's confession did not represent the belief of all twelve of them. There was one exception. The term "devil" means "slanderer" or "false accuser." This man believed he was sovereign over his own life, but in reality he was the slave and instrument of the devil. He who was "one of the twelve" would perish with the devil and his angels. How much more should you who are a part of the visible church not rest in your "nearness." Unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

J. The Witness of Jesus' Testimony at the Feast of Tabernacles (7:1-8:59) - [To Top](#)

(i) The Heart of Unbelief (7:1-14)

In this section we will see the desperate hardness and unbelief of man. Not only did His own people, the Jews, seek to kill Him, but "even His brothers did not believe in Him." Oh "unless"... 6:44 and 6:65! Man is in absolute need of sovereign grace and God is a God of sovereign grace!

Sometimes saints feel like it is their fault that their family members or loved ones are unconverted. Here we see that even Jesus' own brothers did not believe in Him. What a sympathetic High Priest we have. He not only understands us and feels with us, but He can help!

In this gospel, John gives compelling reasons why Jesus is precious, in the hope that believers will move from a lukewarm to a white-hot love for Jesus, and that unbelievers will be persuaded that Jesus is true and valuable and put their trust in Him. The only way we have of knowing Jesus is by reading the Bible. The Spirit uses the Word to draw us. May God be pleased to use

Jesus' testimony at the Feast of Tabernacles to reveal the incredible wonder and joy of belief in Christ and the deception and horror of unbelief.

V. 1-5 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

It should not escape our notice that John once again lays out a feast as setting for the upcoming events. (i.e. John 6:4) The Feast of Tabernacles, a feast of great rejoicing, was one of three feasts where all the Jewish men would travel to Jerusalem (Deut. 16:16). This particular feast was connected with the ingathering of the harvest (not of the grain but of grapes and olives). It was a seven day feast, followed by a special feast on the eighth day. Families lived in booths for the week (Lev. 23:33-44). The feast was known for its water-drawing and lamp-lighting rites (see John 7:37-38 and 8:12). The ceremony of the outpouring of water, drawn from the Siloam, commemorated the refreshing stream that had gushed forth from the rock at Meribah (Ex. 17:1-7), and anticipated the blessings for both Israel and the world. Isaiah 12 was sung by the people.

There was a torch parade and the illumination of a grand candelabra in the inner court reminding of the pillar of fire (Num. 14:14). Since this feast would be sometime during September or October on our calendar, we are now about six months after the feeding of the 5000.

The 7th month of the Jewish calendar was quite remarkable for the ordinances which the law of Moses required. On the first day was the Feast of Trumpets. On the tenth day was the day of Atonement. On the fifteenth day began the seven day Feast of Tabernacles. In addition, the Jubilee, held every fifty years, was celebrated in the 7th month, just before the Feast of Tabernacles.

Since the law required the presence of all the men in Jerusalem, Jesus' brothers try to get Jesus to go to Jerusalem, where the crowds would be, and display Himself through the miraculous works He had been doing. Like many people, His brothers are excited that Jesus can do such wonders as heal the sick, turn water

into wine, and feed 5000 people. They want Him to get on with the business of showing Himself to the world. In one sense Jesus' brothers have a lot of confidence in Him. They really believe He can do miracles. Yet, we are told a strange thing by John. He tells us that the reason His brothers urged Jesus to an open display to the world was because they did not believe in Him. It appears very clear throughout the Gospel of John, that you can believe Jesus is a great miracle worker and yet still lack the faith Jesus wanted.

This same kind of "believing-unbelief" is seen in other places in John's Gospel (i.e. 2:23-25; 6:15; 8:31-47). Evidently something essential to faith was missing in this "belief" because Jesus would have nothing to do with it. It is not enough to believe Jesus was the Messiah with great power. To believe in Him is to receive Him for all that He is.

Thus, in unbelief, Jesus' brothers see the Feast of Tabernacles as a great opportunity for Jesus to demonstrate His miraculous powers and win a big following.

V. 6 – 9 Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come." When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.

Jesus has no intention to use His miraculous power to make Himself popular. He has no intention to fill churches with enthusiastic unchanged people like His brothers. He tells people that their works are evil and so rather than becoming popular with the people, He gets crucified.

Jesus' brothers can go up to Jerusalem any time they like, but Jesus is under special constraint. They are of the world, and thus the world does not hate them (see John 15:19). The world hates to have its evil exposed and to be convicted of its sin. They, being of the world, cared nothing for God's agenda (like Ahab in 1 Kings 22:8). They see a show of power as a means to attain fame and glory. They see no place for suffering and a cross.

V. 10 – 14 But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said,

"Where is He?" And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, "He is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary, He deceives the people." However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews. Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught.

When Jesus finally goes up to Jerusalem in the middle of the feast, He goes privately. And instead of dazzling miracles, He goes into the temple and begins to teach. In His teaching He reveals to His brothers and to us, what it is to receive Christ for who He really is. There are many opinions about Christ. What matters, however, is what is true.

(ii) Jesus' Authoritative Teaching
(7:15-24)

V. 15 And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?"

It seems that the amazement of the Jews is not one of appreciative amazement at Jesus' insight. From the context it would appear that it is either more of a scoffing shock at Jesus' presumption for taking the role of an authoritative rabbi when He has not received the "proper training"; or else an amazement that someone who had not studied in one of the great rabbinical centers of learning could have such a command of the Scriptures. There was a similar response later to Jesus' followers in Acts 4:13.

V. 16 Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.

Jesus answers their question by stating that His teaching is not based upon tradition or his own opinion and judgment. He is a mouthpiece of the One who sent Him; namely God.

V. 17 "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.

Jesus then states that before one can really know that Jesus' teaching is truly from God, he must truly be desirous of doing God's will. Unless a person really wants his whole life to be shaped by the will of God, he will not recognize Jesus for who He is in truth. Thus, we see that it is not evidence that men need, but rather, they need a new heart!

The real reason behind people not receiving Jesus' words, is not that they lack sufficient evidence, but that their wills (their hearts) are against God. The root of the problem is moral, not intellectual. The greatest obstacle to recognizing the truth of Christ is deep rebellion against the authority of God.

There is a parallel phrase used in John 8:44 – just from the opposite perspective. In John 8:44, Jesus is answering the question He states in the previous verse, where He asks why they cannot hear His word. They most certainly can hear Him with their physical ears. They cannot “hear” because their heart desire is to do the will of their father, the devil.

So, if our will is truly to know and want to do the will of God, we will know this is the Word of the true and living God. It is not apologetics that makes the difference, it is a new heart. Something has to happen deep at the root of our will to remove the rebellion against God that we all have by nature (Rom. 8:7-8); 1 Cor. 2:14; Matt. 16:17). A rebellious will produces a blind eye toward the truth. Do you really want the truth? If anyone is to be led unto truth, he must be fundamentally committed to doing God's will. He must truly be open to whatever God speaks (Acts 17:11-12). This one will be brought into knowledge.

18 "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.

Jesus lays out the criteria for knowing one who is true. He seeks the glory of the One who sent Him. His life is devoted to enjoying and magnifying the glory of God, not in his own private glory.

This is what Jesus' brothers should have seen in His miraculous works; not the mere display of power, but the all-consuming love to God which emptied Jesus of the typical human craving for the praise, acclaim, and approval of men. Jesus rejects pragmatism (v. 3-8) in favor of His Father's agenda.

The Jewish religious leaders were always seeking to promote their own glory (i.e. Matt. 27:18). Their religion was false pretense. Jesus sought His Father's glory!

This is the unrighteousness of fleshly men. They rebel against the will of God in not desiring and seeking God's glory as the quest and passion of our lives. (See John

5: 41-44). You cannot receive and believe the truth, if your will is bent on relishing the glory that comes from men and not the glory that comes from God. We will never recognize the truth of Jesus until our will is to do God's will, namely, to love the glory of God above our own.

John Piper once said in a sermon:

"If you wanted to develop a love for the glory of classical music, you would study it and spend time talking with people who love it, and you would listen and listen and listen.

If you wanted to develop a love for the glory of the sky, you would get a telescope and you would read astronomy and you would spend time with people who love the stars and night by night you would gaze and gaze and gaze.

And if you want to love the glory of God above all other glories, then you will study God and spend time with lovers of God and listen to God and look at God and gaze and gaze and gaze at the revelation of the glory of God" – in particular, in the face of Jesus Christ.

V. 19 "Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"

Now Jesus exposes their hypocrisy.

Mere possession of the law cannot guarantee sanctification. They boasted in being Moses' disciples (John 9:28). Yet, they did not heed Moses, whom they honored with their lips (John 5:44-47). Moses wrote about and honored Christ. Their hatred of Jesus and their desire to kill Him, showed their opposition to the law which stated, "Thou shalt not murder." The law would have been read in their hearing during the feast of Tabernacles (Deut. 31:10-12; Neh. 8:13-18). They wanted honor for themselves. They wanted their own agenda. They were not truly seeking God and His truth.

V. 20 The people answered and said, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?"

They call Him insane. They do not know that the leaders are already plotting to kill Him, and by the end of this discourse (v. 30), they do try to kill Him. Men do not know their own hearts and corruption (Jer. 17: 9). Jesus' testimony is true and His testimony of man is accurate. God knows us. He is too loving to say anything needlessly severe. He has no motive to misrepresent us. His testimony concerning man is abundant and clear. Man is a sinner. God's testimony is that "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). "There is none that does good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:12). Men do not love God, but rather are "haters of God" (Rom. 1:30). Men are not just a little sinful, but are wholly "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), and are therefore justly under wrath (Eph. 2:3). This is a divine verdict, not a human one. It is God, not man, who condemns, and God is not a man that He should lie. If God says something is so, then it is so. We need to receive it as true and respond accordingly.

Is it not wonderful that when we truly feel our sinfulness and understand our just condemnation, we can see the perfect fitness and suitableness of Jesus as the Savior? His atonement is sufficient for our guilt. The more we grasp the depth of our sinfulness and our deserved damnation, the more will the lofty height of grace in the cross of Christ be recognized and appreciated. Indeed Christ is precious to the redeemed.

Study God on the cross and you will behold a glorious sight. Gaze upon Him and behold His glory. In Him is life. Look to Him and live. Behold the love of God to sinners in the giving of Himself for those who cared nothing for Him. See His wisdom that conceived of such a plan to forgive and receive sinners in holiness. Recognize His power, when in weakness and death, He conquered the world's greatest enemies – sin, Satan, death, and hell. Does not God show forth His worthiness and honor in the salvation of His people? Happy saint of God, Christ has paid your debt, opened your prison, broken your chains, and set you free from sin's condemnation and death's penalty! Is it not fitting that even now sweet refrains of praise roll off our tongues for Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, that we might be forever with the Lord?

Has God granted you faith to behold the excellence of Christ? Faith beholds the matchless, priceless Son of God. His beauty outshines all other beings. "Faith sees majesty in His lowliness, dignity in His condescension, honor in His humiliation, beauty in His tears, transcendent, surpassing glory in His cross! 'I see Him,'

exclaims the believer, 'to be exactly the Christ I need- His fulness meets my emptiness- His blood cleanses my guilt- His grace subdues my sin- His patience bears with my infirmities- His gentleness succours my weakness- His love quickens my obedience- His sympathy soothes my sorrows- His beauty charms my eye. He is just the Savior, just the Christ I need, and no words can describe His preciousness to my soul!'" (Octavius Winslow)
Beloved, is not Christ crucified and risen as Lord, enough to cast away every fear; to annihilate every doubt, and to fill you with peace and joy in believing? What shouts of praise to Jesus should burst from every lip as each believer contemplates the sacrifice that has secured his eternal salvation!

V. 21-23 Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel. Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?"

This one work would be a reference to the healing of the man at the pool (John 5:8-18). One work evoked astonishment; not the astonishment that leads to praise. They were astonished that someone would actually work a healing and then tell another to carry his mat on the Sabbath Day, and thus, openly defy the accepted norms for Sabbath keeping. Man is ever ready to bind legalistic rules on other men's consciences. Yes, they will use the Bible, but it will be to bind very tight laws and rules, beyond the intended meaning of a passage (Mark 2:22).

It was this one deed, performed on the Sabbath that brought about the plotting on His life. Their anger was roused against His healing of the man on the Sabbath. Jesus uses the example of circumcision to teach them truth. If ceremonial cleansing of one "member" of the body is permitted, then what about the actual healing of the entire body? Jesus did not "wound" his body, but made him completely well.

Jesus made the man "completely well on the Sabbath." When I ponder this in light of the true Sabbath rest in Christ, I am moved to great rejoicing! We were as those pictured in Isaiah 1. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed

or bound up, or soothed with ointment." And then Jesus passed by! When no eye pitied us, to have compassion on us – we were as one cursed from our birth and cast out into the open field to struggle and perish in our own blood – Jesus passed by. When Jesus saw us lying there, and knew that we already had been in that condition a long time, He said to us, "Do you want to be made well?"

O sinner, wretched and cursed, do you want to be made well? It is Jesus who asks. I cannot help you, but this One who asks is not a mere man. It is the Lord.

O believer, do you remember what Jesus said? Jesus said, "Live!" He said, "Live! Rise, take up your bed and walk!" It was a great day of Sabbath rest that day when we were healed and found rest for our souls in Christ. As Lazarus was dead in the tomb– an abomination to the living – so were we dead in our trespasses and sins (John 11: 1-44; Eph. 2: 1-7). And then as He had purposed, in His own time and for God's glory to be seen, Jesus came near and called us by name to come forth.

How is it Lazarus heard His voice and obeyed, coming out of the tomb? A dead man cannot hear. He must have been given life. So was it true of you, dear believer. God granted you life that you could hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. What grace! Glory be the God who saves for His own name's sake! Are you not glad that when Jesus went to the tomb, He did not say, "Lazarus, I have deal for you. If you take the first step, then I'll grant you life."? Salvation is of the Lord! Don't point a sinner away from Christ and Christ's power to himself and his own ability and say, "Now it's up to you." I'm glad that is not true. We do not tell sinners that their only hope is in themselves. We want them thrown to the ground in utter hopelessness and tell them, "Your only hope is the grace and power of God. You'd better call on Him!" Jesus, the powerful Lord of glory, is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him.

V. 24 "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

Jesus calls them to stop being rash in judgments which are in accordance with appearances. Some worthless and filthy things can be painted and coated and look bright. A nugget of gold can be covered with dirt and look worthless. May the Lord deliver us from rash judgments. Had they judged righteously, they would

know that Jesus is not a Sabbath breaker, but the One who fulfills both Sabbath and circumcision! (See also Isa. 11:3-4). They rejected this "cornerstone" upon which God would build His holy temple (see Isa. 28:26 with context of 28:16-17, and similar incident in Acts 4:8-12)!

(iii) Who is Jesus Christ? (7:25-36)

V. 25-27 Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill?"

But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ? However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from."

At this point it seems that the crowd is beginning to connect Jesus with the one who healed the man at the pool some months earlier. They give some consideration to Jesus being the promised Christ. However, they quickly dismiss the idea. They keep defending their denial. Men never seem to lack reasons to confirm their will. In this case, they have a wrong presupposition that no one will know where the Messiah is from. They seem to have a belief that he would just miraculously appear on the scene. That mistake led to a wholesale rejection. How many make mistakes regarding truth because they start with their presuppositions, and they do not actually evaluate whether their foundational beliefs are actually true according to the Word of God.

The crowd also thought that they knew where Jesus was from – Galilee. It was a well-known prophecy that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). They come to a quick rejection without truly searching out the facts. Many shut their eyes to the plainest facts and will not honestly search for, nor submit to the truth. Remember the saying, "None are so blind as those who will not see."

V. 28 Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know.

They do not know God. How can they? They miss the very Divine self-disclosure in the incarnate Word before them.

V. 29 But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."

Jesus knows God as no one else! "He sent Me." Jesus is the Sent One – the Messiah; the Prophet greater than Moses, whom the Father had always promised to send. Jesus is saying:

"I am the seed of the woman sent to bruise the serpent's head.

I am the Lamb of God sent to take away the sin of the world.

I am the logos – the Word sent forth to "exegete" the Father.

I am the giver of living water, sent that thirsty sinners might be satisfied.

I am the Bread of life, sent that men may eat and live forever!

I proclaim Myself the "Sent One" – the very Christ of God!

V. 30 Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.

Here we see the ruling hand of a sovereign God! God rules over all His enemies. In this circumstance, as in every situation, they had no power, except what God permitted them to do. Later we will see His capture was purposed, voluntary, and controlled. It was all by permission of the Most High God, and according to the eternal counsel of the Triune God. Remember this in time of need! We live in a world where God overrules all times and events, and where nothing can happen but by God's permission. The very hairs of our heads are all numbered. You can say to every opposing person or circumstance: "You could have no power against me, except it were given to you from above" (John 19:10-11). Our times are in God's hand (Ps. 31:15). That hand guides and governs all things here below and makes no mistakes!

V. 31-32 And many of the people believed in Him, and said, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?" The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning

Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him.

There can be a general belief that Jesus is the Messiah. Yet that is not the same as being born from above. There always seem to be people ready to oppose the truth. They come alongside those "awakened" and keep them from entering into the kingdom (Matt. 23:13). Woe to those who take on such a role.

While the officers are seeking an appropriate time to make their move and arrest Jesus with as little commotion as possible, John unfolds what Jesus is doing and saying in the next few verses.

V. 33-34 Then Jesus said to them, "I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come."

Once again Jesus makes reference to the Father's foreordained schedule. The cross – His death – is not the end for Jesus, but the return to the glory He had with the Father before the world began (John 17:5).

Oh, what a miserable end – to be told you cannot come to where Jesus is going (see Matt. 7:23; Rev. 21:27, 22:14-15). Hell is a truth known too late for many. But for His own, Jesus said, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward" (John 13:36).

It is a strange statement to say, "where I am you cannot come." Jesus does not say, "where I am going" here. I think this is because of who Jesus is. Jesus is even then in heaven! (See also John 3:13).

V. 35-36 Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What is this thing that He said, 'You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come'?"

Once again Jesus' words are misunderstood. What irony - for indeed Jesus will teach the Gentiles! In fact, this book has been used to teach many Gentiles their need of a great and powerful Savior. John's writing reveals to the world that Jesus has come in the flesh to powerfully redeem sinners. He is the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world!

(iv) The Promise of the Spirit (7:37-39)

V. 37-39 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The water metaphor that Jesus uses is most appropriate for people whose minds would be fresh with the image of the water-pouring rite performed during the feast. The other immediate contextual connection is the just mentioned departure of Jesus to a place where His opponents cannot come. However when He ascends on high as Lord, after His death, He will send the Spirit!

(a) The Setting – "On the last day, that great day of the feast..."

I believe that the fact that this was the last day of the feast, adds special force to Jesus' words, if it was immediately after the ceremonies themselves ceased. The rites may stop, but His claim is continuously valid! On the seven days of the feast, a golden flagon was filled with water from the pool of Siloam and carried in a procession led by the High Priest back to the temple. As the procession approached the watergate, three blasts from the sopar – a trumpet associated with joyful occasions – were sounded. While the pilgrims watched, the priests proceeded around the altar with the flagon, with the temple choir singing the Hallel (Psalm 113-118). When the choir reached Psalm 118, every male pilgrim shook willow and myrtle branches tied with a palm in their right hand, while his left hand raised a piece of citrus fruit as a sign of the in-gathered harvest. Then all cried, "Give thanks to the Lord," three times. Wine and the water from the pool were poured into their respective silver bowls and then poured out before the Lord. (1 Samuel 7:6 may provide the roots of the water rite.) Connected with these rituals, to the Jew, was the Lord's provision of water in the desert, and to the Lord's pouring out the Spirit in the last days. This pouring at the Feast of Tabernacles symbolically would refer to the messianic age in which a stream from the sacred rock would flow over the whole earth! (Zech. 13:1 – 14:21).

(b) The Cry – "Jesus stood and cried out, saying..."

In the midst of the temple, Jesus stands and cries out to weary pilgrims. (c) The Need - "If anyone thirsts..."

Thirst is a painful sensation. Ponder the stories of those who have been lost in a desert or adrift at sea, without access to water. Remember the words of the rich man in Luke 16:24 when he "cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame'"? There is nothing so terrible and hard to bear as thirst. And if bodily thirst is painful and deadly, how much more is thirst of the soul; with nowhere to turn for relief - that spiritual thirst that realizes you are dying daily, and has a clear view of your own guilt and wickedness. Oh, the thirst for pardon, forgiveness, and peace with God, that comes with the craving of an awakened and troubled conscience; desirous of rest. This is the thirst of the 3000 Jews hearing Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2:37). This is the thirst of the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:30).

The first step toward heaven is to be thoroughly convinced that we deserve hell (contrast with Rev. 3:17); that sense of sin that so alarms a man that makes him realize his own case is desperate. If you saw God as He is in truth, you would not flatter yourself with your abilities and good wishes. You would see your inability to save yourself and that there is no fitness in you, but for eternal damnation. Once you recognize the true state of your being, as a lost, damned creature with hell gaping ready to receive you if God would but cut the thread of your life, then the Lord's call of mercy will be a sweet, sweet sound in your ear. If you so thirst, listen to the call of Jesus.

(d) The Remedy - "let him come to Me and drink."

This is what Jesus recommends! This alone is how a man can have peace with God. Such a marvelous remedy! Such a simple remedy for ignorant sinners who need simple. It is not some great thing to do – just come to Him. He will do it all. Jesus will provide all you need. You need an answer for all your sin. You need a right standing with God. Commit your soul to Him.

Christ is the fountain of living water which God has graciously provided for thirsting souls. For relief you must come to Christ Himself – not His church, or His ordinances. Christ alone can take the burden from you and set you free. There is no other remedy than this, and all the wisdom of the world cannot find a flaw in it or devise a better plan. David, crushed by the guilt of adultery and the murder of a righteous man, drank of this fountain by faith and was relieved. He believed in a Shepherd greater than himself. He repented and

believed in the supreme King and received a full supply of pardon and mercy and grace.

Let me note one more thing. You must actually come and drink. It is not enough to profess or wish or talk or intend or hope. Come to King Jesus and like the Queen of Sheba at Solomon's court, you will soon say, "The half was not told me" (1 Kings 10:7).

(e) The Promise – " 'He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive..."

He who comes to Christ by faith shall receive an abundant supply of everything he can desire for the relief of his own soul. The Spirit shall convey to him such an abiding sense of pardon, peace, and hope that his inward man will be like a well spring never dry. If you come to Christ, you will not only receive an abundant supply of everything you need for your own soul, but you shall also, through the Spirit, spill out and become a source of blessing to the soul of others.

This cry of Christ to the thirsty calls to mind Isaiah 51:5 which says, "Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, you who seek the Lord; look to the rock from which you were hewn ..." 1 Cor. 10:4 makes it clear that the rock in the wilderness that was struck and gushed forth with a river of water to sustain the lives of the thirsting nation, was but a picture of the ultimate spiritual Rock – Jesus Christ. Exodus 17 truly provides for us a stirring picture. First with the rock struck, and the provision of water that the people would not perish. Then, even Moses needed the "support" of a rock, but victory was granted when the deliverer stretched out his hands – with a man on each side!

This cry of Christ to the thirsty also calls to mind the passage in Isaiah 12, which follows contextually the statement that the messiah would not judge according to appearance, but He would judge righteous judgment (Isa. 11:1-5). In Isaiah 12, the call goes out to the remnant of God's people. "And in that day you will say: 'O Lord, I will praise You; though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for YAH, the Lord, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.' Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. ... Cry out and shout, O inhabitants of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!" (Isa. 12:1-3,6)
You will notice the joy of having God's anger turned away. Up to that point, there was only judgment where

the prophet proclaimed over and over ... "For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still" (Isa. 5:25; 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4). There is only one place where God's anger is turned away! There is but one source of comfort. Draw water from the wells of salvation! He, the Lord, has become my salvation! Jesus announces in a loud cry that He can provide these waters!

If you thirst, heed Jesus' invitation without delay. Don't wait to see what anyone else will do. The nail-scarred hand of the living Redeemer is now held out from heaven, but will one day be withdrawn. The fountain is now open, but soon will be closed forever. If anyone thirsts, let him come and drink without delay. Even though you are a great sinner and perhaps have resisted many such warnings and calls to salvation in the past, now is the day of salvation. Come to Christ. Do not say that you don't know how to come, or that you don't know what it is to believe, that you must have more light. Will a tired man say that he is too tired to lay down? Will a man clinging to a ledge say he is too weary to let go? Let go. Surrender and fall into the everlasting arms of mercy and love. The door is not yet shut. The fountain is not yet closed. Those outstretched arms yet beckon you to come. No one ever came to the Fountain and found it dry, or went away unsatisfied. Christ is breath-taking in all His splendor. He is a banquet of grace in the wilderness.

(f) The Reference – "as the Scripture has said, 'out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive..."

"The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail." (Isa. 58:11)

"For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring; they will spring up among the grass like willows by the watercourses." (Isa. 44:3-4)

There is also another great connection in the book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah chapter 8 sets the context as the Feast of Tabernacles. Following the reading and teaching from the Law, they give an extended prayer of praise and confession. Within this prayer, Neh. 9:15, and 19-20, clearly the water from the rock episodes are connected to the "bread from heaven." These events are

also connected with the giving of God's law, His Word, and His Spirit. For Nehemiah, the Spirit is connected with the giving of God's revelation – His instruction. These same links are present in John's Gospel.

(See also the New Covenant promise in Isa. 43:19-21 and its close connection to Isa. 44:3-8. Verse 8 speaks of there being no other Rock – which was the source of the water in the wilderness! That Rock was struck once. After that it was to be spoken to [Num. 20:8].)

(g) The Giving of the Spirit – “for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

In what sense was the Holy Spirit not given? At first glance, we can get mistakenly get the impression that the Holy Spirit was not involved at all in the Old Testament era. Similar problems can occur in the reading of passages like John 1:17 in an “absolute” manner. John 1:17 is not saying that there was no grace or truth in the Old Testament era, but there is a fullness that was not before experienced. Likewise, in some sense the Holy Spirit was going to do something in the New Covenant era that He did not do in the Old Testament era. The New Testament era would be an age of belief – the age of the Spirit (Ezek. 36:24-28; Jer. 31:31-34; Joel 2:28-32). The Spirit would bring about a new covenant people who would all be forgiven and transformed believers. There were transformed believers in the Old Testament era, but these were the minority – a remnant – within the larger unbelieving community of old covenant people. That truly was an age of unbelief. The spiritual kingdom and the building of the new household of God – the new temple – could not take place until the “Cornerstone” was laid.

Once Jesus was established as King, the Spirit was sent to bring about a knowledge of truth, not available in the Old Testament. This revelation we have in the New Testament Scriptures (Eph. 3:1-7; John 14:25-26, 15:26, 16:7-15). The Spirit also gifts all believers for the building up the family of believers into a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:4-5, 1 Cor. 12:7-11). This giving of spiritual gifts did not take place until after Pentecost (Eph. 4:7-13). The Old Testament provided a physical picture of this in Exodus 31:1-11 and 35:30-35. The Spirit of God also came to motivate and empower believers to take the gospel to the world, for the building of a spiritual temple made up of living stones collected from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Acts 1:8, Rev. 5:9-10).

(v) The Response From the Crowd (7:40-53)

V. 40-42 Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

Jesus' cry certainly seemed to get their attention. When Jesus fed the crowds in the wilderness, as mentioned in the previous chapter, some immediately thought He must be the prophet like Moses predicted in Deut. 18: 15-18 (see John 6:14). Now again, with the mention of living water, at the feast which remembered the water brought forth from the rock, some are prompted to think of Moses' predicted Prophet. Others considered the possibility of Jesus being the promised Messiah. It seems they separated the Prophet and the Messiah as two individuals. However, in Jesus, the Davidic Messiah and the Prophet like Moses are both fulfilled. The expectation of many was a temporal Redeemer. The Old Testament language is one of physical and natural expressions (i.e. Psalm 14:7; Isa. 61:1). However, they find their fulfillment in Christ in a far more glorious spiritual reality than had ever entered into the heart of man (see 1 Cor. 2:6-10).

Others totally rejected Jesus as the Christ because He was a Galilean. The great irony here is that indeed their proclamation does establish Jesus as the Christ, for the readers of John's gospel know that Jesus is the Seed of David and He did sprout forth in Bethlehem. Many from this crowd were familiar with the content of Scripture, yet the eyes of their own understanding were not enlightened. Their Messiah stood before them, but they did not receive Him. People can know the Bible well, quote texts appropriately and reason about the things of Christianity, and yet remain dead in trespasses and sins. A new heart is the gift of God!

V. 43 So there was a division among the people because of Him.

Jesus brings about division (Luke 12:51). As long as human nature is corrupt, Christ will be a cause of division and difference among men (2 Cor. 2:16). It is an interesting, yet sad note, that we have no record of the crowd going to Jesus with their concerns. In their own wisdom and knowledge, they discussed things amongst themselves. However, we do not read of them going to Jesus, and humbly saying, "We believe you are

the Messiah, but we do not know how to reconcile the passage about coming from Bethlehem in our minds" etc. There is still a tendency in men today to talk about another and even vilify a man, instead of simply going to the man himself to get things cleared up, if at all possible. It seems far too often, men would rather "roast" an absent "opponent". It is definitely easier to win a debate when your opponent is absent and cannot respond for himself. We'll see this true of the chief priests and Pharisees in the next few verses.

44 –46 Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him. Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

Again, we see His hour had not yet come.

The officer's answer is striking in light of the fact that they were prejudiced against Him. Was it Jesus' emphasis on grace as opposed to works that struck them? Jesus spoke words of grace and truth. Perhaps they, too, had Jesus' words pierce to their deepest needs and emptiness.

V. 47 – 53 Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." And everyone went to his own house.

The first response of the Pharisees is a common one made by prejudiced men in any age. They will not recognize the possibility of those without "papers" actually learning and grasping more truth than one recognized as "great and learned." When people cannot answer clear teaching, they will often resort to the weapons of the Pharisees. They do not deal with the objective facts, but rather seek their refuge in some great teacher, or the "majority" (which often means the majority of people in their own circle). [i.e. 'Why should I believe you when Dr. so and so believes something different?'] You will always find "great scholars" on almost every side of a debate. These Pharisees do not seem to be leaders with "shepherd hearts." They have no genuine love for those they are supposed to serve. From high upon their pedestal, they pontificate as if they have attained.

One man directs these religious leaders to the Scriptures. This same Nicodemus, who some eighteen months earlier had come to our Lord at night as an ignorant inquirer, now speaks as a teacher of the law. It seems he most certainly does have some knowledge of the Scripture. He wisely appealed to the law of Moses which they all professed to honor. The Pharisees, despite their bragging and self-assertion and condemnation of the common people, show their own evil in ignoring the law. For all their "knowledge," they do not make any application into their own lives and practice. They are not doers of the Word.

It is clear that the law, as pointed out by Nicodemus who exhorted them to obey the law, would have them talk to Jesus in sincerity. This they were unwilling to do. They had no desire to examine themselves nor their beliefs. The Pharisees have set themselves up as judges and they make judgments in accordance with themselves. Their own mind becomes the standard. Thus, their presuppositions go unchecked. Their assumption was that Jesus was born in Galilee. Thus, what they saw as a fact was indeed incorrect, and therefore they reached a wrong conclusion.

Nicodemus' attempt at reasoning with these men with the Scripture, is met with scorn and contempt. Thus, they deflect things away from the real issue, which is their own disobedience. They will not admit their sin and wrong. The charge that they were breaking the law was unanswerable. However, rather than acknowledge it in humble repentance, they get mad and deflect things on another. Then they withdraw to avoid the light that shines forth from the Scriptures. Again, we note that the Pharisees are not alone in this tactic which reveals the corrupt heart of pride in sinful man. Their bitterness stems from their pride.

God Himself had testified, "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" Yet, they continue to discuss amongst themselves and reach conclusions apart from righteous judgment. Oh, let us take this lesson to heart. Let us be genuine and humble enough to test all our judgments by the clear testimony of Scripture within its redemptive, historical context. Let us who have received such grace, have no pretenses about having attained, and be ever ready to be corrected from the Word by a brother, for the sake of the glory of God's name.

(vi) An Adulteress meets the Light of the World
(8:1-12)

V. 1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

While the religious leaders went to their homes (7:53), Jesus departed to the Mount of Olives. He had no place to lay His head. He lived as a pilgrim with eternity in view. Communion with His Father was His necessary delight (Luke 21:37-38; 22:39-46).

V. 2 Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to him and He sat down and taught them.

The outer court served as a venue for many scribes to gather their students around them and expound the law to them. Early the next morning Jesus returned and sat down to teach the people (sitting was the posture of the teacher; Matt. 26:55). Perhaps the early hour, was due to this being a work day, or perhaps to teach people before they left Jerusalem to travel home since the feast had now ended. Either way, the light of the world was dawning and would shine in Jerusalem and from there to the world (8:12).

We also make note of the word "all". Many are confused by this word and use it in an absolute sense only. Confusion over the proper understanding and use of this word has led to confusion over issues such as the atonement.

V. 3-5 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?"

Now enter the scribes and Pharisees, hindering the learning of the people with their own agenda. Most of the scribes (lawyers, theologians etc.) were Pharisees by conviction. They address Jesus respectfully as "teacher" when only the night before they called Him a deceiver. Who is really the deceiver here with flattering lips? In addition, adultery is a sin that is not committed in isolation, so we naturally wonder why the man was not brought in with her. The next verse reveals to us that they are not concerned about justice, but rather their focus is trapping Jesus.

V. 6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear.

It is commendable to ask questions in sincerity, but to use questions to set up your own agenda is deception. Using the law of Moses as a deceptive means to one's own end is a misuse of God's revelation. They refer to texts like Lev. 20:10 and Deut. 22:22-24 to set Jesus up. If He demanded her to be stoned, they could go to the Roman authorities (John 18:31) and this Man who received harlots and tax-collectors would lose face with crowd of sinners flocking to His gracious words. If Jesus did not uphold the law, He would show Himself to be an enemy of Moses and the law of God.

Jesus silently responds in fulfillment of Psalm 38:12-14. "Those also who seek my life lay snares for me; Those who seek my heart speak of destruction, and plan deception all day long. But I, like a deaf man, do not hear; and I am like a mute who does not open his mouth. Thus I am like a man who does not hear, and in whose mouth is no response." (see also Amos 5:10-13) Oh they had no idea how low Jesus would stoop in the dust to receive sinners in a just forgiveness!

V. 7-8 So when they continued asking Him, He raised himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

When Jesus responded He did so with a heart-searching reply. Jesus neither spurned the law, nor excused the prisoner's guilt. He did not say that the woman had not sinned or that her sin was small. But He reminded her accusers that they were not the ones to bring a charge against her. Their own hands were not clean. In the net they spread, their own foot was taken! Jesus makes reference to the very law they abused which clearly stated: "Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil from you." (Deut. 17:6-7)

Since the Scribes and Pharisees were the witnesses, would they dare to be her executioners? How men are zealous to condemn others for sins which they themselves are guilty. We ought to be more severe against sin in ourselves than others. Sinners are often far too anxious to play the judge. The truth is, we either are, or have been, or may be what he/she is ... but for the grace of God! Do we really believe that?

We have no idea what Jesus wrote on the ground. However, in light of the close proximity of Jesus' declaration of living water the day before, it is hard not to think of Jeremiah's statement.

"O Lord, the hope of Israel, all who forsake You shall be ashamed. 'Those who depart from Me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters.'" (Jer. 17:13) Let us look to the only One who is without sin. There alone can we find peace and joy and forgiveness. Only He can cleanse our conscience by His own death and condemnation for our sins.

V. 9-11 Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

Before being shamed publicly, they withdrew (like Judah in Gen. 38:23-26). Fallen as human nature is, God has taken care to leave within every man a witness that will be heard (Rom. 2:15). Happy is the one who never quiets his conscience, but rather strives to keep it tender. Still happier is the one who prays to have it enlightened by the Holy Spirit and sprinkled with Christ's blood. [See further notes on conscience in 2 Cor. messages #5 and #6.]

With the accusers gone, we have a sinner left alone at the bar with Jesus. With wonder we gaze upon His compassion and grace. How can He do this? This is unjust, is it not? No, for Christ will satisfy justice! Jesus did not say that she did not deserve to be condemned. Grace appears to make light of sin God's grace does not. Behold the cross – behold the Lamb of God. Christ has come to silence the law's demand for judgment. For this purpose He came, that He might save His people from their sins (John 3:17; 12:47). He Himself would be condemned for her. There is forgiveness and a place in the kingdom for adulterers and adulteresses who leave off their sin.

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? What sweet words – "I do not condemn you!" Acquitted in the high court of heaven. We are not free to sin, but to go and sin no more (Psalm 85:8). Forsaking sin is the essence of repentance.

V. 12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the

light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

What an episode John gives to us in the life and testimony of Jesus. Indeed, this early morning (see v. 2), the true light was dawning! Jesus shines so pure and genuine in contrast to the darkness – the cloaked deception of the religious leaders. Christ is the light of the world. Thus He is expressing what He is in Himself – most excellent and glorious; and what He is to the world – the source of light. Since this was said in the treasury, where the golden lampstands would give their light, Jesus unveils His supremacy to the old pictures and types. He who follows Jesus, as the Israelites followed the pillar of bright cloud in the wilderness (as remembered in the symbolism of torch lights etc. in the feast of tabernacles), would have the light that brings and produces life (1 Peter 2:9). In fact, in the next chapter, Jesus will illustrate this truth by causing the blind man to see. Pluck out a man's eyes who has this light (Jesus) and he will still see!

Light in John's Gospel: John 1:4-9; 3:19; 9:5; 12:35,46.

The light metaphor is steeped in Old Testament allusions: Ex. 13:21-22; 14:19-25; Psalm 27:1; 36:9; 44:3; 90:8; 119:105; Prov. 6:23; Isa. 9:2; 42:6-7; 49:6; 60:1-3, 19-22; Hab. 3:3-4; Zech. 14:5b-7 gives the promise of continual light following the flow of living waters from Jerusalem. (See also Luke 2:29-32; Acts 13:47; 26:22-23).

As I reflect upon this whole episode, I find myself in wonder, for I recognize that I was a spiritual adulterer. I, too, had an accuser who caught me in the very act. But the Judge of all, the One who was without sin, who had every right to condemn me in my guilt, did not heed my accuser. Instead He stooped to the dust of this earth, even to the grave, that I would not be condemned. Oh may such grace move us to go and sin no more.

(vii) The Authority of Jesus' Testimony (8:13-30)
V. 13-18 The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true." Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me. It is also written in your law that

the testimony of two men is true. I am the One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.”

Light bears witness of itself – by its very presence. Thus, Jesus does bear true testimony of Himself. His opponents speak without knowing where He is from or where He is going. They lack the necessary knowledge to judge, yet they are constantly judging Christ, but according to fleshly standards (i.e. merely a countryman from Galilee – the son of Joseph). They lived according to their physical senses, and thus they wanted a carnal or fleshly Messiah and Deliverer and King. In verse 15, Jesus is saying that He does not judge anyone the way they do. He does not appeal to superficial, fleshly criteria, and mark people “up” or “down”. Jesus is not saying He does not judge in any sense. For in v. 16, He says when He judges, His judgment is true (see also John 5:22,27). Therefore any assessment Jesus gives now is and will prove right, for He stands with and judges only as He hears from the Father (see v. 26). Jesus has an inseparable union with the Father.

Jesus does bear witness of Himself, yet His witness is not alone standing against all other witnesses. Rather, His witness and words are in perfect conformity with the Father’s will (John 16:28), and certainly with the Father’s witness in the Scriptures.

When Jesus refers to it being “your law,” He is emphasizing that it is the very law they appeal to (i.e. Deut. 17:6; 19:15). The Father bears witness of Jesus in that very law!

In the Greek, “men” in verse 17 is emphatic. That may be promoting the idea, that if the testimony of two men is solid enough (i.e. totally reliable and trustworthy) to put someone to death, what about the testimony of the Son of God and the Father who completely agree? (See 1 John 5:9)

V. 19 Then they said to Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.”

Once again Jesus testifies of His unique relationship with His heavenly Father. How often in John does Jesus say something, only to have it misinterpreted by others? Despite all their pretended wisdom, these “scholars” are ignorant of God. Their question reveals they neither know Jesus nor the Father. In and through Christ is the only way to draw near to so high and holy a Being as

the true God. Christ is the way by which we must come to the knowledge of God. In Him, through Him, and by Him, we may come boldly into the Father's presence and behold His high attributes without fear of being consumed. In and through Christ, the lowliest, humble sinner shall find out enough about God to make him happy forever!

V. 20 These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple, as he taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.

The treasury was a very public place (Mark 12: 41). The right hour would be determined by God Himself. They had the will to hurt, but not the power. When the time expired our Lord said, "But this is your hour and the hour of darkness" (Luke 22: 53). What comfort for us as believers in Christ; to have a Father who is truly over all!

In this next section, Jesus will pick up on what He said in the previous verses and speak of:

- Where He comes from
- Where He is going
- Who His Father is
- Who Jesus is.

In speaking of who He is, He is going to show the great contrast between Himself and them:

- He is from above; they are from below
- They are from this world; He is not from this world
- Where He goes, they cannot come
- God is His Father; theirs is the devil.

Who then is the true Israel – the true son of God?

V. 21 Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come."

Christ warns them of His departure - as the glory departed from Israel in the days of Ezekiel. By "going away" Jesus is referring to His death, which is the means through which He will go to His Father.

When Jesus says, "you will seek Me," He is not likely referring to Himself personally, but rather, the Messiah. However, they will not find Him, for they have rejected the only Messiah there is. Thus, they cannot come to enjoy the eternal happiness at His Father's right hand.

In fact, they will die in their sin. The term here is singular, referring to the sin of unbelief; the sin of rejecting Jesus and the revelation that He is. Therefore they cannot come into the Father's presence and be accepted. To reject the Son is to reject the Father (Jn. 5:23). Therefore they cannot come, for they have no right to come.

V. 22 So the Jews said, "Will He kill Himself, because He says, 'Where I go you cannot come?'"

Of course, they are thinking of Him committing suicide. However, the irony is that there is a sense in which truth is being communicated once again unwittingly, as we have seen so often in John's gospel. Jesus would indeed "go away" by voluntarily laying down His life – not in suicide, but in submission to the Father's will – in a violent death meted out by His enemies.

V. 23-24 And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

The terms "beneath" and "of this world" refer to the fallen moral order in conscious rebellion against the Creator. Jesus is contrasting the realm of God and the realm of His fallen and rebellious creation. If they die in the kingdom below, that is, of this world, they will die in their sins. Here "sins" is plural referring to all the diverse and ugly forms of corruption that sprouts forth from the one sin of unbelief.

To die in one's sins ... horror of horrors. It causes us to shudder as we reflect on a sinner dying unpardoned, unforgiven, and unfit to meet God. His sins will not be left behind and forgotten, but the sins of the unbeliever will go to the grave with him. If you die in your sins, you will be cast before the righteous judge of all the earth, whose eyes are a flame of fire, with all your sins upon you.

It is not harsh to humbly and graciously warn of hell (Ezek. 3:19; 33:9). In fact, it is our Lord Jesus Christ, the loving, gracious, merciful, compassionate friend of sinners, who leads the way. To ignore the truth of coming judgment is a false love and a deception. There is a hell. It is the highest love to warn men plainly of danger and to beseech them to flee to the refuge from the wrath to come. Flee into the arms of Jesus, the only refuge for sinners. It was Satan, the deceiver, who declared to Eve, "You shall not surely die." Was he just

being loving; trying to look only to the positive side of things? Jesus is love. He speaks these words to warn, not to condemn. Someone has estimated that about one hundred people a minute die in their sins and go to hell. God, in Christ, has condescended to warn us. The only possibility of escape lies in genuine belief. What is it they are to believe? Jesus says they must believe "that I am He." ("ego eimi" – literally, "I am") In hearing this we are reminded of the scene where Moses is confronted by God in the burning bush (Ex. 3:13-14). Jesus is greater than Moses. He is the one who sent Moses!

There is also a close parallel phrase found in Isaiah 43:10 (see context Isa. 43:8-11).

V. 25-26 Then they said to Him, "Who are You?" And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

Jesus responds to their question saying that the answer is the same as what He has communicated from the beginning. He has been consistent. His statements concerning Himself have always been the same. He is the very Word of the Father!

V. 27 They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

Here John makes sure that we don't misunderstand what they misunderstood.

V. 28-29 Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself, but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him."

When will the full disclosure of who Jesus is take place? When will His glory be most fully revealed? The answer is: when the Son of Man is lifted up – lifted up on the cross and lifted up to His Father's presence (John 12:32-34). As the serpent was lifted up on the pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:14-15).

Notice too, how this will be achieved through His enemies ... "when you lift up the Son of Man." There

should never be any doubt as to who reigns in this universe. The Son of Man is a reference to Dan. 7: 13-14 – the one who receives the everlasting kingdom from the Father.

What is meant by the phrase, “then you will know that I am He” (or “I am”)? Different suggestions have been put forth. Some think that is referring to the fact that even those who do not believe will stand at the last day, condemned by Him whom they lifted up on the cross. That day when Jesus was hanging on the cross, they were blind to the glory that shone around them, yet the day would come when they would bow down and confess that Jesus is Lord. Others think Jesus is referring to the signs accompanying the crucifixion through which the Father would testify concerning His Son (i.e. darkness, temple veil torn, earthquake, resurrection etc.). A third suggestion is that they will know once He has risen, ascended, and destroyed the temple and Jerusalem as He said would come upon that generation (Ezek. 33:33; Mark 14:61-62; Matt. 26:63-64). Another possibility given by some is that He is referring to their death. Then the reality of who He is would come crushing down on them. One thing that Jesus is making very clear, is that both His teaching and His going to the cross are nothing less than the Father’s will (John 16:32). In His Son, God is well-pleased (Isa. 42:1). It is most wonderful to ponder that Jesus never once looked back upon a day with regret. He always did those things that pleased His Father.

Now, fellow believers, because the Son of Man was lifted up, we too, are from above, and no longer below! We are no longer of this world (John 15:19) or of the devil (John 8:44)! Where Jesus has gone, we will come! O blessed thought; the best is yet to come!

V. 30 As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

Many believed (for the Scriptures says that they did), but Jesus does not treat their belief as true belief, as we shall see. There is “belief” and then there is belief in John’s gospel. There is a belief which Jesus views as enduring and persevering and genuine, and there is a belief which Jesus views as spurious - which is interested in superficial things.

So many people were fascinated by Jesus’ power. They were fascinated by the miracles; by the signs; but they did not come to grips with a suffering servant who would be destroyed. They did not have a faith which took them to the cross - which they take up, dying daily. Jesus calls for disciples to follow Him - outside the camp! This

is the kind of faith that embraces the fellowship of His sufferings – living as one not of this world.

(viii) The Children of Abraham (8:31-59)

John has already introduced the theme of “fickle faith” (2:23-25; 6:66). Now Jesus lays down exactly what it is that separates spurious faith from true faith – false disciples from genuine ones.

V. 31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

The term “abide” (Gr, “meno”) means “to stay” (i.e. in a given place, state, or relation). It can carry the idea of continuing, dwelling, enduring, remaining etc. (i.e. to make your home or rest or refuge here). Therefore, a genuine believer “holds fast” to Jesus’ teaching (2 John 9). He obeys it and finds it precious (John 15:4-10). It is not beginning, but continuing in one’s profession that is the test of true grace (Acts 13:43, 14:22; Rom. 11:22; Col. 1:23; Heb. 3:14, 10:38-39). The same word is found in 2 Tim. 3:14 and 1 John 2:19 and 24.

When Jesus says, “My disciples indeed”, He used the Greek word “alethos” which means “truly” or “of a truth” or “in reality.” (i.e. My real or true disciples). Jesus is never interested in numbers, but genuine believers. Therefore He insists that would-be disciples count the cost (Luke 9:59-62, 14:25-33). Up to this point it is unclear to the reader whether these “believers” will prove true or false. (Verse 33 makes it clear they do not receive His teaching. They cannot believe He is necessary for true freedom. They will not recognize their own slavery to sin.)

Perseverance is a mark of true faith – of real disciples – and it has some glorious consequences (such as v. 32)!

The Privilege of a True Disciple:

- You shall know the truth!
- The truth shall make you free!

Jesus is the truth (John 14:6)! The Spirit guides us into truth (John 16:13; 17:17; Isa 54:13; 61:1; Luke 4:18). Justification makes us free from the guilt of sin by which we were bound over to the judgment of God. Sanctification makes us free from the bondage of corruption by which we are enslaved.

To free is to set at liberty from dominion of sin – for that is the context of the nature of the slavery. The nature of the freedom correlates to the nature of the slavery (Rom. 6: 14-18,22; 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:17; Gal. 5:13).

V. 33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, "You will be made free'?"

The people who answer Jesus here are the same people in verse 30. Here their attitude changes. The word of Jesus, implying that spiritually they were not free men but slaves, has shocked and angered them. Their pride resents such a remark. If Jesus offers them freedom, then the assumption is that the Jews are currently slaves. It seems to me that they are referring to their standing before God as sons of Abraham. They saw themselves as sons of Abraham who was a prince and a great man. Thus they were not descended as servants or slaves, but they saw themselves as "free-born" citizens of the kingdom of God. It does not seem likely that the Jews meant they had never been in political subjection to anyone. That would be absurd, for there was scarcely a major power whom the Jews had not served! Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome had all held the Jews in political captivity. Thus it is more probable the Jews were referring to their spiritual and inward freedom and privilege with God. The Jews saw themselves as sons of the kingdom. Therefore they viewed themselves "whole" and in no need of a physician. They are convinced they are free and therefore need no deliverance but political. Here these "believers" are already demonstrating their unwillingness to hold to Jesus' teaching.

V. 34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

Ultimate bondage is not political or economic enslavement, but spiritual bondage to sin. While the Jews thought of themselves as free sons of Abraham, in reality, they were slaves of sin. The reigning dictator that they needed to be concerned about was not Caesar, but sinful self and its shameful, evil, and enslaving devotion to created things at the expense of the Creator. In fact, Caesar Himself is a slave. In His use of "whoever" Jesus wipes out the distinction between Jew and Gentile, to which they clung.

The one who "lives" in sin reveals he is enslaved. He is chained and cannot break the chain. Sin is a hard taskmaster – misery and disappointment along the way and despair and hell in the end. These are the ultimate

wages that sin pays to its servants!

V. 35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.

Now the thread goes on to the status of slaves. Their allegiance to the law of Moses as the source of their "freedom" is misguided. Moses is a servant. Jesus is the Son! (Heb. 3:5-6). [Compare Gen. 21:10 with Gal. 4:30-31; Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 4:4-7]

The application is clear. The Jews think of themselves as sons (of Abraham) but in reality they are slaves. To be told they are slaves is to strike at the heart of their assurance, for a slave has no permanent place in the family. In the context (i.e. v. 36) the true son is Jesus Himself. Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, believers are not just liberated and sent on their way, but the Judge adopts the freed individual as His own son. Only the true children will remain in the house.

V. 36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

We live in a land of freedom; but are we ourselves free? There is a freedom that few ever think of – a freedom independent of all political changes. It is this freedom to which Christ refers – the glorious liberty of the sons of God!

- The only party I care for is the Lord's side.
- The only election I'm anxious about is the election of grace.
- The government I care to support is the government which is on the shoulder of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; and before Christ, I want every knee to bow and every tongue to confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

If you are not free, I want to guide you unto true liberty. If you are free, I want you to know the full value of your freedom.

Even in political freedom, many Canadians do not know the value of freedom. They were born into the blessings of which they enjoy and they really have not idea of the state of things in other countries – ignorant of the cruel tyranny in many lands. We have personal freedom, civil freedom, religious freedom, and national freedom. Many nations have historically known the miseries of slavery (i.e. Israel, blacks etc.). However, temporal slavery is not the only slavery and temporal freedom is not the only freedom. There is a freedom held out to every child

of Adam willing to have it. It is the freedom which Christ bestows without money and without price on all true Christians.

As the Son of God, with full rights, Jesus exercises full authority invested in Him by the Father (Jn. 3:35) to liberate slaves. If you see your chains, know of a surety that Christ came forth to deliver! Since God has taken it upon Himself the salvation of sinners, there is great hope! Death and hell are already conquered. The Redeemer has already taken possession of glory and will bestow it on all who come to Him. If you perish now, the blame lies wholly at your own feet. It is because you are not willing to come to Christ that you might have life.

Christ's freemen are free from the guilt and consequences of sin by the blood of Christ. Thus, they are forgiven, pardoned, reconciled, justified, and accepted in God's sight. They can look back on their old sins – however black and however many – and say, "You cannot condemn me." They can look back on years of carelessness and worldliness and say, "Who shall lay anything to my charge?" This is liberty indeed!

Christ's freemen are free from the power of sin by the grace of God's Spirit. Through the power of Christ's Spirit, they mortify the deeds of the body with its affections and lusts. They are tempted and tried, but not overcome. They are more than conquerors through Him who loved them. This is freedom indeed!

Christ's freemen are free from the fear of man. They are no longer afraid of man's opinions. The fear of man was once a snare to them. They trembled at the thought of what man would say or think or do. They shrank back from the idea of standing alone. But that snare is now broken and they are delivered!

Christ's freemen are free from the fear of death. No longer is it that horrible thing which they do not care to think about. Through Christ, they can look this last enemy in the face and say, "You cannot harm me." They can stand by the side of an open grave and say, "O, death, where is your sting? O, grave, where is your victory?" "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You, My Shepherd-Lord, are with me." This is true freedom!

Christ's freemen are free forever. The freest citizen on earth will at length die and lose his privileges forever. But not so with Christ's people. They will rise again with it at the last day and enjoy the privileges of it forevermore. This is to be free indeed!

How has Christ obtained these mighty privileges for His people? How has He obtained such freedom for ones who were once enslaved? The freedom which Christ's

people enjoy has been accomplished like all other freedom; at a great cost and by a mighty sacrifice. Great was the bondage and therefore, great was the price necessary to be paid to set them free. Mighty was the enemy who claimed them as his captives, and it needed mighty power to release them from his grip.

Blessed be God! Is there not grace enough and power enough in Jesus Christ? He provided to the uttermost everything that was required to set His people free. The price was His own life-blood. He became their Substitute and paid all their debt by allowing the chastisement for their peace to be laid on Him (Isa. 53:5). He cleared them from every imputation of sin, by becoming sin for them (2 Cor. 5:21). As their Champion, He triumphed over the devil and disarmed principalities and powers, making a public spectacle of them – triumphing over them in the cross. Christ, having given Himself for us, has purchased the full right of redemption for us.

Christ is every way fit to be a Savior of sinners – and He alone. He has power sufficient; wisdom sufficient; merit sufficient; and love sufficient for completing the work of freeing us from the tyranny of sin, and into the happiness of true liberty (in fact, a greater happiness experienced than had we never known bondage).

You can never value this freedom too highly. For the rest of our days let us use every effort to promote spiritual emancipation. If we have tasted the blessings of freedom, let us spare no pains to spread the truth by which men are set free.