A Study of the Gospel of John

*Christ's teachings versus the modern American gospel*

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I will give You thanks with all my heart; I will sing praises to You before the gods. I will bow down toward Your holy temple and give thanks to Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; for You have magnified Your word according to all Your name. [Psa 138:1-2].
CREDITS

• In this unfinished edition, up to page 158, all Scripture not attributed is from the NASB. All others are from the ESV.

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• JFB denotes commentary by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary (1871). No page references are given as the resource used was the parallel version in the Olive Tree reference library. Unless noted otherwise, the commentary reference is parallel to the Scripture passage.

NOTES

• References to passages are in parenthesis ().

• References to direct quotes and quotes of passages are in brackets [].

• Brackets used within a quote signify editorial changes.

• All references with numbers only and no book, reflect a location in the Gospel of John.
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You Should Always Read The Introduction First

Ours is not an age of thinking or reading to the great detriment of the church and the souls of men. Unless professing Christians wake up, most will live out their lives believing falsehoods and when they die will wake up in hell for all eternity. [Arthur Pink; The Broad Way and the Narrow Way].

This commentary on the Gospel of John is intended to expose the difference between what the modern American gospel commonly preaches and what the Bible actually says.

The Apostle Paul warned in latter times people will gather under preachers who satisfy their itching ears. Many professing Christians reiterate this warning, totally unaware they are in this camp. The average professing Christian is not in the Word; they "feel" their faith and most ministers teach psychology or morality and throw a little Scripture in to back up their points.

To reveal this disparity between the modern American gospel and the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, it is befitting to begin with the Gospel of John. It is widely understood among historians, commentators and theologians the Apostle John wrote this Gospel and his first two epistles to combat the heresy of Cerinthus, the "enemy of the truth."

The false teaching of Cerinthus was:

1) Jesus was merely human and is not the Christ and

2) God has not come in the flesh.

A recent survey revealed the majority of professing Christians believe Jesus Christ was the first created being. This used to be limited to the realm of Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses and other cults, but this understanding has crept into the evangelical visible church. Most professing Christians believe Jesus was a good teacher and by going to church, they can learn to turn their lives around; they can have successful social lives, families and careers. They are not in the Word; they do not know Christ. Faith in Christ has
become a religion of feeling good about themselves, but they do not honor God with their lives.

According to Irenaeus, Polycarp told the story that John the Apostle so detested Cerinthus, he once fled a public bathhouse when he learned the false teacher was inside, yelling "Let us flee, lest even the bathhouse fall down because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within!" [WH vol 1, pg 33, quoting Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses (Against Heresies), book III, chapter 3].

The Apostle John began the book with commentary. One of the best and most beautiful narrative commentaries can be found within the first eighteen verses of the first chapter. In his commentary, John made clear Jesus Christ is God, who has come in the flesh. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. This is a summary of the Apostle John's descriptive account of God coming to earth as a man and making a way for the salvation of those who are chosen in Him:

Christ, the Word, was with God and was God from the beginning of time; He was the Creator of the world and nothing was made without Him. He is life and light. He brought this eternal light into a dark world and the darkness was powerless to stop Him.

He sent a witness to announce His coming; the True Light was coming into the world. Regardless this Light and despite the proclamation of the Light and although He made the world, the world did not know Him. Although He set aside a nation for Himself, they did not receive Him.

But those who do believe, who receive the Christ, He gives the right to become children of God, for they are not born of their own freewill, desire or decision, they are born of the will of God.

The Word, God Himself, became flesh and dwelt among man. John and the disciples saw His glory; glory full of grace and truth.

Though truly and fully a man (yet without sin), He is fully God and He brought to us grace upon grace. For
Moses brought the Law (though our works could not save us), but Christ brought grace and truth (that obedience to the Law is the work of God). He revealed to us the mysteries of God; He revealed the Father to us. He is the only One who could do this, because He is the only One who has seen the Father and He is at the Father's side. Glory be to God! [1:1-18 restated].

Jesus Christ is eternally God; God the Son. And, this passage is a beautiful account of the Son of God coming to the world as the Son of Man; God in the flesh; the Creator became as the created. As 1:18 says, He came to make the Father known. The Son of God, fully God and now also fully man, working to fulfill the eternal covenant with the Father.

Not many talk about the eternal covenant, but God has expressed His purposes through covenants. The Bible is a book of covenants. The Old and New Testaments are two covenants. The Old Testament is a covenant revealing God's promise to send His Son to redeem His people. The New Testament is the account of this covenant fulfilled by Christ and it contains instructions to follow Him. Throughout the ages, God has revealed His purposes through His Word, His covenant with man.

Let us sidetrack for a minute and review the major covenants of Scripture. Some theologians will argue God made no covenant with Adam, because the first mention of "covenant" was with Noah. However, Scripture disagrees. The Prophet Hosea said Adam transgressed the covenant (Hos 6:7). Though it is not recorded God calling His words with Adam a "covenant," this is what they were.

1. The covenant of God with Adam was a call to be God's spokesman upon the earth; to practice the image of God in which he was created. To populate the earth and be productive by taking dominion over its resources (Gen 1:26-30). This was a covenant of works, but the sign of this covenant is the Sabbath (Gen 2:1-3), the day of rest from works. There was given a warning: of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he shall not eat (Gen 2:17). But the first man sinned and brought death upon all mankind.
Therefore, God cursed the earth with decay, man with hardship and Satan with defeat. But God also brought grace: He promised to send a Redeemer (Gen 3:14-19). Adam's sin brought death, but God's grace restored life.

2. The covenant of Noah (Gen 8:20-9:17). God will never again destroy all mankind with a flood. God set the rainbow in the sky as a sign of this covenant and a reminder between God and man. Built upon the covenant with Adam, God reiterated to man the command to be fruitful and multiply upon the Earth. To be fruitful is to make profitable use of the resources God has provided. To multiply is to cover the Earth with people. And God promised man cannot destroy the Earth: "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." [Gen 8:22 ESV]. Nonetheless, despite God's expression of grace, man continues to defy God. Instead of filling the Earth, man destroys unborn babies in the womb and builds cities to increase his power. Instead of producing, man creates laws hindering production upon the earth. Defiance against God, produces tyranny against man.

3. The covenant of Abraham is in four parts (Gen 12:1-7; 13:14-17; 17:1-5; 22:15-18). The first part of the covenant, God promised to make Abraham a great nation and a people set apart for God. Then, God supplemented the covenant by promising Abraham, for this nation He would give all the land he could see. In the third passage, God promised this man, who had not yet received the son of promise and who was ninety-nine years old, he would be a father of many nations. God changed Abram's name to Abraham and the sign of this covenant was circumcision. Finally, after Abraham's faith was proved by his obedience, because he was willing to sacrifice his promised son, Isaac, God sent a substitute sacrifice to spare his son and He promised Abraham through him all the nations on earth will be blessed. This final promise was the promise of the Redeemer, God's Son (Gal 3:16). Who, two thousand years later, became the substitute sacrifice to restore man back to God through the blood of the eternal covenant (Heb 13:20),
and He will one day rule the nations from Jerusalem (Zec 14:16; Rev 20:1-6).

4. The covenant of Moses (Exo 19:1-20:20; cf Deu 10:12-11:32). God claimed the nation of Israel as His own. God gave them the charge to fear Him and Him alone; to be in awe of His deeds and obey His commandments. The sign of this covenant was the Ten Commandments. Many claim God is done with Israel and replaced her with the Church. But they have wrongly interpreted Scripture and do not see God's purposes for Israel as expressed in the books of the prophets, especially specific references to Israel in the last days by Zechariah and the prophecies in Revelation. Furthermore, Isaiah prophesied God will bring the dispersed back to Israel a second time and this has not happened yet (Isa 11:10-11). The nation of Israel is still in the plan of God and He will fulfill His covenant.

5. The covenant of David (2Sa 7:4-17; cf Psa 89). God raised David up and cut off his enemies so he would rule over Israel. His throne will be established forever. David is a type of Christ; a foreshadow. Christ has fulfilled this promise and this last clause promised Christ's future reign in Jerusalem (Isa 9:6-7; cf Zec 8:22; Rev 19:11-21).

These covenants prepare the world for the Redeemer and the New Covenant given in the Gospel. Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of the Eternal Covenant.

The eternal covenant is a covenant God made with Himself; it is a covenant which transcends time. Hebrews 13:20 speaks of the blood of the eternal covenant. The Bible does not go into specific, detailed conversations about the eternal covenant, but it does tell us, in Jesus' own words, "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" [Luk 24:26 ESV]. Of this covenant, we know from Scripture:

1. The Father promised the Son a dominion (Psa 110:1-2; Isa 9:6-7). But first, the Son would face the ridicule of those He would rule (Psa 2).
2. The Father promised the Son a bride (3:29; Rev 19:6-9). But first, the Son would die for His bride (Eph 5:25).

3. The Son would become a man and He would forever be fully God and fully man (Joh 1:1; Col 2:9; Heb 2:14-18; Rev 1:12-18).

When Moses and Israel were confirming the covenant between them and God, Moses threw the blood of the sacrifice on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words." [Exo 24:8b ESV]. This blood was a typology of the blood of the Redeemer, which was to come.

without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. [Heb 9:22b ESV].

Through the prophets, God gave promise of a New Covenant between Him and man (Jer 31:31-34; Eze 36:22-32). Jesus, our Redeemer, said the sign of this covenant is His death and resurrection. We remember his death by partaking of Communion. Specifically, Jesus mentioned the drink is a symbol of the blood of the covenant; a new covenant in His blood (Mat 26:28; Mar 14:24; Luk 22:20; 1Co 11:25).

The promise in Jeremiah was God would make a new covenant with Judah and Israel (Jer 31:31-34). God would put His Law in their hearts. This indicates the work of the Spirit within man, which had not been given until Christ ascended (14:15-26).

The promise in Ezekiel, God promised to return His hardened people to the land of the covenant (Eze 36:22-32). He would sprinkle them with clean water, that is, they would be born again or regenerated (3:3). He would give them a new heart and a new spirit; the Holy Spirit would dwell in them. They will walk in His commands, which is the work of regeneration and sanctification, which is the work of the Spirit within man.

These Old Testament covenants call man to worship God. The Law exposed man's sin and made him the subject of God's wrath. The Gospel is the good news Jesus Christ satisfied God's wrath for man (Rom 3:20-26) and established a new covenant.
The Bible tells us the Father was willing to crush the Son, to put Him to grief, so that through His agony many will be made righteous (Isa 53:10-11). He paid our debt, nailing our sins to the cross (Col 2:14), so God would see us as righteous through His blood (2Co 5:21). The Gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ. It is the good news of the incredible work He has done to redeem those chosen by the Father to become part of the eternal covenant.

The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) are narratives with little commentary. The Apostle John, however, gives extensive comment throughout his book; including much commentary on doctrine. Many professing Christians have a loose idea of doctrine; they do not hold doctrine to be important. Some stay away from doctrine, declaring it to be divisive. Pay attention to John: not only because he points out the importance of doctrine, but he also clears up a lot of doctrinal controversies; arguments which continue today and should not exist among a Biblically literate people.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. [2Ti 2:15 ESV].

The purpose of the writing of the Gospel of John is found in 20:31, "these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." The Gospel of John contains the path to eternal life. Study it.

There is a dangerous false doctrine out in Christendom which says God was lonely, so He made man. I have heard several preachers declare God needs us more than we need Him; as if to woo us to God through sympathy. Blasphemy! God is not a victim; He has no need; He lacks nothing because He is perfect in every way. From eternity past, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit were in perfect fellowship; perfect union; perfect love. They needed nothing.

According to this modern American gospel, the reason God was willing to sacrifice His own Son was because of our incredibly great worth. "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." This message proclaims our value is immeasurable. This is a self-esteem gospel; it is blasphemy.
The truth is, we were created and our Creator made us from dirt. And, this dirt has rebelled against the Almighty One who has made him and he deserves eternal destruction. The Bible is clear, we were born in sin (Psa 51:5); we were enemies of God (Rom 5:10) and God saved us for His own purposes (Eph 1:11). He saved us for His Eternal Covenant. This covenant is for His glory; we benefit, but all glory belongs to God.

There is only one reason God, Himself, had to die for our sin: because our sin is so great, no man could redeem man. No man could even redeem himself. When we elevate man, we bring God down. It is a dangerous thing to bring God down to man's level (Rom 10:6); to make Him into our image as if He is one of us. There is no man or god like Almighty God (1Ki 8:23; 2Ch 14:11; Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8). God alone is holy (Rev 15:3-4).

you thought that I was one like yourself. [Psa 50:21b ESV].

God does everything for His glory (Isa 43:7; 48:9-11). Man was made in the image of God (Gen 1:26; cf Jam 3:9) and this is for His purposes. For those who are saved, God chose us in Christ Jesus before the creation of the world for His purposes, His glory (Eph 1:4-11). And it is for His glory, not our worth, that He blots out our sins (Psa 25:11; Isa 43:25). Lest any man should boast (Eph 2:9).

The focus of the Gospel is not man. The Gospel is not a message of power for this life; it is not a message of making you a better person or helping you feel better about yourself; nor is it a message of how you can get yourself saved.

Salvation is of God from beginning to end; He draws us (6:44); He authorizes our salvation (6:65); He opens our hearts to receive Him: "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all." [6:63a ESV]. Nonetheless, there is a false gospel, to which most professing Christians subscribe: It is the modern American gospel, which preaches a gospel centered around man; man's work or decision, mans' value and mans' benefit.

The modern American gospel or easy-believism says you are saved by saying the sinner's prayer. It is something you do; a decision you make. Furthermore, it says as long as you were sincere when you
said it, you cannot lose your salvation. It matters not how you live; all that mattered was your sincerity at the time you said the prayer. This is known as fire insurance. But fire insurance is a false gospel and this false hope is leading many people to Hell.

The modern American gospel says we are saved by grace, not by works: true, so far. But it declares a false "therefore"; and this therefore says we are saved regardless of our works. This false gospel says God loves us the way we are; He does not require us to change. This, too, is blasphemy.

Jesus said we must take up our cross and follow Him (Mat 16:24-26; Luk 9:23; 14:27); He talked about abiding in Him, being in the Word; He talked about bearing fruit (8:31-32; 15:1-6; Mat 7:16-20). But, according to the modern American gospel, these things are optional; they are for those who want to go to the next level; those who want to reap the rewards of a closer walk with Christ. And, according to this false gospel, if you don't get to this level, you are still saved. This false gospel declares a carnal Christian will still get to Heaven but will have fewer rewards. "Skin of the teeth," but you made it. This is the lie of the devil.

Jesus warned, many who think they are saved are going to Hell (Mat 7:21-23). Many who work in the church; many preachers and Sunday School teachers; many who went on missions trips; many who did "great things for God" are on their way to Hell. Jesus said this. Beware you are not deceived by the modern American gospel and its partner, easy-believism. The modern American gospel has deceived many and those who preach or teach it are patting sinners on the back on their way to Hell.

The Word of God equates believing with following Christ and living obedient lives (3:36; Heb 3:18-19).

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice. [1Sa 15:22b ESV].

The Apostle James said if believing is just knowing a truth and accepting it as truth, the demons do this: they believe in Jesus Christ, in fact they have met Him and they have declared His name to man, but they cannot be saved (Jam 2:19; cf Mar 1:24, Luk 4:34). Unless you take up your cross and follow Christ; unless you obey
Him as King, Lord and Master, you cannot be saved. The words of Jesus in the Gospel of John are clear, your works cannot save you but you cannot be saved without them (15:1-6).

Jesus said in the Gospel of John, chapter eight, if we abide in Him or, as He described in chapter six, if we need Him like we need food and drink and devour His Word, then and only then, will we know the truth and the truth will set us free (8:31-32).

There is no such thing as a "carnal Christian"; there is no such thing as fire insurance for getting to Heaven. Many cling to their sinful lifestyles and claim, "God knows my heart." Yes. God does know your heart and He knows it is evil, deceitful and in rebellion to Him.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? [Jer 17:9 ESV].

Feeling good about God is not the pathway to eternal life. Don't cling to your sin; repent and follow Christ.

And someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And he said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able." [Luk 13:23-24 ESV].
Brief Outline Of The Gospel Of John

1) The revelation of Jesus Christ, Son of God made flesh
   a) Prologue; God coming to the world as a man (1:1-18)
   b) Revealing the Son of God (1:19 - chapter 4)
      i. covering a period of approx two years and four months (Dec 26 to Passover 29)
   c) Rejection in Judea (chapter 5)
   d) Rejection in Galilee (chapter 6)

2) Public Teachings of Jesus Christ
   a) Retirement ministry (7:1 see the Synoptic Gospels)
      i. covers Passover - October 29
   b) Preaching among His adversaries (7:2-10:39)
      i. covers Feast of Tabernacles to Feast of Dedication year 29 (October to December)
   c) Call to sinners (10:40-42)
   d) Raising the dead - Lazarus (chapter 11)
   e) Triumphal entry and final public exhortations (chapter 12)

3) Final Instructions to the Disciples, Death and Resurrection
   a) The Last Supper Discourses (chapters 13-16)
   b) The prayer to the Father, or high priestly prayer (chapter 17)
   c) Trial, execution and burial (chapters 18 and 19)
   d) The Resurrection and appearances (chapter 20 and 21)

Dates and times for this outline came from William Hendriksen's New Testament Commentaries. This is an adaptation of their outline (WH vol 1, pp 64-65).

The plan of John's Gospel is, indeed, beautiful. The arrangement is superb. We see the Word in His pre-
incarnate glory, so that we may appreciate His condescending love in coming to earth in order to save sinners. In His earthly ministry He reveals Himself to ever-widening circles, but is rejected both in Judea and Galilee. Nevertheless, He does not at once destroy those who have rejected Him, but instead He makes His tender appeal to sinners, that they may accept Him by faith. Meanwhile opposition becomes active and bitter resistance. By two mighty deeds He now manifests Himself clearly as the Messiah. But though Greeks seek Him, the Jews, who have seen such clear tokens of His character, love and power, repulse Him. So He turns to the inner circle, tenderly instructs them in the Upper Room, and just before His final suffering and death commits them to the Father's care. In His very death He overcomes the world and by means of His resurrection He reveals the meaning of the cross.

[WH vol 1, pg 66].

The Gospel of John was written approximately 85 AD.
John 1:1-3 Christ Is The Word From The Beginning

"In the beginning." These are the first three words of the Bible, from the Book of Genesis; and these are the first three words of the Gospel of John. Genesis begins with the creation of the world; John begins with the Creator of the world.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. [v1-2].

The word "beginning" refers to the beginning of time. God created time when He created the world. Paul wrote Christ was before all things (Col 1:17) and Jesus, Himself, said He was with the Father before the creation (17:5). He was before time began; when nothing existed but God alone.

God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit had perfect fellowship, perfect unity and perfect love among themselves. Man would try to bring God down to his own level and many blasphemously proclaim God created man because He was lonely. But "with God. . . was God" speaks of fulfilled glory and His glory reveals God was in need of nothing.

When John said Christ was with God and was God from the beginning, this does not imply there was a moment when He came into existence. God is eternal; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have no beginning. Everything else has a beginning or a starting point, because they are created. God was eternally pre-existent before He brought any creation into being. God is the I AM (8:58; cf Exo 3:14). When time began, He was already there. Compare this to creation, which "came into being."

How do you explain time before time began? It is hard for man to understand eternity; it is something to grasp no end of time going forward, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to grasp eternity going backward. Time is measured; eternity is not. We think of eternity in relation to time, but time is a creation of God, while eternity is an attribute of God. The best John could say with human understanding was Christ was with God and Christ was God in the beginning.
The Gospel does not say He was FROM the beginning. The Gospel says He was IN the beginning. When all things began, He was there. His life transcends time.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." [Rev 1:8 ESV].

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. [Rev 21:6b ESV].

CHRIST IS CALLED THE WORD

John's account tells us the Word was in the beginning. The Word was not a written document; John was talking about the Author of the written document, the Scriptures. The name for the incarnate Son of God is the Word of God.

the name by which he is called is The Word of God. [Rev 19:13b ESV].

In 1:2 John refers to the Word as "He." This tells us two things:

1. The Word is a person, Jesus Christ; and
2. God is not a "she."

In Genesis, the Bible accounts God's creation to His Word. "And God said. . . " (Gen 1:3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26). Hebrews 11:3 says the universe was created by the Word of God.

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. [Heb 1:1-3a ESV].

God created the world through His Son, Jesus Christ, and it is through His Son the universe is sustained, to this day. If you believe man can destroy the Earth, you do not believe in the Son of God.
Worship the LORD in holy array. Tremble before Him, all the earth; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. [1Ch 16:29b-30].

According to John's account, the Word is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Bible is also called the Word, and rightly so because the Scripture is about Jesus Christ; He is the central theme. Christ is the Word; the physical representation of God and the Bible is the Word, the written account of the Son of God.

He is the image of the invisible God. [Col 1:15a].

In the Old Testament, the theme is the coming Messiah, with histories, pictures, types and prophecies of Christ. The New Testament gives four accounts of Christ's life, death and resurrection. It looks forward to His coming again and tells us how to walk with Him while we wait for His return.

Christ is the Word of God because He came to make God the Father known. In the first chapter of Hebrews, the Bible says God the Father "has spoken to us [through] His Son" [Heb 1:2]. The Apostle John wrote:

No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. [v18].

And Jesus said He came to make the Father known to man:

I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. [5:30].

My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. [7:16b].

If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.. [14:7].

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not
speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. [14:10].

Christ came to make the Father known (1:18). In the fullness of Scripture we see clearly the Son of God and the plan of the Father. God, our Creator, came to earth in physical form, as a man, to dwell among men, making Himself known. He is the Word.

ALL THINGS WERE MADE THROUGH HIM

All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being [v3].

Everything was made through Christ; space, time, matter. This includes everything we can see and everything we cannot see; everything too small for the microscope and everything too far or vast for the most powerful of telescopes. All things physical and all things spiritual were made by Christ.

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. [Psa 33:6].

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. [Col 1:16-17].

Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created. [Rev 4:11].

In Colossians 1:16-17 (quoted above), rather than describe this creation as animals, trees, mountains and such, Paul recounted this as thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities. All these world rulers and every kind of authority among man and principalities of the heavens are made by and for the glory of Christ. Though they rage against Him, as written in the second chapter of Psalms, Christ is the Creator and all authority rests in Him. From the highest to the
lowest, He will be glorified among all men. Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess He is Lord (Php 2:10-11).

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. [Mat 28:18b-19a].

This is the problem for the atheist: they profess not to believe in God or His creative work, but the fact is they despise His authority. If someone truly did not believe in God, they would treat the subject like the Easter Bunny or Santa Claus. They would not waste their time trying to disprove His existence, would they? However, most atheists are consumed with proving God does not exist, lest they should have to answer to Him.

because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. [Rom 1:19-21].

This is the nut: if Christ is the Creator, then He is the highest authority; He owns everything and He makes the rules. All men are merely created beings, no matter the vastness of their wealth or intelligence. As created beings, they have an obligation to give God the honor due to Him. If they refuse to honor Him now, they will bow and confess He is Lord at the judgment (Php 2:10-11).

All things were made through Him and nothing was made without Him. This is why you cannot profess evolution and be saved: the Apostle John makes clear the Savior is the Creator. Even the attempt to bring creation in favor with the world, this blasphemy called Theistic Evolution, it too, is a denial of God's authority. God created. He spoke everything into existence (4:17; Psa 33:9; Heb 11:3). He owns all things and is the highest authority (Col 2:9-10).
From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the LORD is to be praised. [Psa 113:3].

It seems God anticipated this false science of evolution and theistic evolution by writing creation as "the evening and the morning were the [first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth] day," in Genesis chapter one. To drag on the length of days and try to portray the Creator as a mere guide while the Earth did its thing, is to deny God for the sake of winning favor with man. Jesus asked the question, if you work to please man rather than seek God's glory, how can you be saved? (5:44).

If you deny Him as the Creator, in full or in part, you deny His authority. You may profess Christ as your savior while denying His authority, but you cannot be saved.

in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. [Heb 1:2-3a].

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. [Heb 11:3].

God's authority is a stumbling block, even to many professing Christians. The heart of man has a natural tendency to elevate himself and bring God's authority down to mans' level.

Yet it remains, God rules over all His creation, for He created the universe by His Word and He upholds all things by the Word of His power. All creation is for His glory. He alone is supreme. If we are following Christ, we must always be mindful we exist through Christ and we exist for God's glory.

**IN CLOSING**

The Bible begins with the story of Creation. The Gospel of John begins with the story of the Creator.
Christ was with God and was God for all eternity past. He was in the beginning before God created time.

Christ is called the Word. He came to reveal the Father to man. In the same way, the Scriptures reveal the Word to man. All things were made through Him. He is the Creator and He has come to earth as a man. Fully God and fully man.

Those who claim man can destroy the Earth, which Christ upholds by the word of His power, blasphemously bring God down to mans' level. Those who claim God used evolution to create the world, blasphemously reject the written Word of God. You cannot deny the glory and power of God and be saved.

All authority belongs to Him and "so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." [Php 2:10-11].

Because of the greatness of Your power Your enemies will give feigned obedience to You. [Psa 66:3b].

Those who hate the LORD would pretend obedience to Him, and their time of punishment would be forever. [Psa 81:15].
John 1:4-5 Jesus Christ, The Light And The Life

Christ, the Word, was with the Father from the beginning. The Father created all things through Him and has given Him the highest authority. Through creation He gave life to all things.

**In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.**
[v4].

Light and life are central themes throughout the Gospel of John. Christ is the Creator; therefore, He is the author and source of life.

Before the creation, the earth was full of darkness. The way Moses described it in Genesis was to say there was deep darkness. This must have been an incredible darkness; no light, no sun, moon or stars. But God is greater than the deepest darkness and He brought life and light to this darkness.

He reveals mysteries from the darkness and brings the deep darkness into light. [Job 12:22].

The first thing God brought to creation was light (Gen 1:3). Before this light, creation was swallowed up in darkness. But God brought creation out of the deep darkness. Then He made a paradise on earth and He set man in this middle of this bliss. However, this utopia would be short lived as man soon chose to serve the darkness rather than the Light.

Have you ever thought of how the first man Adam sinned? We know from the Genesis account, the woman was seduced by the snake to believe she could be as wise as God (Gen 3:5-6). But it seems Adam was with her at that time and he did not intervene. They knew good, but it was tempting to know evil; they thought they could be like God and it looked so good.

Eve took the forbidden fruit and she gave some to Adam, who did not heed God's warning. Adam relied upon his own wisdom and the result was death and darkness for himself and all his posterity. Jesus warns us if we rely upon our own wisdom, it is deep darkness. It may seem like light to us; the world's wisdom may seem to be positive and uplifting, but it is darkness. God has given us His Word; the Light of men. To rely upon anything else is darkness.
If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! [Mat 6:23b].

In verse fourteen, the Apostle John wrote Christ "became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory." God's Light came down to bring man out of darkness. In his later epistle, John gave a similar introduction to Christ. In this introduction, he described His manifest glory as "life," the eternal life.

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. [1Jo 1:1-3].

THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend [overcome] it. [v5].

Referring to Christ as the Light speaks to God's holiness. The world is dark; it is common and sinful. Christ is light; He is holy. His life stands in stark contrast to the world. He brought light to save man from darkness.

The natural man hates God's holiness. This is why man killed Christ and when they did so, it appeared the darkness would overcome the Light. Nonetheless, Christ overcame death and crushed the powers of evil (Col 2:15) and has given life and light to all who believe and follow Him in holiness.

To the Jew, the world was especially dark when the Messiah was born. Throughout the Old Testament, God had spoken to Israel through judges and prophets. As the Old Testament came to a close, God would be silent for 400 years; equal in span to the time of slavery in Egypt. As the Prophet Isaiah foretold, the people walked
in darkness; deep darkness. Then, into this darkness the Messiah was born, bringing light to man.

The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them. [Isa 9:2].

John described Christ as the light of men and he said the Light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot grasp it or overcome it (v4-5). The most vileness of men, even the cumulative evil of all men cannot overcome the light of Christ. Though they try to kill all the saints and choke the message of the Gospel, the Light still shines.

In John chapter three, Jesus told Nicodemus men love darkness because their deeds are evil. The evil heart of man has not changed over time. For two thousand years man has tried to suppress the truth of Jesus Christ, but wherever His truth is brought forth, the darkness is driven away. The darkness is unable to overcome the Light.

Christ has promised to deliver us out of this darkness, if we believe in Him.

I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. [12:46].

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? [1Jo 5:4-5].

Overcoming the darkness is opposite of the psychology preached by the modern American gospel where people are placed into victim groups in need of recovery. When a professing Christian appears to be trapped in a life of addiction, or other such sin, instead of calling them to repentance, people apologize for them and encourage them in psychological counseling or in self-help groups. But the Bible says those who remain in sin, their faith has not taken root. They are not saved.
The parable of the Seed and the Sower, in Luke chapter eight, explains this. If the seed does not take root, the person is not saved. If the person is saved, the Bible says this person is delivered from darkness. They are NOT on the road to recovery; they are delivered.

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. [Col 1:13-14].

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. [2Co 5:17].

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ. [Eph 2:4-5a].

If we are saved, Jesus said we are born again (3:3). Recovery groups keep the person focused on the old life and deceives man to think he has to work his way out of his sin. This is an evil which traps men in their old lives and no one ever graduates out of the group.

there is no discharge in the time of war, and evil will not deliver those who practice it. [Ecc 8:8b].

Getting into the Word is the only way to "recover" from the old life. If Christ has delivered us, why do we deny His authority by seeking to recover by our own efforts? If we believe God has delivered us from the domain of darkness and placed us in the kingdom of His Son, we must walk as children of light.

for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light. [Eph 5:8].

Jesus said if we follow Him, we will not walk in darkness (8:12). We must be in the Word daily. If we need more help, get into the Word more often and seek out a doctrinally sound church for good counsel and discipling.
If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. [1Jo 1:6-7].

Many professing Christians are walking in darkness and they are not saved. It is impossible to have fellowship with God while chasing after the world. The pursuit of worldly wisdom and man's praise is all darkness.

Some sins are obvious: thieving, adultery and the like and those who claim their identity by their sin, such as "homosexual Christian." But some sin is less obvious. When I was a young man, I left the faith because I had become indoctrinated by positive mental attitude books. The books spoke some truth and seemed to be uplifting, but they are darkness; they lead the reader away from Christ and center man's thoughts around himself. This sin was not as obvious as some, but it was just as dark as the darkest sin.

Any time we look for truth outside of God's Word, we are looking for truth via darkness, or, as John said, we are walking in darkness. If we are walking in darkness, we cannot be saved: no man can serve two masters.

The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. [Mat 6:22-24a].

The healthy eye is concentrated upon the Word of God, which is the source of true light. The bad eye follows the world's wisdom which may appear to have truth and may even be encouraging, but the darkness is very great. In the first three chapters of 1 Corinthians, Paul wrote the wisdom of the Word of God is foolishness to the world, but we who believe have the mind of Christ.
The Light shines in the darkness. Seek the Light.

JESUS AS LIFE IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

1) 1:4 "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men."
2) 3:15-16, 36 Whoever believes in Him will have eternal life.
3) 5:21 "the Son also gives life to whom He wishes."
4) 5:24 "he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life."
5) 5:40 "and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life."
6) 6:33 "For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."
7) 6:40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life."
8) 6:47 "he who believes has eternal life."
9) 6:48,51,54 "I am the bread of life. . .I am the living bread that came down out of heaven. . .he who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life."
10) 10:10 "I came that they may have life."
11) 10:28 "I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish."
12) 11:25 "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies."
13) 14:6 Jesus said, "I am . . . the life."
14) 17:2-3 "even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."
JESUS AS LIGHT IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

1) 1:4-5 "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

2) 1:9-10 "There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him."

3) 3:19-21 "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

4) 8:12 "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

5) 9:5 "While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world."

6) 11:9-10 "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

7) 12:35-36 "For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light."

8) 12:46 "I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness."

IN CLOSING

Christ came to bring life and in this life was light. As Creator, He is the author of life. Just as He brought light to His creation, He came to bring light to the darkness of man's sin.
He has delivered us from the domain of darkness. The Light shines in the darkness and though man tries to extinguish this Light, the darkness is not able to overcome it. The world assaul ts the Church from the outside and works deception from the inside, yet the light of Christ cannot be quenched.

Though we live in this world of darkness, we can be confident Christ is our light and our life. He has promised us eternal life if we believe and walk in obedience to Him.

Since Christ has brought this light to us, we should strive to live in the fear of God and bring this light to others.

among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life. [Php 2:15b-16a].
John 1:6-8 God Sent A Witness To The Light

Isaiah prophesied Light would come into this world of darkness (Isa 9:2). He also prophesied God would send a witness to proclaim this message (Isa 40:3).

There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. [v6-8].

John the Apostle wrote this Gospel, but never referred to himself by name. In this passage, He referred to John the Baptist as "John." So, when we read of John in the Gospel of John, we know the person referred to is John the Baptist.

JOHN THE BAPTIST, A WITNESS FOR CHRIST

- a man sent from God
- a witness (to testify of the Light so all might believe)
- was NOT the Light

Sent from God. The voice of John the Baptist crying out in the wilderness was prophesied by Isaiah 700 years before the birth of Christ. The Prophet Malachi also prophesied God would send a witness to prepare the way for the Messiah.

A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. [Isa 40:3].

Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple. [Mal 3:1-2].

Malachi prophecied a second time regarding John the Baptist. In the last two verses in the book, which are the last two verses of the Old Testament, Malachi prophesied of an Elijah to come.
Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse. [Mal 4:5,6].

After this prophecy, there was a 400 year gap of silence from God's voice. Then an angel came and prophesied about the birth and the life of John the Baptist to Zechariah, his father. In this prophecy, the angel reiterated the words of Malachi, affirming his son would be the Elijah to come.

It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. [Luk 1:17].

Later, Jesus confirmed John the Baptist was the Elijah who was prophesied:

And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come. [Mat 11:14].

Elijah does first come and restore all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt? But I say to you that Elijah has indeed come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written of him. [Mar 9:12-13].

He was a witness. John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ to testify He was the Messiah and the Son of God. He preached a message of repentance to prepare the people to follow the Messiah.

Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." [Act 19:4].

The purpose of his witness was so "all might believe" (v7). Who are these "all"? 1:12 says "But as many as received Him, to them He
gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name." It is clear in Scripture not everyone accepted the words of John the Baptist or the message of Christ. Nonetheless, John was faithful to proclaim the message and leave the results to God.

When a man becomes famous and people throng to see him, as in the case of John the Baptist, it is common for pride to get the better of him. He begins to think of himself more highly than he ought. We have seen leaders and rulers believe they are above the law; we have seen televangelists and preachers' lives taken down by egregious and prideful sin. But John lived a life of self denial. He never claimed to be the Christ and he never elevated himself to the height of his fame. He was faithful to his duty as a witness.

He must increase, but I must decrease. [3:30].

**He was not the light.** Christ is described as the Light. Jesus described John the Baptist as a lamp (5:35). John was a small light bearing witness to the great light. John was not the Messiah and he faithfully testified he was not.

You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, "I am not the Christ," but, "I have been sent ahead of Him." [3:28].

**JESUS' TRIBUTE TO JOHN THE BAPTIST**

in Matthew chapter eleven, Jesus Christ gave tribute to the life of John the Baptist, while he was alive, in prison:

What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear soft clothing are in kings' palaces! But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

"BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU."
Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force. For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places, who call out to the other children, and say, "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn." For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon!" The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds. [Mat 11:7-19].

An examination of the words of Jesus Christ regarding John the Baptist will reveal these points:

1) John the Baptist was not of an unstable mind, providing entertainment in the wilderness.

2) He did not wear fancy clothes or fill his life with luxury. He lived a life of self-denial; he did not try to impress the crowds.

3) He was a prophet and a special one at that. For he proclaimed the coming of the Messiah and prepared the hearts of the people to receive Him.

4) No man was ever greater than John the Baptist. But his greatness had nothing to do with his own strength or power; he looked at himself as unworthy (Mat 3:11,13-14). His greatness had to do with opportunity, the commission, the call God had given him; to be the proclaimer and forerunner of the Messiah.
5) The least in the kingdom of heaven are those of transformed bodies and minds. They spend their days, if you will, proclaiming the glory of God. John the Baptist was still in the flesh. Although he proclaimed the Christ, he was shackled by his sin nature and doubt. This is why Jesus said the least in the kingdom of heaven are greater than John the Baptist.

6) "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force." Some take this clause to mean violence against the kingdom of God. They get this from the word "suffer," which can mean experiencing oppression, but it can also mean to tolerate or allow and this can be from within or without. Jesus was speaking about John the Baptist and John was locked up in prison by King Herod, so, from this, some will interpret "suffer" as being from without. However, we know Satan's kingdom has never defeated God's kingdom and never will; so "take it by force" has to mean something different than to oppress or to conquer. Jesus said from the days of John til now; this is days, weeks, months, but not even years; John and the Messiah were both recent to the scene. If Christ meant violence against the kingdom, would He not have said "since the beginning of time" or "beginning with Abel" or "since the Law and the Prophets" or such? But He said since the days of John the Baptist; which means, since the days of the proclamation "repent for the Messiah has come." During the time of the ministries of John the Baptist and of Christ, after He was revealed by John, people were crushing or forcing their way upon them as an army upon a city; this is violence. This had not happened with the other prophets. People heard the message and were seeking to understand this and the kingdom of heaven was advancing, forcefully or violently against the darkness of the world. Some translations include the wording the kingdom "has been forcefully advancing" or "led by force" or other such. With this interpretation, the violence spoken of is not malicious, but is a violation of the darkness that once held the people captive to sin; and the world was very dark to the
Jew because God had not spoken by prophet or revelation in over 400 years. This goes along with the idea light violates or intrudes upon darkness. The light advances and darkness cannot overcome it, said the Apostle John (1:5). People who have heard the Gospel and understand it are willing to leave the wisdom of the world behind (violence against the darkness) and cling desperately to it (take it by force). It is true, the kingdom does suffer violence from outside resistance, but the reason we know this is not what Christ was talking about are two key phrases: 1) from the days of John the Baptist; and 2) the violent take it by force. Something new or recent is happening here and we know God's kingdom will never be defeated. What we learn is this: there is no such thing as a casual Christian or a Christian of "private faith." We do not merely say the sinner's prayer and lock in our eternal security. If we are truly saved, we take this new faith by force; we devour it (chapter 6); we speak this Word, which is light, into the darkness. When the world assails against it, we stand firm in and for the Word of God. This is the violence.

7) The Law and the Prophets prophesied of the Messiah to come. John proclaimed, "Repent for He is here." Jesus affirmed John the Baptist was the Elijah prophesied in Malachi 4:5-6 and elsewhere.

8) Those who are called will hear, but the unbelieving world is deaf. They have declared John the Baptist to be a demon; they have declared the Christ to be a glutton and a consort of sinners. The wisdom of God is foolishness to the world.

WHY THE INTERLUDE?

When accounting for the coming of Christ and describing Him as the Word, the Life and the Light, why did the apostle include this interlude, this seeming parenthesis about John the Baptist? After this apparent interruption, the apostle seems to continue on about Christ right where he left off. Here is John 1:4-10, without 6-8, the interlude:
In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. . . . There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

This conversation seems to make sense without the interlude about John. So why is it there? One reasonable explanation could be some people were elevating John the Baptist or confusing him as the Messiah and John the Apostle wanted to set the record straight.

Luke wrote about this happening in the ministry of the Apostle Paul. He gave the account when Paul first arrived in Ephesus there were believers who were baptized with the baptism of John the Baptist. Paul told them, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." [Act 19:4]. These people did not know about Christ and had mistaken the Baptist for the Messiah.

We know the Gospel of John was written to correct error and false teaching. The Apostle John may have inserted this to correct this common error. Nonetheless, the question still remains: why insert this at this place? Why not bring up this subject at the end of the description of Christ's incarnation, where the Apostle speaks more deeply of John's ministry?

To understand why John put this interlude about the Baptist, in this text, we need to look at the flow of the message. Look again at verses 1 through 12:

- (1-5) Christ the Messiah had come. He is God, He created all things and He brought light to the darkness.
- (6-8; interlude) God sent a witness to prepare the way, who proclaimed the Messiah was here.
- (9-12) The Messiah brought the light to this dark world; and, though He made the world, the world did not know Him. Though He came to His chosen people, they did not receive Him. But some did receive Him.
Before the interlude, the Apostle declared the Word of God had come to bring light and life to the world. After the interlude, the Apostle repeated the fact the Messiah brought light to all men. Furthermore, he added: though He was the Creator, nobody recognized or acknowledged Him; though He came to His chosen people, they did not receive Him. As the Prophet Isaiah prophesied,

O LORD, Your hand is lifted up yet they do not see it. [Isa 26:11a].

What did the prophecy say regarding John the Baptist? It said he would "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction." [Mal 4:5-6; Luk 1:17]. God sent a witness so He could rightly judge His people for rejecting the Messiah. There is no excuse. For the nation of Israel, this destruction came to Jerusalem in year 70AD.

Therefore, verses 1 through 11 tell us the Messiah came into the world bringing life and light. Though He came as light in the darkness and though a witness in the wilderness declared He had come, yet the world, even His chosen nation, did not acknowledge Him.

The interlude reinforces the fact God not only sent the Messiah as promised, but He sent a witness to declare Him. Before God would judge the world and His people for rejecting the Messiah, He had given them every opportunity to receive Him.

We just examined one purpose for a witness: to leave people without an excuse. This is the negative side. Let us look at another purpose, a positive purpose:

Though God sent a witness, and though the world and His people rejected the Messiah, some did believe. 1:12 says some did believe and to those He gave the right to become children of God. The Bible tells us for people to believe, there must be a witness.

How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom
they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? [Rom 10:14].

Jesus Christ gave us the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20, commanding us to teach all people to walk by faith in Jesus Christ. They cannot believe unless they hear and they cannot hear unless the Gospel is proclaimed. This proclamation comes through a witness.

It is our duty to obey and profess whether we think anyone will believe or not; and most will not (Rom 10:16). But we speak because God commands and we speak for the sake of those who will hear.

Our example is the Prophet Jeremiah. God told him to speak though the people will not listen. The people, in turn, confirmed the words of God: they would not listen.

You shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you; and you shall call to them, but they will not answer you. [Jer 7:27].

As for the message that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we are not going to listen to you! [Jer 44:16].

Here is the example of John the Baptist: If we follow Christ, we are called to profess Him and teach His commands according to the Scripture. So we speak and leave the results to God. He has promised His Word will never return empty.

So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it. [Isa 55:11].

IN CLOSING

John the Baptist was sent from God to proclaim the Messiah had come. He was a witness.

He bore witness to the Light so men might believe. The prophet Isaiah described him as the voice calling out in the wilderness ( Isa 40:3). He preached so people could hear; so some could believe.
His commission was to preach repentance for the Messiah had come. We, too, have a commission. Our commission is to preach repentance for the Messiah has risen and is coming back in judgment (Mat 28:18-20; Act 17:30-31).

Though he was engulfed with fame, he was not the Light, nor did he claim to be. He said, "I am not the Christ." [v20].

John the Baptist is our example of living a life of self-denial. Though we are not called to live in the wilderness and wear animal skin clothes, we are called to seek God's glory and not our own. We give glory to God with our lives of self-denial and by proclaiming the Lord Jesus Christ so people can hear and believe.

Are we, like John, a faithful witness, proclaiming the Light to this dark world?
John 1:9-13 What It Means To Receive Jesus Christ

The Light had come into the world and He came to His people. God sent a witness to proclaim Him. Regardless, He was rejected. However, God always has a remnant and some will believe.

There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. [v9-10].

THE WORLD DID NOT KNOW HIM

The True Light had come into the world; giving light to everyone. Most people will cling to the darkness; some will come to the light (3:19-21). This is the Light prophesied by Isaiah and, just as Jesus said in 3:16, salvation will extend throughout the world and no longer be confined to Israel.

I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth. [Isa 49:6b].

Christ declared He was the light come into the world. Christ is the light for the nations and He still reaches to the ends of the earth.

I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. [12:46].

Notice, this Scripture does not say Christ, the True Light, came into the world and gave light to everyone. No. It says, Christ, the True Light, who gives light to everyone, came into the world. He has always given light and now He has come into the world. In other words, He did not come into the world to reveal His common grace. His common grace has been clear since the beginning and now He came into the world as a man.

because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For
since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. [Rom 1:19-20].

Christ, the Creator of the world, the True Light, has revealed Himself to man by Word and by works, since the beginning. The Bible says, "So they are without excuse." The true Light, who had revealed Himself to man, had now come in the flesh; He was in the world. We know this to be a historical fact: Jesus Christ was physically a man and lived among men.

This is a beautiful picture. The Creator came to live among His creation. He was born to a woman whom He made; He created His mother. His body walked upon the ground He made and depended upon the air He created. He experienced the beauty of His creation; yet, He also experienced the agonizing consequences of the fall. While He was here, He had compassion on the sick, the lame, the deaf and the blind. The true Light brought healing to a broken world.

The Apostle Paul wrote all things we made by Him, through Him and for Him. He listed thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities (Col 1:16). Christ, the owner and ruler of all things, throughout the vast universe, walked among man and the thrones, dominions, rulers and authorities paid Him no honor, but continued their dark deeds as if there was no one to account to. But in His death He "disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him." [Col 2:15].

God was on earth, in the flesh, but the world did not know Him or acknowledge Him. You could say, they did not even tip their hat to Him. His own creation, the people He made, disregarded Him.

John wrote the world does not know us because it did not know Him (1Jo 3:1). Even today, the world tries to minimize who Christ was; they discredit what He did while He was among men. People live their lives and go about their days with little or no consideration for the things of God.
Their banquets are accompanied by lyre and harp, by tambourine and flute, and by wine; but they do not pay attention to the deeds of the LORD, nor do they consider the work of His hands. [Isa 5:12].

O LORD, Your hand is lifted up yet they do not see it. [Isa 26:11a].

Why the darkness? Why did not the world turn to the Light while He was here? The people did not know Him or acknowledge Him because they clung to their sin.

This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. [3:19].

The world is dark and oppressive, but the Light has come into the world. Light dispels darkness and brings hope. Yet the world clings to evil because the people love their evil deeds. They refuse to turn to the Light, but for us who believe, "the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining." [1Jo 2:8].

**HIS OWN DID NOT RECEIVE HIM**

He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. [v11].

John the Baptist said no one receives the testimony of the Messiah (3:32). Isaiah told us the world does not seek after God; no one calls upon His name (Isa 64:7). The Apostle Paul said, "THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEeks FOR GOD" [Rom 3:11].

Men were not looking for the Christ; the Jews, who carried the oracles of God, were not looking for the Christ. So it can be no surprise they did not recognize Him when He came.

Christ owns the world, but the world did not know Him when He came nor does it want to know Him today. In the Book of Isaiah, God said He set aside a people for Himself so they might declare His praise, but they did not call upon Him. He came to His own people; the nation of Israel, but they did not receive Him.
The people whom I formed for Myself will declare My praise. Yet you have not called on Me, O Jacob; but you have become weary of Me, O Israel. [Isa 43:21-22].

A case in point: The story of the visit of the Wise Men, in Matthew chapter two. The magi inquired of the priests in Jerusalem as to where the Messiah child was living. The priests were able to figure the times and locations given in Scripture and sent the magi on their way to Bethlehem. Nonetheless, even when the birth of the Christ was brought to their attention by the Magi, the Jews did not seek the child because they were not interested in the promised Messiah.

No one seeks after God (Rom 3:11). Seeker friendly churches are a false doctrine and a compromise of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a man-centered gospel; a religion to please man. It is a method to get man churched, but it does not get man saved.

Jesus said no one comes to Him unless the Father draws him (6:44). Man thinks he can come to God via his freewill, but even when Christ was dwelling among man, freewill kept man chained to sin.

**BUT TO THOSE WHO DID RECEIVE HIM**

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of man, but of God. [v12-13].

A popular Christian term is, "I accepted Jesus in my heart." This phrase is improperly used because the Bible speaks nothing of accepting Christ. He does not need our acceptance. Even this verse, speaking of receiving Christ, does not say "receiving into their hearts." We don't put Him into our heart or lives. He comes; He draws us; He regenerates us; and we are born again. It is God's work. We do not "open our hearts" to the Lord. He opens our hearts so we can hear, understand and receive. This is all of God.

A woman named Lydia. . .the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. [Act 16:14].
The idea behind accepting Jesus, opening our hearts and making Him Lord is that we own and control our lives; we are sovereign and God is holding back His sovereignty until we are willing to release ours to Him. This is NOT Biblical.

Furthermore, we do not "make a decision for Christ." 1:12 says we receive Him but verse thirteen says we receive Him through God's will, God's decision. The verse says this receiving had nothing to do with a man's will. God chose us in Christ Jesus before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4). He made the decision; we had nothing to do with it. God has decided, we receive.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says we are saved by grace through faith which is the gift of God. This means God's grace and our faith, our ability to believe, are gifts from God. Our faith is not of our own doing. This means our salvation, God's grace and our faith are not the result of our own efforts; God did not give these gifts to us for anything we did; no decision of our own, LEST ANY MAN SHOULD BOAST.

All these claims, which are common Christian phrases, are boasting. We have accepted these phrases but they are not Biblical. They come from false doctrine and have been used to motivate man to come to Christ. But Jesus said no one comes to Him unless the Father draws him (6:44). According to the words of Jesus Christ, to motivate man to come to Him is the work of the Spirit (3:8).

Are we splitting hairs? or is this an important issue? It is important because our view on these claims expose whether we believe God is sovereign or whether we believe man is sovereign. Does God subordinate His sovereignty to a man's will? God forbid.

If God chose me before the creation of the world, He is sovereign; I am not. Why does Ephesians 2:8-9 end with "lest any man should boast"? It says so because it is God who is glorified in our salvation; when we claim we are saved because of something we did, we rob God of His glory. God says, "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another." [Isa 42:8a]. Therefore, this is an important matter, not a mere technicality.

Everyone who is called by My name, and whom I have created for My glory. [Isa 43:7a].

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Everyone who is called by My name, and whom I have created for My glory. [Isa 43:7a].

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God has no desire to share His glory with us. All praise goes to Him, alone; we earn not even a little slice of this praise. So, when we say, "I accepted Jesus" or "I opened my heart to Him" or "I made Christ Lord of my life" or "I made a decision for Christ" or any such thing, we are boasting; we are robbing God of His glory and taking praise upon ourselves for something accomplished by God. Where in the Bible does God congradulate any who follow Him?

Which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, "Come immediately and sit down to eat"? But will he not say to him, "Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink"? He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he? So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, "We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done." [Luk 17:7-10]

Here is the dichotomy: The Bible is clear, we cannot come to God unless He chooses us, but all men are responsible to come to Him as He has commanded all men to repent (Act 17:30).

I know, O LORD, that a man’s way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps. Correct me, O LORD, but with justice; not with Your anger, or You will bring me to nothing. [Jer 10:23-24].

Those who refuse to believe cannot become children of God and will rot in Hell for eternity. But if we believe, if we repent, this is something to praise God for. We can take no praise for it. Ephesians 2:8-9 confirms our faith, our ability to believe, is a gift from God.

The Bible says I come to Christ, I receive Him and I believe in Him, but it also says all this is of God. Our salvation is the work of God, alone. All praise and glory belong to Him. Let us be careful not to rob even a little piece of this glory for ourselves.

You have also performed for us all our works. [Isa 26:12b].
WHO BELIEVED IN HIS NAME

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. [v12-13].

Judging by the sentence structure, we see receiving Christ and believing in Him are the same. If we do not receive Him, we cannot believe and if we do not believe in Him, we did not receive Him.

Those who receive Him, believe in His name. What does it mean to believe in His name?

This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ. [1Jo 3:23a].

To answer this question, we must first understand what is His name.

Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. [Isa 7:14b].

you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. [Mat 1:21b].

Immanuel or Emmanuel means "God is with us." The Hebrew word for Jesus is Yeshua, which is a variation of Joshua. Yeshua means "Yahweh is salvation" or "Salvation is of the Lord."

The name Jesus Christ is not a first and last name, as in American names; a given name and a surname. Jesus is His name among men and Christ is His title. Christ means "Messiah." His name is Jesus, the Messiah; God with man; God is our salvation.

To believe in the name of Jesus Christ is to believe He is the promised Messiah, He is God and He dwelt among men. To believe in the name of Jesus Christ is to confess He is God incarnate and salvation comes from Him. But we are not talking about a mere knowledge and agreement with the facts.

Many claim to believe and they think "making a decision for Christ" at some time in their life will give them fire insurance from Hell. They believe saying the sinner's prayer is evidence of salvation. But
the demons believe and tremble (Jam 2:19). The demons know God and acknowledge Him, but they cannot be saved (Mat 8:29; cf Mar 1:24, Luk 4:34). Therefore, receiving and believing must be more than mere head knowledge and a tipping of our hat to God.

He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him [3:36].

And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief. [Heb 3:18-19].

Believing is not merely knowing Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who died for our sins and rose again. Believing describes the person who is obedient to God's commands.

Paul wrote about those destined to perish: they refuse to believe the truth, so God sends them a strong delusion; God sends them something to believe, but it is not the truth (2Th 2:9-12). This delusion takes shape in the form of false religions and cults, positive motivation, self-helps, psychology, materialism, hedonism and other worldly wisdoms.

All people have faith; we all believe in something. Faith in Jesus Christ is a gift from God and results in following Him; obeying Him. Some people speak of faith, but it is merely faith in faith. There is no substance, but it sounds positive.

About having faith in faith, A.W. Tozer (1897-1963) wrote:

I do not recall another period when 'faith' was as popular as it is today. If only we believe hard enough we'll make it somehow. So goes the popular chant. What you believe is not important. Only believe. . .

What is overlooked in all this is that faith is good only when it engages truth; when it is made to rest upon falsehood it can and often does lead to eternal tragedy. For it is not enough that we believe; we must believe the right thing about the right One.
C.S. Lewis wrote,

The state of mind which desperate desire working on a strong imagination can manufacture is not faith in the Christian sense. It is a feat of psychological gymnastics.

The Prophet Ezekiel wrote,

They have seen false visions and lying divinations. They say, 'Declares the L ORD,' when the L ORD has not sent them, and yet they expect Him to fulfill their word. [Eze 13:6].

Faith in Jesus Christ is a gift from God (Eph 2:8). Faith in Jesus Christ is not something we get through our own efforts; we cannot conjure this up nor can we "exercise" and build up this "muscle." Those who believe in Christ are born not of the will of man, but of the will of God (v13). We are God's workmanship (Eph 2:10).

God-made Christians are a miracle of grace, the products of Divine workmanship (Eph 2:10). They are a Divine creation, brought into existence by supernatural operations. The new birth is "not of blood (by natural descent), nor of the will of the flesh (his own 'free-will'), nor of the will of man (the preacher's persuasion), but of God." [Arthur Pink; Spiritual Growth].

To truly believe, to believe in Jesus Christ with a saving faith is given to those who have been regenerated by God. They will believe and because of their true faith, they will follow Jesus Christ and live in obedience. This is something the natural man rejects, because he has not been regenerated or born again.

**CHILDREN OF GOD**

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. [v12-13].
This verse runs counter to the claims of the world and many professing Christians. It is commonly said, "we are all children of God," but this is not Biblical. It is true, man is made in the image of God (1:26; cf Jam 3:9). But this passage makes clear, only those who receive Christ are children of God.

Christ came into the world and the world did not know Him; He came to His own, but they did not receive Him. Though man rejects God, for some reason, he wants claim to being a child of God.

The Apostle Paul wrote we are children of God through faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:26) and those who follow Christ are sons of God (Rom 8:14). Furthermore, Romans chapter eight explains those who follow Christ are adopted as sons into God's family and are fellow heirs with Christ (Rom 8:15-17). Those who do not follow Christ, are not children of God.

because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God. . .if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. [Rom 8:7a, 9b].

Love for God is not a feeling. It is obedience. If you feel like you love God, and you may be very emotional about Him, but you are not obedient, if your lifestyle is full of sin, you are not saved.

Those who believe, who obey, have been born of God. Jesus said, "you must be born again." [3:7]. We don't choose to be born, nor do we choose to be born again. So, our receiving and believing cannot be of our own efforts. 1:13 says we are born of the will of God.

The Apostle Paul wrote we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons (Rom 8:23).

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. [Rom 8:19].

Those who believe, God gave the right to become children or sons of God (v12). Romans chapter eight tells us a child of God is adopted and those who do not walk in the flesh but walk in obedience to the Spirit are sons of God.
**SIDENOTE**

An interesting aside is these two verses sum up the eighth and ninth chapters of Romans:

1) v12. Those who received and believed, He gave the right to be children of God. Romans chapter eight speaks of our adoption as sons of God and what this looks like: we will no longer walk in the flesh, but live in obedience to the Spirit. "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." [Rom 8:16].

2) v13. This adoption did not come by our will or even our decision, but by the will of God. Romans chapter nine says God chooses some, but not others. He will have mercy on whom He wills. "So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy." [Rom 9:16].

**IN CLOSING**

Jesus gave us another picture of what a saved person looks like. In this passage, notice some branches are pruned and some are burned. Not every branch is saved. Some of these branches are saved but some are merely professing Christians.

I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. [15:1-6].

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Comparing Himself to the vine and us to the branches, Christ made clear that a profession of faith does not save us. Many professing Christians (branches) are on their way to the fires of Hell.

Are you abiding in Christ? and is He producing fruit in your life? If not, you have not received Him nor do you believe in Him. You may be professing faith in Him, but you are not saved; you are merely tipping your hat to God.

You cannot get to heaven by your own works or even by your own decision. To be saved, you must be born of the will of God.

John 1:14-18 Jesus Christ Came To Dwell Among Man

Christ came into the world and the world would not acknowledge Him. Those He created were content in their estrangement from Him. So this is a great mystery: how that the God who created man would 1) reduce Himself to become a man; and 2) that He would dwell among apostate men without destroying them.

The Apostle Paul told us, even though Christ was God, He did not cling to His status, but made Himself nothing; taking on the nature and likeness of man and He was obedient, even to His own death (Php 2:5-8). Christ did not come to destroy, or condemn the world He came to die so His people could be saved (3:17). This was His reason for living among men.

THE WORD BECAME FLESH

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. [v14].

Christ became flesh. He was fully God and He became fully man. God the Son, God of all eternity took upon Himself the finite flesh of man, a body formed from water and dirt, to walk as man and live among His creation. Scripture declares the two natures of Christ: that He is fully God and fully man, revealing His glory and His flesh.

For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. [Isa 9:6].

For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form. [Col 2:9].

The first chapter of Genesis tells us God made man in His own image and everything God made was good. But man fell to sin and brought darkness and death upon God's creation. Man defiled the
glory God had given him and the Bible describes man's life as grass, a breath, a vapor, a mist or a shadow (Job 8:9; 14:2; Psa 39:5,11; 144:4; Jam 4:14).

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever. [Isa 40:8; cf 1Pe 1:24-25].

Despite all man's rebellion and apostacy, the Creator took upon Himself the likeness of man in all its frailness, but without the sin nature.

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. [Heb 4:15].

In his epistles, John argued against those who denied Christ had come in the flesh. He wrote, "every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God." [1Jo 4:2b-3a]. He called those who denied Christ coming in the flesh as deceivers.

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. [2Jo 7].

Christ has forever taken upon Himself the flesh of man. He is and always will be fully God and fully man (cf Col 1:15-20; Heb 2:5-18). This is called the hypostatic union.

Though He is fully God, when He became man, the Bible says He had to be made perfect and He learned obedience.

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. [Heb 2:10].

Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation. [Heb 5:8-9].
The writer of Hebrews said God had to make Him perfect through suffering and He learned obedience. What does this mean? Isn't God perfect and doesn't He know everything?

We need to consider, while He was on the earth, He was in the flesh of man, with all its frailness, but not its sin. He was forever God, but only recently man. Though He created man, He had never experienced this state. When in this state, He suffered. When suffering, He was tested. When tested, He proved perfect and obedient. Therefore, where Scripture says He "learned" obedience, the meaning is, although He was new to this nature, Christ proved obedient.

There had to be a perfect man to be the perfect sacrifice to settle God's wrath against man. The man Christ fulfilled the requirements of the Law with perfect obedience. He was the spotless lamb of God; thus He was proven to be the perfect sacrifice for the sin of man.

The Law cannot not save man because we all fall short (Rom 3:23). The Law announced God's standard, but it was weak in giving eternal life. This is why God sent His Son.

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe. [Rom 3:21-22a].

For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. [Rom 8:3-4].

God sent His Son, born in human flesh. He was born under the Law to redeem sinners who were under the Law, that is, condemned by the Law. So we might be adopted as sons, fellow heirs with Christ. For this, we cry, "Abba! Father!" (Rom 8:15-17; Gal 4:4-5).
WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. [v14].

Can you imagine following a man who was sinless. For three years, the disciples followed Jesus. It did not slip by unnoticed that, not only did this man have such superior wisdom, but He did not sin. Not in word or in deed. He never whined; He never sought pity; He never sought His own gain; He never said a derogatory word. There was never a time the disciples needed to encourage Him out of His slump. He always spoke for God and He always pointed the disciples and His hearers toward God. This was no ordinary man.

When John wrote "we have seen His glory," he was not merely stating a fact; this is an exciting proclamation. He, along with the disciples and others saw the Christ, the Son of God with their own eyes. He dwelt with them; they touched Him and talked with Him. They saw the glory of God manifest in Him.

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. [1Jo 1:1-4].

The Apostle John saw the miracles Christ performed. He saw God's glory upon Jesus at His baptism (v32) and the Transfiguration (Luk 9:28-36). He heard when God the Father spoke from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." [Mat 3:17; 17:5]. These must have been glorious and terrible things to behold: God speaking to man and pouring His approval upon His Son, confirming He was whom He claimed to be, the only Son of God.
This is why John could positively say, "glory as of the only begotten from the Father." [v14].

His glory was full of grace and truth. Though God is righteous and just and cannot tolerate sin (Psa 7:11; Hab 1:13), He sent His Son to satisfy His wrath (Rom 3:25; 1Jo 4:10). While His Son was on earth, rather than destroy the world, God allowed the world to destroy His Son's flesh. This is grace! In explaining John 3:16, some commentators explain the verse to mean, "This is how God showed His love for the world, by sending His Son."

Grace, in that:

1) He dwelt among man without destroying him (Rom 3:26; 1Ti 1:15);
2) He came as a servant (Mat 20:28; Php 2:7);
3) He was the final sacrifice for mans' sins (1Co 5:7; Heb 10:12);
4) He came to destroy the dominion of death (1Co 15:25-26; Col 2:15; 2Ti 1:10; Heb 2:14);
5) He came to die so we might have life (10:10; Rom 5:8; 6:23).

Truth, in that:

1) He came to make God the Father known to man (1:18).
2) Christ told us He is the way, the truth and the life (14:6).
3) Christ is the only way to the Father (Act 4:12; 1Ti 2:5).
4) God's grace comes by way of truth (Col 1:6).

John and the disciples had no doubt Jesus was the Christ, for they had seen His glory. There never was a man like Jesus Christ.

A PARENTHESIS

Just after "full of grace and truth" and just before "grace upon grace," the Apostle John slipped in this apparent parenthesis:
John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" [v15].

In speaking of Christ, full of grace and truth, the Jew was inclined to compare this to the Law; they clung to their "obedience" to the Law for their salvation. And the apostle wrote, "His own did not receive Him." But there were another group of Jews: those who left the Law behind for John's baptism. Though receiving the news of Christ's death (and resurrection), they clung to their salvation through this baptism.

The Apostle John was reminding those who still clung to the baptism of John the Baptist for salvation, the eternality of the grace and truth through Jesus Christ. John was finite; Christ is infinite. He reminded them, even the Baptist himself, subjected himself to this truth of the Christ.

The man, Christ, was born after John the Baptist and Christ's ministry began after the Baptist's. So, many saw the Christ as a newcomer, if you will. But Christ ranks ahead of the Baptist because He was before him, from eternity. John was the forerunner, the messenger, the witness. He came to announce the Christ. By the Baptist's own words, he pointed people to Christ because Christ is from eternity.

The Apostle John wrote this to affirm Christ's grace and truth and that it was greater than the baptism preached by John the Baptist. This baptism was intended to lead people to repentance and faith in the eternal Messiah, of whom John preached. John was in part, Christ is in full. Christ's Gospel is the fullness of grace and truth.

**WE HAVE RECEIVED GRACE UPON GRACE**

For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. [v16].

The Apostle Paul told us the fullness of deity dwells bodily in Christ (Col 2:9). In other words, Christ is the full representation of the
Godhead, in that, He is the physical form of God; God dwells in Him (Col 1:15-19).

The dictionary says fullness is the state of being filled to capacity. When the Bible talks about the fullness of Christ it refers to His fullness of the Godhead; Christ is filled with God to capacity, because He is God.

John began the chapter telling us Christ was in the beginning with God and was God. Jesus said He has seen the Father (6:46); He spoke of what He had seen with His Father (8:38); and He told those who saw Him, because they have seen Him they have also seen the Father (14:9).

Christ is the fullness of God and, in Him, Deity lives in bodily form. The Bible says we are "made complete" in Him. He nailed our sins to the cross and paid our debt (Col 2:9-14). He is all we need; we cannot add to nor can we help our salvation in any way. We are filled or made complete in Christ; He alone is our salvation.

Paul wrote Christ ascended so that He might equip the saints until we attain unity in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God; to the measure we are filled with Christ (Eph 4:10-13). How do we become filled with Christ? By abiding in Him; by getting into His Word. Unity in faith and knowledge in the Son grows in the church as each member is in the Word. If unity is not centered around the truth of Scripture, it is a false unity.

God's grace is worked out in our lives as we abide in Christ (15:4-5).

What is the meaning of "grace upon grace"? The term is not "grace upon works" nor "works upon grace." The term John used is "grace upon grace." Grace is a gift of God; not of works nor is it of our decision or choosing (Eph 2:8-9). Bountiful grace. God gives grace and adds grace to it.

Some commentators say John was pointing to the grace God gave through the Law of the Old Testament and the grace of the New Testament was built upon this former grace.

For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin,
He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. [Rom 8:3-4].

In Ephesians 1:4-8, the Apostle Paul tells us of this grace:

1) God chose us in Jesus Christ before the creation of the world.
2) He chose us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ.
3) Through Christ, He redeemed us.
4) He lavished His grace upon us.

In Ephesians 2:4-8, he tells us of this grace:

1) He made us alive in Christ, while we were dead in our sins.
2) By grace you have been saved.
3) He has raised us up with Christ and seated us with Christ in the heavenly places.
4) In the coming ages He will show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
5) For by grace you have been saved through faith.

Grace upon grace: God's grace is "far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think." [Eph 3:20]. Grace immeasurable in this life and grace immeasurable in the life to come.

The Apostle Paul said if it had not been for the Law, he would not have known sin (Rom 7:7). In Galatians 3:24, he wrote the Law was our guardian to to keep mans' eyes upon God. Though we are condemned by the Law, the Law is not without grace. The fact God would direct man to live Godly lives and the fact He gave the Law to make man conscious of sin so he can repent, is evidence of His grace. This is grace upon grace.

For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. [v17].
The Law came through Moses. The Jews clung to Moses and the Law. Though they could never keep the Law, they falsely believed they did by their own works. The Law revealed God's righteousness and exposed man's sinfulness. Paul wrote all have sinned and fall short of God's glory (Rom 3:23).

- Jesus said everyone who sins is a slave to sin (8:32).
- The Apostle Paul wrote we are slaves to the one we obey; either of sin, which leads to death, or of Christ which leads to righteousness (Rom 6:16).

Jesus Christ brought grace and truth. If we follow Him we are no longer under God's judgment, but we have the gift of eternal life (Rom 6:23). Christ promised we will be free if we abide in Him (8:31-32). Paul wrote we are released from the Law which held us captive, so we serve by the Spirit rather than an adherence to the Law.

But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter. [Rom 7:6].

Moses gave the Law, but Christ satisfied the Law. Martin Luther said, "The Law discovers the disease; the Gospel gives the remedy."

Here is the Gospel in a nutshell:

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. [2Co 5:21].

We do not have the ability to be righteous. Good works cannot get us to heaven. Knowing we cannot satisfy God's righteous requirements should lead us to repentance. For those who repent and receive Christ, He took our sin and He gave us His righteousness. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

By saying the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, the Apostle John announced one greater than Moses is here.
HE HAS MADE GOD KNOWN

No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. [v18].

Christ was with God, because He is God (1:1). He came to make the Father known. This demonstrates the love between the Father and the Son. It is evidence of Christ's obedience. He left His glory and took the form of a servant (Php 2:7). In taking on human flesh, He served both the Father and man.

Prior to the incarnation of Christ, God was revealed in His creation (Rom 1:19-20); He was revealed in the Law and the Prophets (Rom 3:21). Through Jesus Christ, God has revealed Himself to man in the flesh (Heb 1:1-3). While Christ was among man, He revealed God to man.

Here are some examples from the Gospel of John where Christ made the Father known to the people:

• 3:11 Jesus told Nicodemus, He spoke of what He received and saw in Heaven, but he would not receive it.
• 4:23 Jesus explained to the woman at the well, the Father is seeking those who will worship in spirit and in truth.
• 5:19 Jesus said He could do nothing of His own, but only what He saw His Father doing, for the Father loves the Son and shows Him everything He is doing.
• 5:36 Jesus said the works He is doing are the works the Father sent Him to do and these works bear witness the Father sent Him.
• 6:38 Jesus said He came to do the will of the Father who sent Him.
• 6:40 Jesus said the will of the Father is everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life.
• 6:44 Jesus said nobody comes to Him unless the Father draws him.
• 14:10 Jesus said He is in the Father and spoke what He saw the Father doing.
• 17:25-26 Jesus showed us what the Father is like.

EIGHT MENTIONS OF MOSES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

1) 1:17 The law was given through Moses, grace and truth through Jesus Christ.

2) 1:45 Philip's declaration to Nathanael. "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote."

3) 3:14 Christ comparing His death with the serpent Moses lifted in the wilderness.

4) 5:45f Jesus' declaration Moses will be their accuser because they did not believe.

5) 6:32 Christ's claim the manna in the wilderness was from the Father not from Moses.

6) 7:19f Jesus' rebuke: none keep the Law of Moses and they do not understand the Law.

7) 8:5f The Jews partially applied the law of Moses in the case of the woman caught in adultery.

8) 9:28 The Jews claimed to follow Moses when arguing with the man born blind who was healed.

AD HOC OUTLINE JOHN 1:1-18

1) Jesus Christ is God;

2) He became flesh and dwelt among man; and

3) He revealed the Father to man.

IN CLOSING
The Word became flesh. He left His Godly state to become a man and He lived among men. John said, "we have seen His glory." His
life was a real event and to those who could understand, He was the Son of the Father.

Because Christ is God, we have received grace upon grace. This is the grace of the New Covenant built upon the grace of the Old Covenant. This is the grace for redemption from sin and death to the immeasurable grace to stand blameless before the Judge of all creation and righteousness.

The Law was given through Moses. It was to reveal the righteousness of God and the sinfulness of man. The Law will lead the repentant heart to Christ.

Grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ. He took our sin and gave us His righteousness.

No one has seen God. In the past, God was revealed through creation, the Law and the Prophets. Now, His Son has come and made God known. Light has come into the darkness.
John 1:19-34 The Faithful Witness Of John The Baptist

Twice in this chapter, the Apostle John sprinkled the text with the witness of John the Baptist. The Baptist testified of the Messiah, but many in this day believed he was the Messiah. So, the Apostle wanted to make clear to the reader, John the Baptist was not the Messiah; he even said so himself.

This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." [v 19-20].

THE INTERVIEW OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

John the Baptist denied he was the Christ.

These were heady days. Large crowds were following him and it would have been so easy to get caught up in the excitement and the fame. Today, we see many ministers and televangelists hogging the limelight and the glory while tipping their hats to Christ. But John the Baptist was steadfast in his resolve to proclaim Christ. He did not cling to his fame and even among his own followers he declared Christ must increase, but he must decrease (3:30).

Upon further questioning, John the Baptist denied being Elijah (v21). However, Malachi described the coming of Elijah and when the angel visited Zechariah, before the birth of his son John, he used the same language to affirm his son will be the Elijah.

Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers. [Mal 4:5-6a].

It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the
disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. [Luk 1:17].

When the Baptist was in prison and after his death, Jesus, spoke of John the Baptist and affirmed he was the Elijah who had come, but he was not recognized and they killed him (Mat 11:14; 17:12). From Old Testament prophecy, from the angel and from Jesus' testimony, it is clear John the Baptist was the Elijah who was to come at the time of Christ.

Nonetheless, although he was the man prophesied to be the Elijah, he was not willing to take any glory for himself. His sole purpose in life was to be the voice calling in the wilderness preparing the way for the Lord; the herald for the coming King (v23; cf Isa 40:3).

So now these men pressed John further, asking if he was the Prophet (v21). In one respect, you could say John was a prophet. But this question was not about just any prophet and, once again, John would not take the glory for himself, for this belonged to Christ. Christ was the prophet about whom Moses had spoken.

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. . . [Now quoting God] and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. [Deu 18:15-19].

Jesus said He, Himself, was the long awaited prophet and He did nothing on His own authority, but spoke what the Father told Him (8:28). Jesus Christ told the Pharisees, "If you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me." [5:46].

John's answer to being the Prophet was a simple, "No." [v21].

The interview was almost over and they pressed John for an answer, for they could not return to the Pharisees with nothing, John told them he was the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make
straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah had said (v23; quoting Isa 40:3).

So, the interviewers were now confused: If John was not the Christ, the Elijah or the Prophet, why was he baptizing? John answered by pointing them to the Messiah.

I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know. It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie. [v26-27].

The Gospel of Matthew accounts John's words like this:

As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. [Mat 3:11-12].

The Apostle Paul gave this account of John the Baptist:

after John had proclaimed before His coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, "What do you suppose that I am? I am not He. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie." [Act 13:24-25].

Each time John pointed his interviewers back to the Christ:

1) I am not worthy to untie His sandals or carry His sandals;

2) He will baptize with Holy Spirit and fire;

3) He will separate those who will live with Him from those who will suffer the judgment of fire.

John said Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. The Holy Spirit is a seal, given to those who believe (2Co 1:22). The fire is the condemnation of those who do not believe (Rev 20:15).
John preached a repentance to escape God's judgment to prepare the hearts of the people to receive the Messiah.

WHERE THIS INTERVIEW TOOK PLACE

These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. [v28].

In Jesus' time, there were two towns called Bethany. The minions of the Pharisees interviewed John the Baptist at Bethany beyond the River Jordan, that is, the East bank. The Bethany of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, was two miles to the Southeast of Jerusalem (11:18).

There has been much controversy related to the location of this second Bethany. Some place it up north, in the region of Galilee. Others say the most likely location is just opposite Jericho. Some translations have identified the city to be Bethabara and the name refers to fords in the river. During this time, there were near Gilead the fords of Abarah. This would place the location south of the River Jabbock and north of the Dead Sea.

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" [v29-30].

What is the significance of the Lamb of God?

• Since the Fall of Adam, God had commanded man to sacrifice an animal as the temporary offering for sin (Lev 17:11; cf Gen 3:21; 4:1-7). Abel, the first martyr, bred sheep for these sacrifices (Gen 4:2).

• During the captivity of Israel in the land of Egypt, God commanded the people to take a Passover lamb and spread the blood on the lintels and door posts of their homes. This was to protect them from the coming judgment; the death of the firstborn (Exo 12).
• Sacrificing a lamb at the Passover would be a continuing celebration reminding them of their sin and commemorating God delivering them and saving them from the plague of death upon the firstborn.

• When John the Baptist called Christ the Lamb of God, he was proclaiming Christ to be the final Passover lamb. And, in fact, Christ died for man's sin at the Passover on the day of Preparation (19:31-34).

Christ is the perfect sacrifice; the perfect Lamb of God.

For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. 
[1Co 5:7b]

knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. [1Pe 1:18-19]

As to physical birth, John the Baptist was six months older than Christ (Luk 1:24-45). As to ministry, John the Baptist was already preaching and baptizing when Christ came on the scene. Other translations quote the Baptist as saying Christ was before him. The NASB clarifies Christ existed before. Christ was before John the Baptist, in that, He was before all time.

In saying Christ was before him, he could have been speaking to rank or status. Christ is exalted, He is the King; John was the herald. In other words, John was telling his audience Christ was the one they were looking for.

The day after the interview, Christ was walking to meet John the Baptist, to be baptized by Him. It seems before this day, John had not met Christ apart from when he was still in the womb (Luk 1:41). He knew OF Him, but according to verse 31, he did not know Him or had not met Him before.

I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water. 
[v31].
In this text, John the Baptist states he did not know the Christ, but his sole purpose was to reveal Him. This is why he baptized: to reveal the Christ; to proclaim repentance so people would follow Jesus. God told the Baptist, He would send the Christ and how to know Him. The Spirit would descend as a dove and remain upon Him.

**John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."** [v32-34].

In this text, John trusted God to reveal the Christ to him. When John was in the womb, he recognized Christ immediately (Luk 1:41). But this day, he would not know Him until He arrived.

Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him. After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." [Mat 3:13-17].

Many commentators and critiques have pointed out the contradiction between the account in Matthew and John. It does appear there is a contradiction: In Matthew's account, John appeared to know Christ when he arrived; and in the Apostle John's account, the Baptist did not know him and Christ was not revealed to him until He was baptized.
The whole story lies within both accounts. God had given John the Baptist a unique tie to his Lord and, just as he recognized the Christ while in the womb, so too, he knew the Christ when He appeared at the river. This is not at all contradictory with John's account.

The rest of John's account is that he did not rest upon his feelings, but trusted God to reveal His Son to him, just as God had promised He would. And he testified Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, is the Son of God.

THE WITNESS OF THE FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT

All four Gospels have the account of Christ's baptism. Three of them give the account of the heavens opening, the Spirit descending like a dove and the voice of the Father rendering His approval and affirming Jesus to be His Son (Mat 3:16-17; Mar 1:10-11; Luk 3:21-22).

Awesome as this may sound, it was likely a fearful experience as well, for it is certain the voice of the Father was no milquetoast and before the voice, you can be sure the heavens opening gave a terrible and strong pronouncement. John the Baptist could only proclaim, "this is the Son of God." [v34]

Isaiah said of the Messiah, "the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord." [Isa 11:2-3].

So, here at Christ's baptism, we have the witness of the three: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Son came to be baptized; the Holy Spirit announced by rending the skies and descending upon Him like a dove; and the Father voicing His approval and affirming Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

The witness of the Father and the Holy Spirit upon the Son marks the beginning of Christ's ministry.
SON OF GOD IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

1) 1:34 John the Baptist testimony Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

2) 1:49 Nathanael's declaration Jesus is the Son of God.

3) 3:18 Those who do not believe in the name of the Son of God will be judged.

4) 5:25 Those who hear the voice of the Son of God will live.

5) 10:36 Can the Son of God blaspheme by claiming to be the Son of God?

6) 11:4 The Son of God will be glorified when God raises Lazarus from the dead.

7) 11:27 Mary's (the sister of Lazarus) declaration Jesus is the Son of God.

8) 19:7 The Pharisees charge Pilate that Christ should die for claiming to be the Son of God.

9) 20:31 John wrote the book so we might believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and by believing we shall have life in His name. Amen.

IN CLOSING

John the Baptist used every opportunity to point people to Christ and took no glory for himself. Some thought he was the Messiah, but he denied it because he was preparing the way for the true Messiah.

Though he was the prophesied Elijah, he took no glory for himself in this and even denied it.

He preached repentance so people would receive the words of Jesus Christ and escape the wrath of God. True repentance is to confess and turn away from our sin. We cannot follow Christ unless we repent of our sin.

The day after the interview, Christ came to him to be baptized. At this event, Christ was revealed and John confirmed Jesus was the
Christ or the Messiah. "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God." [v34].

When faced with the popularity John experienced, he did not cling to the glory nor make the most of it. We see preachers become famous and lose sight of their calling, if they were ever called at all. Their ministry becomes about themselves rather than turning hearts to the Lord. John the Baptist, however, remained faithful to his calling and continued to point people to Christ.

John preached repentance to prepare the way for the Messiah. The true Gospel is not "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." The Gospel is the message of John the Baptist and of Jesus Christ: "Repent for the kingdom [judgment] of God is at hand." [Mat 3:2; 4:17].
John 1:35-51 How Christ Chose The First Five Disciples

A QUICK SUMMARY OF THE FIRST FIVE CHOSEN

1. The Apostle John and Andrew disciples of John the Baptist. When the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God." John and Andrew followed Christ (v35-37).

2. Andrew was the brother of Simon. He brought Simon to Jesus, who renamed him Peter (v40-42).

3. The next day, Jesus found Philip and said, "Follow Me" (v43).

4. Philip was from the same town as Andrew and Peter. He found Nathaniel and brought him to Christ (v44-48).

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. [v35-37].

Proclaiming the Messiah was completely in character with the nature of John the Baptist. For we read in the account of Luke, when Mary was with child and she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, the mother of John, he jumped in the womb (Luk 1:41). Even as a six-month unborn child he recognized and celebrated a visit from the Lord.

Two days in a row, Jesus was walking near John the Baptist and both times John's response was, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" [v29,36]

This time his reward for declaring the truth about the Son of God was to lose two of his disciples as they left to follow the Messiah. John the Baptist declared Jesus was the Lamb of God. The Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary explains the second
declaration by John was a hint to his disciples to follow Christ. Andrew and John left John the Baptist to follow Jesus.

We know John was one of the two because had it been another, John would have mentioned him by name. Whenever the Apostle John speaks specifically about someone, but does not name them, the person is himself.

Jesus asked John and Andrew what they were seeking. They called Him Rabbi, or Teacher and asked Him where He stayed (v38). To ask someone where they stayed was a request for audience; an appeal to talk with them.

Jesus accepted their entreaty, "Come, and you will see." [v39]. Because of the late hour (the tenth hour by Jewish time is 4pm), they stayed the rest of the day. They stayed, talking and listening.

O taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! [Psa 34:18]

They called Him "Rabbi" and wanted to spend time with Him learning of Him and from Him. Contrast this with the modern American gospel: We want to get saved and integrate our Savior into our lifestyle; fitting Him in around our work and entertainment. After all, He is our best friend, as the casual expression goes. Let us examine our lives and see if we truly desire to spend time with Him; learning from Him and learning of Him. This is the example of the disciples in the Gospel of John.

Andrew ran off and found his brother, Simon. He declared, "We have found the Messiah." [v42]. And he brought his brother to Jesus. When Simon arrived, Christ changed his name to Cephas, or Peter. Cephas is the Aramaic word for stone and Peter (Petros) is the Greek word for small rock. Simon means "he has heard." Simon Peter acted on what he heard and he became a rock.

**FOLLOW ME**

He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow me." . . .Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law
and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth."
[v43b,45].

Jesus went up to Galilee and found Philip. Besides saying, "Follow Me" [v44], we have no account of what else Jesus revealed to Philip. But it was enough to impress him. He went to find Nathanael and declared he had found the Messiah.

Philip did not keep this discovery to himself. If we are convinced Jesus is the Messiah, it should move us to seek out others to follow Him.

The synoptic Gospels only record Philip as one of the twelve; they say nothing of him. The Apostle John, however, records four interactions between Philip and Christ:

1) When Christ sought out Philip (1:43f);
2) When Christ asked Philip where they would get the food for the five thousand (6:5f);
3) When Philip lobbied Christ on behalf of the men from Bethsaida (12:21f); and
4) When Philip asked Christ to show them the Father (14:8f).

Philip's declaration to Nathanael that Jesus was the Messiah of whom Moses and the prophets wrote is consistent with what Christ revealed of Himself with the two on the road to Emmaus. "Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." [Luk 24:27].

Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." [v46].

Nathanael was hesitant to accept Philip's claim at face value. He must have remembered the prophecies that Christ would come out of Bethlehem (Mic 5:2; cf Mat 2:5-6). Details mattered to Nathanael, but apparently he was not familiar with Isaiah's prophecy the region of Galilee would be glorified by the presence of the Messiah (Isa 9:1-2). The Pharisees missed this, as well (7:45-52).
By the conversation of Philip, we can assume he and Nathanael had been looking for the Messiah. However, Nathanael was not looking for a bandwagon. He was not one to rush off to every "sighting" of a messiah, he was looking for the truth.

How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit! [Psa 32:2].

When Christ described Nathanael as a man without deceit (v47), he wanted to know how Christ knew. He may have been wondering if this was mere flattery or had his reputation got around? But Christ told him He saw him under the fig tree before Philip came to talk to him. Christ said this to demonstrate to Nathanael He knew all things.

Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel!" [v49].

Nathanael declared Christ's authority:

1) Son of God is Christ's personhood and King of Israel is His position (JFB).

2) By declaring Christ is the Son of God, he professed Him to be the Messiah (11:27).

3) By declaring Christ is the King of Israel, he professed the LORD, God Himself, had come down to them to dwell in their midst (Zep 3:15-17; Zec 9:9; cf 12:12f).

4) By calling Christ "Rabbi," he submitted himself under Christ's teaching. He declared he wanted to be taught by Christ.

Daniel prophesied through a vision the Son of Man would be given dominion, glory and a kingdom; all peoples, nations and languages would serve Him; His dominion will be an everlasting dominion which shall never pass away (Dan 7:14). The Son of Man came first as the Messiah to die for His people, but He will come again as the King of kings to rule over all.

Many want to reduce His authority by claiming Christ does not now reign. The truth of the matter is Christ conquered death and defeated all authority and power (Col 2:15); He was given all authority and
power (Mat 28:18) and He sits at the right hand of the Father (Heb 8:1, 12:2). All things are subject to the Son (1Co 15:25-27; Eph 1:22). The truth is, He reigns now from on high.

It is blasphemy to disclaim Christ's authority, as if this is reserved for some future event. Though His kingdom or millennial reign is not now established on earth, He reigns on high and all people, tribes and nations are obligated to worship Him and keep His commands (Act 17:30-31).

Jesus' answer to Nathanael's praise was he would see greater things than this. He would see heaven opened "and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." [v51]. This is a direct reference to Jacob's vision of the ladder in Genesis chapter twenty-eight. While Christ was upon the earth, all of heaven was attending to His needs. His business and the communication between the Father and the Son was revealed to the disciples.

CALLING DISCIPLES FROM A HARDENED WORLD

Philip was from the town of Bethsaida (v44), which is on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was the town of Andrew and Peter, however, by the account of Matthew, in chapter eight, it appears Peter may have moved on to nearby Capernaum.

According to 21:2, Nathanael's home town was Cana in Galilee. So, here we have four believers living in or previously from the area around Bethsaida.

Matthew recorded in his gospel, Bethsaida was hardened against the witness of the Lord (Mat 11:21; cf Luk 10:13), but Christ healed a blind man from the town (Mar 8:22f) and He called four disciples. Even though He condemned the town, He had a remnant within it.

There was a time Elijah was depressed because of the hardness of the nation of Israel. He complained to the Lord he was the only one left, but God assured him He had reserved seven thousand who revered Him and did not bow the knee to Baal (1Ki 19:9-18). So too, though Christ rejected Bethsaida, He was compassionate to a blind man who believed. Though the whole world refuse to believe in
Him, God retained a remnant and from Bethsaida, called out four disciples.

For out of Jerusalem will go forth a remnant, and out of Mount Zion survivors. The zeal of the LORD will perform this. [2Ki 19:31].

Now in that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. [Isa 10:20; cf 37:31-32; Jer 23:3].

AFTER THESE THINGS I WILL RETURN, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT, SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME. [Act 15:16-17].


In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice. [Rom 11:5].

SON OF MAN IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

1) 1:51 Christ declared the disciples would see the angels attending to the Son of Man.

2) 3:13 The Son of Man has been in heaven and has come down from heaven.

3) 3:14 The Son of Man will be lifted up on a cross just as Moses lifted the serpent in the wilderness.

4) 5:27 The Son of Man has been given authority from the Father to execute judgment.
5) 6:27 The Father has set His seal on the Son of Man and He will give you the food worth laboring for.
6) 6:53 You have no life without the flesh and blood of the Son of Man.
7) 6:62 The Son of Man will ascend to where He was before, demonstrating His authority to say the things He said.
8) 8:28 When the Son of Man is lifted to the cross you will know He spoke on His Father's authority.
9) 9:35 Jesus asked the man born blind after demonstrating before the Pharisees he believed Christ came from God, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"
10) 12:23 The hour has come to glorify the Son of Man (death and resurrection).
11) 12:34 The crowd asks how the Son of Man could suffer death and who is He.
12) 13:31 Speaking of His death and resurrection, He said the Son of Man will be glorified and the Father through Him.

AD HOC OUTLINE JOHN 1:31-2:1

1) Christ was baptized;
2) The next day: Andrew, John and Peter follow Jesus;
3) The next day: Philip and Nathaniel follow Jesus; and
4) The third day: Jesus' first public miracle (coming up. . .).

IN CLOSING

The day after John the Baptist baptized Jesus, Christ passed by again and John declared Him to be the Lamb of God. The Apostle John and Andrew heard him and followed Christ.

They did not follow Him for entertainment or novelty; they wanted to know more about Him and learn from Him. They called Him, "Rabbi."
Andrew brought his brother, Simon, whom Jesus renamed Peter. After Christ called Philip, he brought Nathaniel.

Do we, like the disciples, want to know more about Christ and do we spend time with Him to learn of Him?

If we are convinced Christ is the Messiah, do we tell others and bring them to meet Christ?
John 2:1-12 The Third Day And The First Miracle

Previously, John described the glory of Christ's appearing and dwelling among men. He wrote of the witness of John the Baptist and the calling of Christ's first five disciples. Of these chosen, Christ told Nathaniel he would see greater miracles and the story is about to begin.

The first twelve verses of the second chapter of John begin and end with a picture of Christ's humanity.

1) It begins with Christ, His disciples and His mother at a wedding. There is much work to do.

2) It ends with Christ, His disciples and His mother getting away for refreshment; taking a vacation, relaxing on the beach.

ON THE THIRD DAY

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it." [v1-5].

This is the third day after Jesus was baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist. The Apostle John specifically counted out five days, beginning with the interview of John the Baptist. Here is the countdown of the days:

1) 1:19-28 John the Baptist was interviewed by the Levites.

2) 1:29-34 "The next day," Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist.

3) 1:35-42 "The next day" (day one after the baptism), Jesus called His first disciples (John, Andrew & Simon Peter).
4) 1:43-51 "The next day" (day two after the baptism), Jesus called Philip and Nathaniel.

5) 2:1-5 "The third day day" (day three after the baptism) Jesus and His five disciples were at the wedding in Cana.

Though John did not record the details of Christ's baptism, he did record the Father and the Holy Spirit were there giving their approval (1:32-34), as do the synoptics (Mat 3:13-17; Mar 1:9-11; Luk 3:21-22).

The synoptic gospels place Jesus in the wilderness after His Baptism (Mat 4:1; Mar 1:12; Luk 4:1). The Book of Mark uses the word "immediately." However, it is likely the chronology of the synoptics are not precise, even "immediately," as Mark was writing from conversations he had with Peter. John, on the other hand, is marking out the days as if to make the timetable clear, as the synoptics had already been written. John clarified, this is the fourth day since the Levites and priests questioned John the Baptist and it is the third day since Jesus met John the Baptist and was baptized at the Jordan River.

It was three days from the baptism of Christ to His first public miracle.

The third day is a significant phrase. Christ rose from the dead on the third day (Act 10:40; 1Co 15:4). Jesus foretold His resurrection to His disciples, saying He would be raised the third day (Mat 16:21, 17:22-23, 20:17; Luk 9:22, 18:33, 24:6-7). When Abraham was traveling to Mount Moriah to sacrifice his son, Isaac, it was a three day journey (Gen 22:4) and this event was a type of the crucifixion of Christ. There are Scriptures which mention the third day in relation to sacrifices (Lev 7:17-18, 19:6-7). It would be interesting to further study the third day in Scriptures.

THE WEDDING AT CANA

They were at a wedding. The five disciples had been with Jesus one or two days. The fact Mary, Jesus and His disciples are together at this wedding indicates the wedding must have been for a relative or a family friend. Mary instructed the help (v5); she was likely
organizing or helping with the management of the wedding. John records "Mary was there," but makes note Jesus and His disciples were "also invited." This may indicate Mary was an organizational part of the wedding.

Cana is to the West of the Sea of Galilee; North of Nazareth.

Interesting fact: Just the day before, Christ called Nathaniel and this wedding was in Nathaniel's home town (21:2). When Christ called John, Andrew and Peter, He was South of Nazareth, His home town. The next day, He traveled North to Galilee (1:43). He called Philip and Nathaniel on His way to Cana in Galilee. So, it appears Christ was on His way to this wedding at Cana when He called His first five disciples.

At the wedding, they ran out of wine. To this point, there is no mention in Scripture of Jesus performing any miracles. John said this was the first of His signs (v11). However, this did not deter His mother. She knew He could do something about this problem, so she complained to Him. Several commentaries suggest Mary was hinting to her son this was a good time to begin His ministry. This could be the reason Jesus' answer was, "Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come."

1) Woman: this address is neither disrespectful, but not endearing. This is the same term Jesus used to address His mother from the cross, in 19:26.

2) What to us: a rebuke for interfering between Him and the Father. In 5:19, He said He only does what He sees His Father doing.

3) Hour not come: God alone would determine when His ministry would begin. See 17:1 regarding the hour had come at the end of His ministry.

**CHRIST'S HOUR IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

1) 2:4 My hour has not yet come.

2) 7:30 they could not arrest Him because His hour had not yet come.
3) 8:20 they could not arrest Him because His hour had not yet come.

4) 12:23 Jesus told the crowd at the feast, the hour had come for the Son to be glorified by death and resurrection and the Father affirmed this with a voice from Heaven.

5) 12:27 for this purpose Christ came to this hour.

6) 13:1 Jesus knew His hour had come.

7) 17:1 the hour had come to glorify the Son that the Son might glorify the Father.

Except for Mark 14:41, the synoptic gospels do not speak directly to Christ's life as orchestrated by the Father nor His death as predetermined to a certain hour.

Jesus said He only did what He saw the Father doing (5:19, 14:24) and only in the Gospel of John is it emphasized Jesus was sent by the Father and is one with Him (5:23, 5:36-37, 6:44, 6:57, 8:16-18, 8:42, 10:36-38, 12:49, 17:21f, 20:21). The Apostle John made it clear Christ is God and the events of His life were orchestrated, or timed, because God is in full control and nothing happened to Him by chance.

DO WHATEVER HE TELLS YOU

After Jesus rebuked His mother for pushing Him to reveal Himself on her timetable. Her response was to tell the servants to do whatever he tells you. [v5]. This demonstrates:

1) she is rebuked, but not deterred;
2) she leaves the situation in Christ's hands;
3) she turns the servants over to His authority; and
4) she knows something is going to happen.

There were six stone jars available, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. According to verse six, these jars were used for purification (cf Mat 15:1-2; Mar 7:4). Jesus told the servants to fill the jars. The servants filled the jars to the brim (v7). There was no room for Jesus
to add anything else. Then Christ instructed the servants to draw some out and take it to the master of the feast (v8).

In every step, others did His bidding; Christ did not touch a thing. He created the world with the word of His mouth (Gen 1:3-31; Heb 11:3). His first miracle was spoken also, with instructions carried out by man.

The master of the feast tasted the water become wine. He did not know where it came from, but the servants knew (v9). We know two things from this:

1) The water was turned to wine; not a wine substitute.
   a) The master of the feast commended the bridegroom for saving the best wine for the last (v10).
   b) This is reaffirmed in 4:46. The fact we are reminded a few chapters later affirms the water was turned to wine and not some imitation.
   c) The Bible does not say the master thought it was wine; it says the water was turned to wine.

2) If wine is a bad thing, the Lord would not have turned the water into wine.
   a) The Scriptures warn against allowing alcohol to get the best of you (Deu 32:33; Pro 20:1, 23:30-32; Isa 5:22; Eph 5:18).
   b) But the Bible also says wine is a blessing (Deu 7:13; Pro 3:10; Ecc 10:19).
   c) Paul instructed Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach (1Ti 5:23).
   d) Nonetheless, some people choose not to drink and others cannot drink for health reasons or because they are more susceptible to sin. The important thing is we do not use God's blessings nor our freedom in a way that would be a bad example or cause others to sin (Rom 14:20-21). On the other hand, we do not change the interpretation of Scripture to satisfy the sensitivities of others.
The master of the feast commended the bridegroom for saving the best wine for the last. The general practice was to serve the best wine while everyone still had their senses. After a bit of drinking, not necessarily drunk, the senses were dulled and the cheaper wines could be served with little notice the quality had been reduced.

The miracle-working Christ did not do the minimum. Even in this social gathering where poor quality would have gone unnoticed, He presented His best. The Bible tells us God saw everything He had made and it was very good (Gen 1:31). So if we learn a lesson from this first miracle, the lesson is: God is a God of excellence; everything He makes is good. James affirmed this when he wrote every good and perfect gift is from above (Jam 1:17).

THE PURPOSE OF THE FIRST MIRACLE

This was the first of His signs, or miracles.

1) He did it at Cana of Galilee.

2) He manifested His glory.

3) His disciples believed in Him.

This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. [v11].

His disciples believed after one sign. Compare this to 12:37: though He had done so many signs among them, the people still did not believe in Him. Consider the significance of the disciple's belief against the unbelief of the people.

the works that I do in My Father’s name, these testify of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. [10:25b-27].

When they were at the wedding in Cana, Christ's ministry had not yet begun. His first act of His ministry would be to clear out the temple; a bold act, indeed and it could be terrifying for the disciples. They would need to know they were following the Messiah. This miracle seems to be especially designed for them. Except for Mary
and the servants who carried the water, no one else knew a miracle had taken place.

**CHRIST'S HUMANITY IN REFRESH**

After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and His brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days. [v12].

John did not make clear whether this wedding had been one day or a full week, as was common. Nonetheless, Christ had been busy: He was baptized, He chose disciples and He turned the water to wine. His mother helped supervise the wedding event. It was time to refresh.

So, He, His disciples and His mother went to Capernaum, which is at the North end of the Sea of Galilee. They took a vacation to spend a few days at the beach.

Jesus lived in Capernaum for a while, during His Galilean ministry (Mat 4:13; Luk 4:31). He performed many miracles there and condemned the city because the people would not take this to heart (Mat 11:23; Luk 10:15). He condemned several cities but of Capernaum, He spoke of its arrogance and prophesied it would be brought down. This may indicate it was a resort town.

**AD HOC OUTLINE JOHN 2:12-13**

1) Down to Capernaum

2) Up to Jerusalem (coming up. . .)

**IN CLOSING**

This portion of Scripture begins and ends with Christ's humanity. What we learn from this is, it is good to be involved in other people's lives (rejoice with those who rejoice) and it is good to take time to refresh.

We see Mary was a "take control" kind of person, but Christ was careful to respectfully seek His orders from the Father. Everything
has its time because God is active in His creation and bringing about His purposes.

Jesus' miracle was simply to change water into wine. The Bible does not say "wine-like." We don't accomplish any glory to God by toning down any portion Scripture to satisfy human sensitivities.

The Bible tells us wine is good; it is a blessing from God. The Bible also tells not to be drunk on wine or spend our days drinking. If you are sensitive to alcohol; don't drink any. If you have a religious conviction against drinking; don't touch any. But in any case, don't satisfy yourself or others by changing what Scripture says; or, in this case, minimizing the miracle Christ performed.

Jesus' miracle was excellent. The new wine was noticeably better than the first wine served.

This was Jesus' first public miracle. The purpose was to declare His deity to His disciples and they believed in Him.
Christ's View Of Marriage Versus Mans' View

Changing the water into wine at the marriage in Cana was the first recorded miracle and public appearance of Jesus Christ. Many commentaries note how conducting His first public appearance and first miracle at a wedding are nothing short of His endorsement of marriage. The Jamieson, Fausset and Brown commentary, as one of four points, described how Christ's mission of redemption was illustrated in His endorsement of marriage.

As the miracle did not make bad good, but good better, so Christianity only redeems, sanctifies, and ennobles the beneficent, but abused institution of marriage. . . [JFB].

The institution of marriage has been abused since the beginning of time. In Jesus' time, the Pharisees, the leaders of the Jews, endorsed this tradition of abuse. In their defense of divorce to Jesus, they claimed Moses authorized a man to put away his wife. But Christ set them straight, saying Moses allowed it only because of the hardness of their hearts and then He condemned divorce, calling it adultery (Mat 19:3-9; Mar 10:2-12). In both the Gospel accounts, Jesus also reaffirmed marriage is between a man and a woman and that they were put together by God.

One of the straw-man arguments supporting same-sex marriage is the long history of failure within the institution of marriage of the traditional type; as if to say it will not be abused by the same-sex type. Christian's must not fall for this argument; they must be faithful NOT to concede this battlefront because marriage between one man and one woman is given by God as a blessing and it is an institution representative of the relationship between Christ and the Church (Gen 2:24; Eph 5:22-33).

Christ taught that the man and the woman become one flesh, as designed by God (Mat 19:5; Mar 10:7). The apostles reinforced Jesus' teaching, saying the two shall become one flesh and let the marriage bed be undefiled (Eph 5:31; Heb 13:4). The fact of man's fallen nature marring the beauty God has given is no excuse for elevating sin or allowing evil to take the place of God's design.
When I was young, I heard theories such that marriage is a 50/50 proposition; each spouse contributing fifty percent. Later, I heard theories proposing each party give fifty-one percent, then one hundred percent, then one hundred ten percent. Some have talked about how marriage is not for you but is for the one you married. The premise is each spouse should wholly look to their spouse's interest, leaving their own interests behind. These theories were put forward for the purpose of getting peoples' attention; to convince them to keep their marriages together.

Some say love is about the person you love. The more love and joy you give, the more love and joy you receive. These ideas might sound all warm and good, but a closer look reveals very bad theology. These theories express the idea your spouse, the person you love, should become the object of the marriage. They express the idea the reward for your unselfishness will become ultimate happiness for you, which makes this the goal.

How do we answer worldly wisdom? Is our goal, in marriage or any relationship, our own happiness or glory?

The Bible tells us God claims the glory in marriage. In one Scripture, God tells us the purpose of marriage is so He might have Godly offspring (Mal 2:15). There are other examples, such as the Apostle Paul tells us marriage is a type of Christ and the Church (Eph 5:22-33). We are called to treat this relationship as sacred. If the goal is our happiness, we will lose sight of our mission and our relationship with God. The goal for the Christian is to please God in everything we do (Col 3:17).

"the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth. For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the LORD of
hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously." [Mal 2:14b-16].

Does this mean a marriage without children is not blessed by or ordained by God? Not necessarily; some people are unable to have children and, this too, is from God. If you have chosen not to have children, this is between you and God, but you must understand God knows your heart and you do not (Jer 17:9). Nonetheless, in this Scripture, God is talking about the purpose of the institution of marriage. What this Scripture does affirm is:

1) Marriage is for God's glory;
2) Marriage is His idea and His creation;
3) God has blessed the institution of marriage and the union of husband and wife;
4) For these reasons, we are to guard against becoming unfaithful.

So, when you boil all this down, the happiness of our spouse is not the purpose of our marriage. The purpose of our marriage is to give glory to God.

• The reason we stay faithful to our spouse and seek their happiness is to give glory to God.
• The reason we have children and teach them the ways of the Lord is to give glory and pleasure to God.
• The reason we stand boldly for the institution of marriage is to give glory to God.

Using the tools of worldly wisdom, we can set up our spouse to become our idol. If we get off track in this matter, we can be deceived that God is glorified in our quest for ultimate happiness, which some blasphemously teach.

There was a man who fell into this trap, but after struggling to determine the purpose of life amid the seeming vanity of it all, Solomon concluded the end of the matter and the duty of man is to fear God and keep his commandments (Ecc 12:13). We must keep
our focus on glorifying God in our marriage and in every aspect of our life (Col 3:17).

And taking from the example of Christ in the miracle at Cana: everything He does is very good, excellent and perfect. Our duty as God's creation is to imitate Him (Gen 1:26-27). Thus, we should heed the Apostle Paul's exhortation in everything we do to do it all for the glory of God (1Co 10:31). There is no exception: in everything we do, including our marriage, we imitate Christ's excellence for the glory of God.
John 2:13-22 Jesus' Zeal For His Father's Holy Name

After His miracle at the wedding, convincing His new disciples He is the Son of God and refreshing themselves at the beach, Jesus' ministry was about to begin. The first thing He did was clean up His Father's name and reputation.

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father’s house a place of business." His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME." [v13-17].

CHRIST'S MINISTRY BEGAN AND ENDED AT THE PASSOVER

Using the Apostle John's timeline, Christ's first public act of ministry was at the Passover. His ministry began at the Passover, clearing the temple. The end of His ministry ended at the Passover, and this, just after He had cleared the temple again.

The Passover was a celebration of the time God set apart the people of Israel from the people of Egypt. By the blood of the sacrificial lamb, the Israelites were protected from death when the Angel of God passed over. But of the Egyptians, the eldest son died in every household.

It is significant Christ's ministry began and ended at the Passover. The lamb, by whose blood the inhabitants of the home were spared, was a substitutionary sacrifice. It was a type or precursor of the Lamb to come. The Messiah, Jesus Christ, died at the Passover to be
the permanent sacrifice, the final passover Lamb, to spare the lives of those who believe.

Some came to the Passover to worship God. Some came to make a show of religion. While others came to make a profit. Christ's zeal for the holiness of His Father's name, brought forth His anger against those who were defiling the temple and He cleared the temple of commerce.

CLEARING THE TEMPLE

Malachi prophesied Christ would come and clear the temple and would set about disciplining the priests who served there.

And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple. . .who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? . . .He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness. [Mal 3:1b,2a,3b].

While Jesus walked this earth, His greatest rebukes and judgments were against the scribes, the Levites, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They held the office of service between God and man, but they only cared to serve themselves. Therefore, they did not take His discipline well and set about to kill Him.

The prophecy of Malachi speaks of His first and second coming, which can be confused to be one event; which was common among Old Testament prophecies. The end of verse three says Christ will one day accomplish this discipline and the Levites will serve Him and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord (Mal 3:3b). This will be at the Second Coming; so this portion of the prophecy has yet to be accomplished. While Christ was on this earth, the refining began and one day, it will be completed. As a sidenote: this is further evidence God is not done with the nation of Israel.

We are God's temple; corporately as the Church and individually (1Co 3:16; 6:19; Heb 3:6). Peter wrote judgment begins at the house of God (1Pe 4:17). God seeks to clear His temple of anything which
does not reflect His glory. The sufferings and persecutions God brings into our lives are meant to sanctify our walk; to make us more like Christ; to clear our lives of anything which does not reflect His glory (cf 15:1-6, Rom 8:29). God is jealous of His glory.

For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; for how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another. [Isa 48:11].

In this situation at the temple, God's glory was being marred by the wholesale business enterprises being conducted in His house of worship. The purpose of the temple was for worship; it was a holy place.

To be sure, this enterprise offered a needed service. The animals were supplied for a convenience so the people did not have to travel to Jerusalem with the burden of herding their animal sacrifices. The money-changers were there for converting the common Roman coins into Jewish money which was required by Old Testament Law (Exo 30:13, 38:26; cf Mat 17:24-27).

The problem was they were conducting business in the temple courts. The merchants who exercised their trade within the temple had the sanction of the priests; they had the prime location. This put their businesses at a great advantage. However, this business conducted within the church was a distraction from the worship of God.

Many people go to church to network their business. This is a sin much like what the businessmen were doing when Jesus chased them out. The purpose of church is to worship God (4:23; Psa 34:3), encourage believers (Eph 4:15-16; Heb 10:24-25) and minister the Gospel to the lost (Mat 28:19-20; Luk 24:47). We corrupt the Gospel when we use the church to seek personal gain or personal glory. Do your business outside the church walls. The purpose of the church is to exalt and glorify God.

Is it not written, "MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS"? But you have made it a ROBBERS’ DEN. [Mar 11:17].
The whip Jesus used could have been fabricated from rushes and ropes used for bedding and tying the oxen and sheep. So, materials were close at hand. But, as Hugo Grotius noted, it was not the whip that drove out the sellers. "Not by this slender whip, but by divine majesty was the ejection accomplished, the whip being, but a sign of the scourge of divine anger." [JFB citing Hugo Grotius (1583-1645)].

When Christ comes again to reign, there will be no traders in the temple. "And the cooking pots in the LORD’S house will be like the bowls before the altar. Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the LORD of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them. And there will no longer be a [merchant] in the house of the LORD of hosts in that day." [Zec 14:20b-21]

ZEAL FOR HIS FATHER’S HOUSE

His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME." [v17]. When Christ Jesus was twelve years old, He went with His parents to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. When the feast was over, He stayed behind, but His parents did not know this. When they discovered He was not in the group returning home, His parents returned to Jerusalem to look for Him.

After three days they found Him in the temple, listening to the teachers and asking them questions. Everyone was amazed at His understanding, but His parents wanted an explanation for His actions. Jesus replied, "Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s house?" [Luk 2:49b].

The author of the Book of Hebrews wrote, "Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant. . .but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house" [Heb 3:5a,6a]. This explains His zeal: as a Son, He had a vested interest in His Father's house.

Christ Jesus is the Son of God. When He was on the earth, His love was for the house of His Father. The disciples remembered it was written, "Zeal for Your house has consumed Me." The rest of the
verse is, "and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on Me." [Psa 69:9].

Among the things the incarnate Christ accomplished was to reveal the Father and defend His honor, if you will. After driving out the traders, the contempt the Jews had shown toward God the Father fell upon the Son and they sought to kill Him. He bore the reproaches of those who did not obey God.

The Jews professed a high regard for the Father, but it was they who treated the temple with contempt by trading for profit in God's house; the place of worship. They brought God down to their own level, treating His honor with contempt. Isaiah said they honored God with their lips while their hearts were far from Him (Isa 29:13).

Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on My altar! . . . For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations. [Mal 1:10a,11a].

Christ's zeal was for the worship and honor of the Father. Do we hold God in high regard? Do we have an attitude of worship in the house of God or do we seek our own glory . . . and maybe a little business?

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE TEMPLE

The temple of Solomon was built on the top of Mount Moriah (2Ch 3:1). This is where God provided the substitute ram for Abraham's sacrifice, in place of his son, Isaac (Gen 22:1-19).

When Nebuchadnezzar defeated Jerusalem and carried away the citizens as captive, he destroyed this temple (2Ki 25; 2Ch 36). Four hundred years before the Jews would return to Jerusalem, Isaiah prophesied by name it would be King Cyrus who would allow a remnant to return and rebuild the temple (Isa 44:28, 45:1; Ezra 1; cf 2Ch 36:22). The rebuilt temple was not magnificent like the one built by Solomon, but the people rejoiced to have a temple again (Ezr 3:12).
This was the temple where the Jews were worshipping when Herod became king in Jerusalem. Herod was a builder of grand buildings and it was his desire to rebuild the temple and make it glorious. He convinced the Jews it would be a glorious building and rebuilt the temple with their permission. The approximate dates of construction were 19BC to 27AD. According to some historians, it was not complete when Christ was teaching in it. In this coming passage, the claim of the Jews was it took forty-six years to build the temple, but it was likely still under construction.

Regardless the duration of construction, the temple was a relatively new structure when Christ was on the earth. And it was an impressive structure which explains why the disciples marveled at its construction (Mat 24:1; Mar 13:1; cf Luk 21:5).

The temple in Jerusalem was central to the people of Israel for worship. Even those who lived in other towns would travel to Jerusalem for the feasts (cf Lev 23).

The purpose of the temple was to direct man toward God and provide a place of worship, but the temple became the idol or the object of worship; so much so that men would swear by it, or invoke the temple in their vows (Mat 23:16-21). Professing faith in God, they profaned Him in the temple.

DESTROY THIS TEMPLE

The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body. So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken. [v18-22].

The Apostle John commented twice in this portion of Scripture, verses 13 to 22, "the disciples remembered." This whole episode at
the temple may have been a very fearful adventure. They believed the Messiah was going to set up His rule in Jerusalem. But, here they are with Christ, confronting the very authorities they believed would serve the Messiah, but the authorities challenged and reproached Him. After Christ died and rose again, all these things became more clear, as the disciples remembered.

Beginning with Moses confronting Pharaoh and up through the prophets of the Old Testament, God gave signs to His mouthpieces to prove their authority was from Him. After Jesus was successful in expelling the traders from the temple, the Jews wanted a sign or a miracle as proof of His authority (4:48; 6:30). However, no proof would satisfy, because man prefers preconceived ideas or bias rather than solid evidence from God. The Apostle John commented in another passage how, after Christ had done many marvelous signs in their presence, they still would not believe (12:37).

The Jews had the authority to arrest Jesus, but He cleared the temple and they were powerless to stop Him. All they could do was question His authority. Christ's answer to this request for authority was, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." [v19]. They did not understand why they were powerless against Him. Had they fully understood to whom they were speaking, they would have been more afraid than they were. Rather than let their fear get the best of them, they scoffed.

Here we see Christ used His first act of ministry to proclaim His coming death and resurrection and He foretold who would kill Him. John explained in his commentary in verses 21 and 22, when Christ said He would raise up this temple, He was speaking of His body and His authority to rise from the dead.

At another time, Christ explained He laid His life down of His own accord and He had the authority to raise it up again (10:18). What greater miracle could Christ give to demonstrate His authority than to rise from the dead?

Missing the point of the three days, during the trial and crucifixion of Christ, the Jews used His claim to rebuild the temple against Him, ignorant of what was about to happen (Mat 26:61, 27:40; Mar 14:58,
15:29). They gave no thought to the significance of three days in the Old Testament and no thought to the sign of Jonah (Jon 1:17).

**CHRIST'S MINISTRY BEGAN AND ENDED WITH CLEARING THE TEMPLE**

The first time Jesus cleared the temple was soon after His first miracle of turning the water into wine at the wedding in Cana. He was at the temple in Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. The last time He cleared the temple was just after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. This was also during the feast of Passover and is recorded in Matthew 21:1-13. Soon after this last purging, He was arrested and crucified. Essentially, Christ began and ended His ministry clearing the temple, honoring His Father.

God desires holiness and cannot tolerate sin. The temple was God's representative dwelling on earth. Rightly so that Christ would have a zeal for God's temple and desire it to be holy. He made the temple holy in preparation for His ministry and, later, He made it holy in preparation for His sacrifice.

Christ sanctified the temple by clearing out sinners who were defaming God. So, too, He takes a sinner and sanctifies him. He drives out the sin and corruption in a believer's life. He sets him apart from the world and makes him holy.

It is the Holy Spirit who makes us born again so we can receive Christ (3:3-8). When we receive Christ, He makes us a new creation (2Co 5:17). The Father desires to conform us to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29). This is why He disciplines us (Heb 12:3-11). So, just as the temple was set apart and declared holy, a child of God is set apart and declared holy. What belongs to God is holy.

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." [1Pe 1:14-16].
IN CLOSING

The Jews came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Jesus went up to celebrate with them. However, when He came to the temple, He found a large commotion and distraction from the worship as people were buying and selling in the temple.

He made a whip and drove the sellers and the cattle out of the temple. He overturned the tables of the money changers.

Zeal for the holiness of His Father's house had consumed Him as prophesied in Scripture. His disciples remembered this.

The Jews wanted to know by what authority Christ had done this. This was foolish, in that, they were the officials of the temple, yet Christ had just driven their vendors out!

Jesus used this opportunity, at the start of His ministry, to prophecy of His death and resurrection; the reason He was there. When He rose from the grave, His disciples remembered He said this.

God is just and righteous; He desires holiness. This desire for holiness was demonstrated in clearing His temple and it is demonstrated in sanctifying those who are His. He drives out sin and corruption, so that what is His will be holy.

We must be careful not to defame God's house by conducting business at church. We come to church to worship God, not to give glory nor advantage to ourselves.
Many are the professing Christians, they know the plan of salvation according to the modern American gospel, they may even appear to love the people in their church, but few believe unto salvation.

Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man. [v23-24].

MANY BELIEVED

In this passage, the Apostle John wrote many believed in Christ when they saw the signs He was doing (v23). However, Christ's reluctance to rely upon them indicates they were not truly saved. In chapter six and eight, Jesus will tell the crowds of believers, they are not saved.

Mere belief does not bring salvation. Believing Jesus came to earth and that He died for mans' sin is not a saving faith. A profession of faith in Christ does not confirm salvation.

The Apostle James wrote the demons believe and tremble (Jam 2:19). The Gospels record demons declaring Jesus is the Son of God (Mat 8:29; Mar 1:24, 5:7; Luk 4:34). Demons cannot be saved, yet they know without a doubt Jesus is the Son of God. Therefore, merely knowing the facts cannot equate with a saving belief.

These people saw the signs and miracles and they believed He was the Messiah. Today, many people read the Bible, they hear sermons, and they believe Jesus Christ was the Messiah. They believe He came to earth, they believe He died for our sins and they believe He rose again. They believe all this to be true, but they are not saved.

There is more to being saved than tipping your hat toward God or stating a belief. Even the mere profession "Jesus is my Lord and
"Savior" does not make it so. Many claim Jesus is Lord, but continue on in their sin; they do not live as if they are slaves to Christ, as if they take their instructions from Him. If we cling to knowledge and professions, but bear no fruit, we are not saved.

The Apostle John wrote Christ did not rely upon their profession of faith because He knew what was in their hearts (v24-25). In another passage, Christ said he could not accept the praise of man because He knew man.

I do not receive glory from men; but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. [5:41-42].

God knows our hearts. He knows every heart; just as this passage said He did not entrust Himself to them because He knew them (v24). If we claim to know our hearts, we deceive ourselves; for the Bible tells us our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked, corrupt and incurable. We cannot know what is in it, except to know we lie to ourselves and our hearts are not trustworthy.

The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds. [Jer 17:9-10].

Many make their profession based upon how they think they feel. They are deceived by their hearts. How we feel about God or how we feel about our faith cannot save us. Our salvation rests upon our faith in what God has done for us through His Son, Jesus Christ; this, alone (Eph 2:8-9).

Here are some examples of Christ separating professing believers from true believers:

- 5:39-40 Christ challenged the Jews, saying they search the Scripture thinking in them they find life. These were men who studied the Scriptures. Ironically, they refused to receive the truth of Christ from the Scriptures. Many who study the Scriptures are not saved. We need to be in the
Word to learn of Christ, but merely being in the Word is no assurance of salvation.

- 5:44 The Jews claimed to serve God. Jesus said they could not believe the truth because they were seeking the praise of their peers rather than God's glory.
- 6:26 Christ claimed the crowd of believers were following Him because He had given them food. They were not looking to follow Christ; they were looking for physical satisfaction; they were looking to add Christ to their lives.
- 6:64 When Christ said He was the Bread of Life, many who believed in Him had a difficult time accepting what He said. But Jesus knew from the start those who would not believe.
- 8:31-59 When Christ was speaking to His believers about truth, they had a difficult time accepting the truth. In the end, the believers accused Him of having a demon and Christ accused them of serving their father, the devil.
- 10:26-27 Jesus told skeptic Jews they could not believe because they were not of His sheep. His sheep hear His voice and they follow Him.

Do you believe? Christ knows what is in man and He knows what is in you. To know if we are saved, we must test ourselves; not according to what we think, what we profess or how we feel, but we must test ourselves according to the Scriptures.

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test? [2Co 13:5].

**NIGHT SCHOOL FOR NICODEMUS**

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no
one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." [3:1-2]

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews (v1) and a teacher (v10); he was a member of the Sanhedrin (7:50). People called him "Rabbi." In his meeting with Christ, he called Jesus "Rabbi." He may have recognized Jesus to be a teacher or he may have used the term as flattery to gain audience with Christ.

Nicodemus is spoken of three times in the Gospel of John.

1) The first time, in this chapter, having a conversation with Jesus;

2) the second time, he brought up a question of law for those who were plotting Christ's arrest (7:50); and

3) the third time, he collected the body of Jesus and prepared it for burial (19:39).

In this instance, he came to Jesus by night (v2). Here is how we find Nicodemus: he may have believed Christ had come from God and may have wanted confirmation of this. However, it appears he was afraid his association might become known and cost him his position of authority. So he visited at night.

As the Apostle John later wrote, "Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God." [12:42-43]. Nicodemus was among these of whom John wrote.

Something to think about: Is our quest for Christ pursued in secret, as Nicodemus' was? or is it open and notorious? We cannot keep our faith secret and believe we are saved.

It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. [Psa 118:8].

How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God? [5:44].
Why did he come to meet Jesus?

1) Was it to ask Him, like the rich young ruler, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" [Mat 19:16].

2) Or was he concerned what Jesus did and said when He cleared the temple? Was he concerned how this looked to others?

3) Or did he simply want clarification of Christ's commission from God? Did he want to confirm Christ truly was the Prophet of Deuteronomy 18:15?

His purpose may have been a combination of all three reasons.

Nicodemus began the conversation, "we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." [v2].

1) "We know. . . " Meaning he is not alone in this analysis. There were other Pharisees who considered Christ had come from God.

2) "… You are a teacher come from God." He may have been looking for Christ's confirmation of this.

3) "… for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." He knew Christ was from God, but he may not have believed Christ was the Messiah.

He commended Christ for having won the favor of himself and many of the Jewish leaders. They believed Christ was a teacher come from God. This was the direction he intended the conversation to go. Just like the crowd who believed, Nicodemus hedged his belief. Though he showered Christ with praise, Jesus did not commit Himself to Nicodemus, just as Jesus did not trust the crowd in chapter two.

Jesus gave an unexpected response to Nicodemus' flowery introduction. Just as Christ often warned the crowd of believers they were not saved, He went directly to what Nicodemus needed most. He said a man must be born again to enter the kingdom of God. In other words, He warned Nicodemus, he was not saved.
YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." [v3].

Jesus' response to Nicodemus was straight-forward and struck at Nicodemus' need: He was a religious man, but he was not saved. He studied the Scriptures and he was a faithful, practicing Jew and one whom was satisfied with his own righteousness. Jesus told him, he was not saved; he needed to be born again.

Like Nicodemus there are many in search of religion and learning; and they may be very successful at it and may even believe they have found eternal life, but they are not following Christ and they are not saved.

Christ prefaced His answer with "Truly, truly" meaning "you need to pay close attention to this. Three times Christ used "Truly, truly" (or "Verily, verily") while talking with Nicodemus:

1) "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." [v3].

2) "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." [v5].

3) "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony." [v11]

Nicodemus had no idea what this meant, to be born again. He was offended at this because he studied the Scriptures, he practiced the religion and obeyed all the rules. He was satisfied with his own righteousness, but Jesus said he needed something else; something out of his control. He may also have been offended, in that, he had opened the conversation by commending Jesus, but Jesus did not commend his good efforts at all. Instead, Jesus said he must be born again; this need to be born again was offensive to him.

Being born again is a new birth. It is not a physical birth; it is a spiritual birth. It is God's doing. Just as our being born into this world is God's doing, so too, being born again spiritually is God's
doing. In the first chapter of John we read we receive this by the will of God rather than by our own will.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. [1:12-13].

The saved, the born again, are chosen by God. The Apostle Paul wrote God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world and He chose us according to His purposes (Eph 1:4-11). The psalmist wrote:

> How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You to dwell in Your courts. [Psa 65:4a].

Jesus said no one comes to Him unless the Father draws him (6:44). The Apostle Paul wrote we are saved by grace through faith; it is the gift of God and not accomplished by anything we do, lest any man should boast (Eph 2:8-9). If we are born again, this is God's doing.

**IN CLOSING**

Many believed in Christ when they saw the signs He was doing, but they were not saved. There are several other Scriptures which speak about people believing in Christ, but not being saved.

This gives us something to think about. Many people today believe they are saved but they are not. Jesus warned about this in Matthew chapter seven. "Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord.’" [Mat 7:21]. The Apostle Paul warned us to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith (2Co 13:5).

Salvation is not head knowledge nor is it received by attesting to facts, nor by professing Christ is Lord. Demons have seen God and they believe, they declare His authority, but they are not saved.

Jesus said we must be born again. To be born again is the work of God. We receive Christ, but being born again is not accomplished by anything we do. We cannot even help God in this matter (6:63).
Furthermore, our best works are not righteous and cannot save us (Isa 64:6).

To be born again means we are a new creation and this is the work of God. The fruit of following Christ will be to leave the life of sin and walk in newness of life. If we stay in our sin, we are not saved.

If you are depending upon your obedience to the Law and the righteous things you do to be saved, or even assist in your salvation, you are not born again.

To be born again means God has regenerated you. He has taken away your desire to sin and please the world and you are walking in newness of life.
Nicodemus began the conversation with affirmation and praise to Christ. Christ did not respond in kind, but got right to the root; the need of the man to be saved from sin.

 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. [v3].

This was upsetting for Nicodemus. In essence, Jesus told him his whole understanding of salvation was wrong. He told him he was not saved.

NICODEMUS WAS OFFENDED BY JESUS

The idea of being born again, the terminology, was offensive to Nicodemus. If salvation was the work of God and was not dependent upon the works of man, this would contradict what he had spent a lifetime learning, practicing and teaching. He lived by the Law and he viewed salvation as credited to him for his works. So, he responded with this ridiculous question.

 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?" [v4].

Jesus' answer to Nicodemus' sarcasm was to reveal the work of the Holy Spirit and the works by God which cannot be seen. He answered Nicodemus with four points; four clauses which describe the process of regeneration, in verses 5 to 8.

 1) Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. [v5].

 2) That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. [v6].

 3) Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' [v7].
4) The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. [v8].

In the first clause, Jesus said:

unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. [v5b].

The water represents cleansing; the Word of God cleanses. The Spirit of God regenerates; regeneration is cleansing.

You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. [15:3].

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. [Tit 3:5].

Not by works done by us in righteousness. Right there, the Bible tells us if we depend upon our works, we cannot be saved; for we are NOT saved by our works, because our works are as filthy rags (Isa 64:6).

The Jew saw salvation as given to those born of Abraham who followed the Law. They trusted in their works, which could not save them. Christ told Nicodemus, salvation is dependent upon the Spirit and we cannot see His works (3:8).

Nicodemus knew the writings of the prophets and he should have understood what Jesus was telling him, because the Old Testament prophets attested to salvation through the work of the Spirit. The old covenant called man to obedience, but testified salvation was the work of God.

I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned against Me. [Jer 33:8a].

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a
new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. [Eze 36:25-27].

In the second clause, Jesus said:

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. [v6].

The Apostle Paul wrote flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable (1Co 15:50). In other words, the flesh is unclean and cannot produce life.

Who can make the clean out of the unclean? [Job 14:4a].

The life of the flesh and the Holy Spirit are incompatible (Rom 8:6-8). They cannot live together. God hates sin and will not live with it. As Paul explained in Romans chapter seven, the way of the flesh is corrupted by sinful passions which lead to death, but the way of the Spirit is life. The heart of man has to be changed to be born of the Spirit.

Romans chapter eight says the mind of those who live by the flesh is set on the flesh, but those who live by the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit. They have been born again and they no longer seek corruption. They are free from the bondage to decay.

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. [6:63a].

No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. [1Jo 3:9].

In the third clause, Jesus said:

Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' [v7].

Very often, in present-day preaching, this word "must" is misinterpreted. It should be clearly
understood that, in harmony with the entire context, it does not refer to the realm of moral duty, but to that of divine decree. When Jesus says, "You must be born again," He does not mean, "By all means see to it that you are born again." On the contrary, He means, "Something has to happen to you: the Holy Spirit must plant in your hearts the life from above." [WH vol 1, pg 134].

Just as a person can do nothing about his own birth, this new birth, or being born again, is out of a man's control.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. [1:12-13].

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. [6:44a].

according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. [1Pe 1:3b].

Those who believe they can help in their salvation by meeting God half-way or they believe their freewill contributed to their salvation, do not understand. Romans 5:6 tells us Christ died for us when we were still weak or helpless. We could do nothing for ourselves. The Bible is clear, it is God who chooses; it is God who draws; it is God who regenerates; it is God who saves.

When Jesus told His listener not to be amazed, this was a rebuke. For Nicodemus knew the words of Ezekiel, Jeremiah and the other prophets where God promised to soften the hardened heart and plant His Word within His people. This teacher knew the Scriptures and should have understood this. He could not perceive this because his preconceived bias was that salvation was through mans' effort. Jesus told Him to understand it is the work of God.
In the fourth clause, Jesus said:

The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit. [v8].

To be born again is to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit. We are made new; our desire is no longer for this world, but for God's kingdom. The Apostle Paul wrote if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old life is gone; it is replaced by the new (2Co 5:17).

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. [Rom 6:4].

The new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit; we are born again by the will of God, not by the will of man (1:13). He will accomplish His work in mans' lives and we can see the fruit of it.

The great King, immortal, invisible, the Divine person, called the Holy Spirit: it is He that stimulates the soul, or else it would lie dead forever; it is He that makes it tender, or else it would never feel; it is He that imparts power to the Word preached, or else it could never reach further than the ear; it is He who breaks the heart, it is He who makes it whole; He, from first to last, is the great worker of Salvation in us, just as Jesus Christ was the author of Salvation for us. [Charles Spurgeon].

The four clauses or the four-part answer of Christ can be synopsed into one statement: Man cannot be saved by his own efforts, it is solely the work of God.

This was opposite to the teachings of the Jews. Their teachings were based upon a salvation by man's effort. The Pharisees taught man must keep the Law to be saved (Exo 12:48; Neh 10:28; Isa 56:3). They applied the Old Testament Scriptures in error (Mat 23:15).
Having tried to keep the Law, Nicodemus knew he was unable, but his bias would not admit this. Nonetheless, he should have understood when Jesus said this was the work of the Spirit. But the years of works teaching and practicing rule upon rule blinded him to the truth and he was not honest with himself.

Isaiah said the Messiah would become a "a rock to stumble over." [Isa 8:14]. And Paul said the Jews would not receive God's teaching by faith because they pursued salvation based upon works (Rom 9:32-33). Peter wrote of those who reject the living stone, "they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed." [1Pe 2:8].

The truth is hidden from those who do not believe, lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart and repent and God would heal them (12:40; cf Isa 6:10; Mat 13:13-15; Luk 8:10). This is why Jesus called the Jewish leaders the blind leading the blind, because they were not of the Father (Mat 15:13-14); they were not of His sheep (10:26). They believed themselves wise, but they could not see.

**STUMBLING OVER JESUS' TEACHING**

*How can these things be? [v9].*

Nicodemus was still offended. All his life, he had done what he thought was good works; works which secured his salvation. He had done everything according to the letter of the Law. Now, Jesus told him everything he was doing and teaching others to do was wrong. Christ told him he was not saved and he must start over. This was not at all what he came to discuss and this upset him greatly.

Nicodemus knew the Law and the Prophets. As a Pharisee, he had to commit most of this to memory. He deceived himself to believe he kept the Law. He knew God's Word, but did not understand the way of salvation. So, the Messiah rebuked him (v10).

Christ had made several references to what was written by Ezekiel, but they were lost on Nicodemus. When Nicodemus first resisted, Christ's rebuke was "Do not marvel." The second time, Christ's reproach was more severe.
Let's review and compare the four clauses with the writings of the Prophet Ezekiel.

1) unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. [v5].
   a) "I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean." [Eze 36:25a].

2) That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. [v6].
   a) "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you." [Eze 36:26a].

3) Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' [v7].
   a) The story of the Prophet Ezekiel in the Valley of Dry Bones: "Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones, 'Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life. I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin and put breath in you that you may come alive; and you will know that I am the LORD.'" [Eze 37:5-6].

4) The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. [v8].
   a) "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." [Eze 36:27].
   b) "Then He said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they come to life.'"" [Eze 37:9].

Ezekiel prophesied God would bring new birth to His people. Other words of the Law and the Prophets should also have come to Nicodemus' mind. For example, Moses wrote, "the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so
that you may live." [Deu 30:6]. Moses spoke of the turning of a man's heart as the work of God.

Nicodemus and the Jews had their focus on the Law. They did not understand God's promises to make them new; to make them born again. They did not understand the Law revealed mans' sin and the sacrifices were pointing to God's provision of a Redeemer. They considered salvation to be from the works of man rather than the work of God.

Keeping the Law is impossible for man, but the Pharisees had deceived themselves by adding rule upon rule. Rather than repent and seek God, they built a religion based upon a rigid earning of salvation by man's works. And they deluded themselves to believe they kept all these rules.

For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. [Rom 10:3-4].

Nicodemus was likely looking to Christ to seek encouragement or affirmation in his keeping of the Law. When Christ turned everything on its head, explaining how salvation is from above and not from the will of man. The light bulb should have come on. But it is hard for man to unlearn what he has been taught from his early years. When confronted with his lack of understanding, Nicodemus said no more, at least as recorded in John chapter three.

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY

Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. [v11].

In the second verse of this chapter, Nicodemus began the conversation with, "We know," referring to his and his colleague's certainty Christ was a prophet from God. After Jesus confronted Nicodemus with his error, He supported His argument with "We speak. . .We know." He was referring to the Father, the Son and the
Holy Spirit. Mans' knowledge and authority does not hold a candle to God's.

Nicodemus listened to Christ's words as having the authority of a prophet, but he had not asked whether Christ was The Prophet (Deu 18:15). Christ revealed His authority to be one with the Father. Jesus answered the question Nicodemus did not ask: He is the Messiah and He is God.

Though Nicodemus sought Christ's wisdom, by his questions he revealed he was not ready to accept His teaching of salvation. Chapter one of the Gospel of John says He came to His own and His own did not receive Him (1:11). Now, in chapter three, Christ said to Nicodemus, "You do not accept our testimony." [3:11].

If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? [v12].

Up to this point, Jesus had explained the earthly thing: the way of salvation is to be born again. Regeneration is by God's will and by His Spirit. Therefore, it is error to believe man can be saved by obeying the Law.

What are the heavenly things Jesus revealed in this conversation?

1) v13: The Son of God came down from heaven. In times of old, God sent prophets to reveal Himself and call people to worship Him. Moses prophesied God would sent the Prophet or the Messiah and warned man to listen and obey Him (Deu 18:15). For who can proclaim the glories of the eternal God, but the Christ who came down from Heaven.

2) v14-15: The Messiah came to die to redeem those who believe to eternal life.

3) v16: The Messiah would not come just for the Jew, but for the whole world.

4) v17: The Messiah would not come to bring condemnation or judgment upon the nations as was believed by the Jews.

5) v18: Those who believe God sent the Son of God to die for their sins will not be condemned, but those who disbelieve
are condemned already. Or, as John the Baptist said in verse thirty-six, "they remain under God's wrath."

The Pharisees studied the Scriptures, but they held to their own bias rather than seek God. They claimed to seek God, but they had made Him in their own image; an image which favored their bias. Jesus explained to Nicodemus He, the Messiah, did not come to raise up Israel and condemn the world. This was the false belief of the Jew. He came to die for the sins of those who believe.

The modern American gospel has remade God according to the bias of man seeking a loving God, who abolishes all judgment on their behalf. So, in their claim to study the Word, they celebrate promises taken out of context, they cherish the audible voice of Jesus and they make claims of revealed glories from God. These glorious treasures they proclaim celebrate man and contradict the plain meaning of Scripture. They do not understand the earthly things explained in the Word, but cling to the heavenly things they invented. There will be a judgment.

**SO MUST THE SON OF MAN BE LIFTED UP**

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. [v14-15].

The Apostle John recorded two other times Christ referred to His impending death as being lifted up.

1) "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me." [8:28].

2) "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." [12:32].

On the one hand, the term lifted up described the type of death, which was by crucifixion. On the other hand, the term lifted up referred to His death being a public display, as crucifixion always was.
The serpent in the wilderness lifted up by Moses was the bronze snake in Numbers 21:1-9. This description is a picture of how Christ would bring salvation by His death on the cross. Just as those who looked upon the snake were healed, those who look to Christ's work on the cross and believe will be saved.

In the account of the bronze snake, the people of Israel were grumbling against God and Moses in the wilderness. God had just given them a tremendous victory over the King of Arad. Yet, instead of rejoicing, they began to complain, even calling the miraculous food God provided in the desert "worthless food." So God sent fiery snakes among the people and many died.

When they repented, God told Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." [Num 21:8]. Those who looked to the cross were delivered from death. This was a type and a forerunner of the Cross of Christ. Jesus said, "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life." [6:40a].

The snake on the cross had no power to deliver from sin and death. It was a representation or type of Christ, who does have the power to deliver man from sin and death. Here are some similarities between Numbers 21 and John 3:

1) In both cases death threatened as punishment for sin.
2) In both cases it is God Himself who, in His sovereign grace, provided a remedy.
3) In both cases this remedy consisted of something/one lifted up on a cross, in public view.
4) In both cases those who, with a believing heart, look to the one lifted up are saved.

[Numbered points from WH vol 1, pg 138].

Christ was lifted up in public view, but not all who look at Him will be saved. Many will look and refuse to believe. Many will think they believe, but will not follow and obey. These people will reject this salvation. Few will look, believe and obey. So, to restate Christ's
words (v14): "The Son of Man must be lifted up in public view so that those who look and believe may have eternal life."

Christ here says "must"; He must be lifted up. This "must" means the time, the place and the means have been predetermined by God the Father. As Paul wrote "when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son." [Gal 4:4a]. And, "at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." [Rom 5:6].

For verses on God's timing in reference to Christ, see also 2:4; 7:6,8; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23,27; 13:1; 17:1.

Christ came to die for mans' sin and He came at the right time.

WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL BE SAVED

that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. [v15].

After describing the death He would suffer on the cross, Jesus said whoever believes in Him will be saved, for it is in Him we have eternal life. Nicodemus was not saved, for he believed the Jewish tradition and teaching. Regeneration is not the work of man and cannot be accomplished by keeping the Law nor anything we do. Jesus explained to him, there is only one way to be saved: to believe in Christ and the work He did to redeem man.

Leviticus 18:5 says if a person is to keep the Law, they must live by it. But how can man live by the Law? The Apostle James warned if you keep the Law, but fail in one point, you have broken the entire Law (Jam 2:10). This is why the Apostle Paul said no one is justified by the Law (Gal 3:11). Nonetheless, Nicodemus believed he was saved, because he foolishly believed he had kept the Law. The Law cannot regenerate a man; for it measures man by God's standard.

Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. [Rom 3:19-20].
What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law. [Rom 7:7a].

The Apostle Paul wrote the Law and the Prophets pointed to a Redeemer. Mans' inability to keep the Law, should have led Israel to repentance. Rather than repent of their sin, the Jew added man made laws to God's Law and became prideful in their law keeping.

We cannot be saved by following the Law. This is why God sent His Son so He would take on our sin and clothe us in His righteousness. "that whoever believes in Him shall be saved."

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. [2Co 5:21].

IN CLOSING

Nicodemus began the conversation with a complimentary greeting. Jesus returned the greeting by telling him he was not saved. Jesus said unless a person is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Unless one is born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

To be born again is to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit. It is the work of God. Just as you had no part in being born into this world, you have no part in being born again into God's kingdom. It is the work of the Spirit. We don't know how the Spirit works, but we see His fruit as He changes people and draws them to Christ.

Nicodemus was a teacher of the Law. He stumbled over these things because, rather than recognize man was unable to keep the Law and needed to come to God in repentance, the Jews built more laws upon more laws and strived to keep every one of them. They prided themselves in doing so; even though they utterly failed.

Jesus rebuked Nicodemus for not understanding these things. Then He explained He had come down from heaven to bear witness of what He knew and what He had seen with the Father. Just as surely as Christ came down from heaven, He must be lifted up.
To be lifted up described the death He was going to die and it would be in public display. So that, just as Moses lifted up the serpent on the cross in the wilderness for people to look at and be healed, those who look to the cross of Christ will be forgiven and have eternal life.

In verse 15, Jesus, once again told Nicodemus he was not saved. You cannot be saved by anything you do, but whoever believes in Him shall be saved.

Are you trusting in the good things you do to be saved? Or, even to help your salvation? Are you trusting in the decision you made to follow Christ? If you are trusting in anything you do or any help you give, my friend, you are not saved. It is only faith in the work of Christ which saves us.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT: Jesus said about the Spirit, "You hear the sound." When the Holy Spirit indwells in us, we no longer have a "private relationship" between us and God. Jesus said we do not hide the candle under a bushel and we are a city upon a hill. If we are of the Holy Spirit, we are the light of the world (Mat 5:14-16) and our public confession will be Jesus Christ is Lord (Rom 10:9-10). If we think our faith or our salvation is a private matter, if no one can hear the sound of our salvation, we are most likely not saved.

SOMETHING ELSE TO THINK ABOUT: The Pharisees had the appearance of virtue, but they were lost souls. If we believe salvation is of God and not of works, is this reflected in how we encourage others in their walk with Christ?

1. Do we raise children to have a Christian appearance? or do we raise them to be in the Word and follow Christ?

2. Do we teach new Christians rules or morals to live by? do we teach them to do Christian things? or do we teach them to be in the Word and follow Christ?

Like the Pharisees, we can get caught up into thinking it is important we have a Christian appearance, while we neglect to feed our faith by being in the Word.
John 3:16-17 The Context And The Four Common Errors

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. [v16-17].

John 3:16 is America's favorite Bible verse. It is interpreted by most people, even most professing Christians, to mean God loves everyone in the world. But is this what the verse says? To understand the meaning of any Scripture, it is important to understand the context around it.

An examination of the context would begin with "who is talking?" and "to whom is the conversation directed?".

Here is an example of context: in chapter six, verse 40, Jesus said everyone who believes in Him will be saved. The potential seems to be every person in the world.

For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day. [6:40].

This may sound like a call for everyone to be saved, but four verses later, He put a limit upon whom this "everyone" can be. Only those whom the Father draws, can be saved.

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. [6:44].

This is not a contradiction, because in verse 37 of chapter 6, Christ had defined "everyone" as "all the Father gives Me."

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. [6:37].
Keep in mind, in this conversation in chapter six, Christ was not offering salvation to everyone. He did not need to, because all who would be saved will come. In this conversation, He was explaining to the unbelieving believers why they could not be saved.

They could not be saved because the Father had not given them to Him (6:37); the Father had not drawn them (6:44). How do we know the Father had not drawn them? Because they did not look upon the Son and believe in Him (6:40). It is very important, when examining Scripture, to keep the verses in context.

Let us look at some of the errors of interpretation of John 3:16-17. The first common error:

**THE ERROR OF THE JEWS**

So, now we come to the political portion of the conversation. Jesus Christ was talking to Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee; a leader and a teacher of the Jews. In John 3:16-17, Jesus cleared up a political error the Jews held regarding the Messiah.

The Jews believed the Messiah would come to set up His kingdom in Jerusalem and, from there, He would conquer, judge and condemn the nations of the world; and Israel would be exalted.

In the past, God had dealt directly with Israel. Salvation was for the Jew, alone. God had not brought salvation to the world. The Jews assumed this is the way it would always be. So, when Christ said, "For God so loved the world. . . " He was explaining to Nicodemus He had now come to bring salvation to the world. This means the Gentile as well as the Jew can follow God.

**A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, and the glory of Your people Israel. [Luk 2:32; cf Isa 49:6].**

We know Christ was clearing up this error about the political mission of the Messiah because in the next verse, when He said He did not come to condemn the world, He was arguing against the theology proclaiming the Messiah would come to judge the nations and exalt Israel above her oppressors.
Even after Christ died and rose again, even at the ascension of Christ, the disciples had it wrong when they asked, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" [Act 1:6]. The Messiah had to leave this world before the disciples finally understood Christ had not come to set up His kingdom.

Look at the context of these verses. Let's start with verse 14, read through 18, while skipping 16 and 17:

> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life... Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. [v14,15,18].

The Gospel message is here: Christ died on the cross so those who believe will have eternal life; they will not be judged or condemned; those who do not believe are condemned already.

Verses 16 and 17 seem to be a repeat of this message, except verse 17 says the Messiah did not come to judge or condemn. So, why would verse 17 say the Messiah did not come to judge but verse 18 says those who reject Him are judged already. I have heard this explained as Christ does not judge (v17) but the Father does (v18). This is error; for we know from Scripture, Christ is the judge (Act 17:30-31; et al). So which is it? Did the Messiah come to judge or not?

The key to understanding this are the words, in context:

- In verse 18, it is clear Jesus is talking about people; individuals. Whoever believes is saved but whoever disbelieves will be judged. "Whoever does not believe is condemned already." Whoever. People.

- In verse 17, Jesus said the Father did not send Him to judge the world but to save the world. The world which He was not here to judge was the nations. The world He was here to save was His people. Matthew 1:21 says He will save His people from their sins. So, those who disbelieve are judged already.
but the Messiah did not come to judge the world, that is, the nations.

Jesus told Nicodemus the message of salvation, that it is through faith in the One who died for our sins; and those who will not believe, such as the Jews who think they keep the Law, will be condemned.

So, how do verses 16 and 17 fit, when, at first read, they appear to be a redundancy and partial contradiction? The Jews believed salvation was exclusively for the Jews and they held to a false theology the Messiah would come to judge the nations and exalt Israel. Verse 16 and 17 address this political fallacy. Let us look at verses 14 through 18, in sequence:

1. [14] The Messiah had come to die for the sins of man. This was the antitype of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness.

2. [15] Those who look to the One who died on the cross will be saved. Nicodemus and the Jews were wrong: The Law cannot save, nor can man's efforts; salvation is through faith alone in Jesus Christ's work alone.

3. [16] This salvation was no longer for the Jew alone, but for the world. This whole idea of God loving the world was foreign to the Jew. In previous generations, before Christ came to earth to redeem mankind, God had shown His favor exclusively to Israel, His chosen nation. Now, the Messiah had come to save His people from every tribe, nation, language and people. The "whoever" extends to these, the despised Gentiles who were chosen by God.

4. [17] Christ did not come to condemn the nations. The Jews expected the Messiah to rule from Jerusalem and judge or condemn all the nations in the world and exalt Israel. Christ put this wrong interpretation of Scripture to rest. This was a further condemnation upon Nicodemus, a teacher of the Law, for not only had he the wrong view of salvation, he held to a wrong view of what the prophets said about the Messiah.
5. [18] The Messiah had not come to condemn the nations, however, those individuals who do not believe are condemned already. Or as John the Baptist put it in 3:36, those who disobey remain under God's wrath. Underline "already" in verse 18 and "remain" in verse 36.

Up to this point in the conversation, Jesus explained to Nicodemus, a church leader and instructor of the Scriptures, why he is wrong and why he is not saved.

John 3:16 is not a stand-alone verse. It needs to be viewed in context. In this verse, Jesus corrected Jewish error; an error concerning the mission of the Messiah.

While we are in this conversation about errors, the modern American gospel has built many errors around this verse and we are going to discuss a few of these.

The second common error:

**THE MODERN ERROR CHRIST DOES NOT JUDGE**

Christ as judge: Many claim Christ is not a judge and will not judge, based upon John 3:17. This fits the image they have created of Christ, that He is always kind and gentle. They argue if Christ didn't judge, we have no right to judge. However, Scripture does not say this. Looking at what He said in the Gospel of John, we see He came the first time to bring salvation but He will judge on the Last Day.

1) 3:17 Christ said He did not come to condemn the world, but to save;

2) 3:18 Christ said those who do not believe are condemned already;

3) 3:19 Christ said this is the judgment: the light (Christ) has come into the world, but the people loved darkness because their deeds were evil;

4) 5:22 Christ said the Father has given all judgment to the Son (Christ);
5) 5:24 Christ said whoever hears and believes will not come into judgment;

6) 5:27 Christ said the Father gave Him all authority to judge because He is the Son of Man;

7) 5:30 Christ said His judgment is just because He seeks the will of Him who sent Him;

8) 8:15 Christ said He judges no one; but in

9) 8:16 Christ said if He does judge, His judgment is true;

10) 8:50 Christ said He did not seek His own glory, but there is One who does and He is the judge;

11) 12:47 Christ said He did not come to judge the world, but to save; but in

12) 12:48 Christ said the word He has spoken will judge the unbelievers on the Last Day.

The third common error:

THE ERROR OF THE WORTH OF MAN

Some preachers use John 3:16 to proclaim the greatness or the value of man in the eyes of God. They say man is of infinite worth to God. Jesus died because man is so valuable. They preach a man centered gospel; a self-esteem gospel.

They are deceived to believe beings made from dirt, sinful and in rebellion to God, could command God's love. I have heard preachers claim God needs us more than we need Him. This gospel is nothing short of blasphemy.

The modern American gospel says "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." This is not supported by Scripture; in fact, the Bible says otherwise.

It is true God holds a common grace or love for His creation, in that, the rain falls on the just and the unjust (Mat 5:45). But God does not love the world to the extent He would send His Son to die for those who do not believe; He would not die for those who refuse to repent.
God is a righteous judge, and a God who has indignation every day. If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword. [Psa 7:11-12a].

The purpose of Christ's death was to satisfy God's wrath (Rom 3:25; Heb 2:17) and redeem those who are His (Mat 1:21; Luk 1:68). His wrath is never satisfied against those who do not believe (3:36).

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans chapter five, while we were unable to save ourselves, while we were sinners and enemies of God, Christ died for us. But this does not refer to the whole world; this refers to those who have been justified by faith (Rom 5:1). We abuse Scripture when we use verses out of context.

The world and all the people in it are His creation. He made it all. The world holds no value that would draw God to it. He destroyed it once by water and He will destroy it again by fire (2Pe 3:5-7). Everything God does is for His glory. He does not share His glory with man (Isa 42:8). In sending His Son into the world, He demonstrated His greatness; the greatness of His love not the greatness of man's value.

The fact that it took the blood of His sinless Son to redeem man to God, does not reflect upon man's greatness. It reflects upon man's depravity; the greatness of man's sin. In other words, this is how bad man is, that only the blood of the sinless Son of God could satisfy the wrath of a Holy God. Some theologians explain the verse this way: "This is how God showed His love, by sending His Son into the world." The key to understanding John 3:16 is the value of God's love; not the value of the world nor the people in it.

The fourth common error:

**THE ERROR THAT CHRIST DIED FOR EVERYONE**

Consider this: If Jesus Christ came to save the whole world from the wrath of God, then why did John the Baptist say those who disobey Christ REMAIN under God's wrath (v36)? Why did Jesus say they are condemned ALREADY (v18)?

If Christ died for the everyone in the world, then
1) either He failed, because most the people will not believe; or

2) all people are saved through His death and resurrection.

If "God so loved the world" meant the whole world would believe, then God failed. Therefore, the "world" in context must be "whosoever believes in Him." We cannot receive this gift this unless God draws us and Christ said all those given to Him by the Father, will come to Him (6:44,37). So, God did not fail; He cannot fail.

Certainly, the Bible does not teach universal salvation; the idea all men are saved. Even the Jews, in their limited view of redemption, knew not all the physical children of Abraham were saved.

Some will modify this idea of universal salvation with the claim salvation is a free gift, given to all, and man can choose to receive the gift or reject it. In other words, Christ died for the sins of the whole world and, by this, He put this gift of salvation out there, up for grabs, if you will, but only those who believe and accept this gift are saved. And, in the face of competing doctrines, this interpretation can appear to be less controversial, but it is wrong.

This free gift argument used by modern preachers, sees God as offering salvation to all men as a gift, almost pleading with man to receive it. But the fact is God demands repentance.

Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead. [Act 17:30-31].

Receiving Christ is not a simple matter of accepting a gift; it is repenting of our former life and following the Judge of all the earth.

But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Rom 6:22-23].
Christ came to save His people from their sins (Mat 1:21). It is clear in Scripture God does not love evil men (Psa 7:11-12) and there are many Scriptures listing the evil and the men God hates. For example, in 2Peter chapter 3, the Bible says God is not willing any should perish. But in the chapter before this, there is a whole list of people God is willing to condemn. If you read Peter in context, it is clear the people God is not willing should perish are the elect, His chosen.

Look at the first chapter of Ephesians:

- Verse 4: The Father chose us in Christ Jesus before the creation of the world. Jesus said all those chosen by the Father will come to Him. The Father gives them to the Son; they are a gift (6:37).
- Verse 7 and 8: Christ has redeemed us through His blood. He has forgiven our sins and lavished His grace upon us.
- Verse 13 an 14: We are sealed with the Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance.

In this passage, we see the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have a singleness of purpose for the elect. The Father chose us; Christ redeemed us; the Spirit seals us. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are of one mind.

If the Father chose the elect for His Son and the Holy Spirit sealed them for their inheritance, why would Jesus die so unbelievers not chosen would have the opportunity of being saved? Christ did not redeem the whole world. In His prayer to the Father, Christ said He was not praying for the world but for those the Father gave Him (17:9).

So when John 3:16 says "loved the world," either Christ died for everyone's sin and God is looking at the world as forgiven, or there must be some exclusions to the definition of the word "world." The verse must be understood in context. The verse, itself, suggests some exclusions, in that, Christ implied some cannot be saved when He said, "whoever believes." This phrase leaves open some will not believe.
Here are a partial list of verses which also use "all" or "world" along with John 3:16. When studied in context, it becomes clear the words "all" and "world" do not refer to everyone in the world. In most cases, the words refer to those who believe; those who follow Christ.

1) "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" [1:29b].

2) "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." [12:32].

3) "So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men." [Rom 5:18].

4) "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" [Rom 8:32].

5) "and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." [2Co 5:15].

6) "namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them." [2Co 5:19].

7) "who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time." [1Ti 2:6].

8) "For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers." [1Ti 4:10].

9) "so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone." [Heb 2:9b].

10) "and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." [1Jo 2:2].

11) "We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." [1Jo 4:14].
Not to forget, the word "world" is used with several different meanings in the New Testament and even in the Gospel of John. In this gospel, the word is used over fifty times with more than a half dozen different meanings. Therefore, we conclude "the world" in John 3:16 does not mean everyone in the world. It has a limited scope, similar to these verses listed above.

The correct interpretation for John 3:16 is: the Father sent His Son to save people, Jew and Gentile, for His glory; not for any value intrinsic in man. We must look at the verse in context. Christ was talking to a teacher and leader of the Jews. The prevailing view was the Messiah would come to redeem the Jews and condemn the world. Jesus taught him God sent His Son to redeem people from out of all the world, even Gentiles, and did not come to condemn the world at this time. Those who believe, whosoever believes, will have eternal life with God. Whoever does not believe is condemned already.

**IN CLOSING**

Jesus redirected Nicodemus' worldview when He told him God's love and salvation were not limited to the Jew, but encompassed the world. This included Gentiles, whom the Jews believed could not be saved (except under certain conditions).

Furthermore, contrary to what Nicodemus and the Jews believed, Jesus told him the Messiah did not come to judge the nations and establish Israel. But, the judgment the Messiah did bring was upon the individual who does not believe (v18).
The way most people look at John 3:16, it is proof positive, to them, God loves everyone in the world. They see Rom 5:8; Eph 2:4; 2Th 2:16; 1Jo 3:1 and such as backing up this claim of God's love for the unregenerate. But these verses declare God's love exclusively to those who follow Christ. The fact remains, there is no other verse in Scripture which declares God's love for the whole world; everyone in the world.

Anytime a verse appears to be a stand-alone, we must examine it in light of what the rest of Scripture says about this same subject. There are three Scriptures which are key when considering whom Jesus was referring to when He said, "God so loved the world."

As you examine this, keep in mind the angel's promise to Joseph regarding the child within Mary:

> you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. [Mat 1:21b].

**MARK 10:45**

> For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. [Mar 10:45; cf Mat 20:28].

In this verse, Jesus said He came to give His life as a "ransom for many." The first thing to consider in this is the ransom: A ransom is paid to redeem someone who belongs to you. It is neither generic nor does it have a broad application. No one pays a ransom for someone who does not belong to them.

The second thing to consider is the "many." Christ did not claim to ransom "all" or everyone in the world. He said His life was given as a ransom for many; the many who belong to Him. Christ ransomed those who are His.

At the Last Supper, Jesus said, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." [Mat 26:28; cf Mar 14:24]. Christ
did not claim His blood would be shed for the whole world. This idea of Christ redeeming "many" rather than the world is repeated over and over in Scripture (cf Rom 5:15; Heb 2:10; 9:28).

**REVELATION 5:9-10**

Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth. [Rev 5:9b-10].

The praise in this verse is Christ purchased or ransomed men from every tribe and nation. Here again is the concept of a ransom and the ransom is for people FROM the whole world; every portion of the world, but not everyone in the world.

We know Christ did not ransom everyone in the world because this text says He made those He ransomed a kingdom and priests to God. We know from Scriptures, the unbelievers will never be a kingdom and priests to God. They detest God; they are in rebellion to God; they will suffer eternal destruction.

This supports the definition of the "many." This supports understanding the word "world" in John 3:16 as God's chosen from among the world.

This voids the argument which claims Christ died for everyone, but only those who receive Him are saved. This verse clearly says, those Christ died for, He made them a kingdom and priest to God. There is no wiggle room here. He ransomed people; people who belong to Him and those He ransomed, He regenerated.

**ISAIAH 53**

The third Scripture to consider is Isaiah chapter 53.

In verse 6, Isaiah wrote, "the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him." Who are the "us all"? Later in the chapter, in verses 11 and 12, it is more clear, who is the "us all." In these two verses,
the prophet reveals the Messiah "will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities."

As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors. [Isa 53:11-12].

Here again, is the "many." They are the ones who will "be accounted righteous" because, it is clear, it is for their sin Christ suffered. He did not suffer for anyone else's sin and He certainly did not suffer for sin of the whole world. "He bore the sin of many"; the many to whom He imputes righteousness.

**THE MANY ARE SAVED**

These three passages are key to identifying whom Christ died for; the quantity: the many. Did Christ ransom the entire world from sin, or the many? And, if the many, who are they?

Here are some verse which help us understand who are the many. In each case, it is those who were chosen by God to believe.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. [1:12-13].

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. [6:44].

He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. [Eph 1:4a].
We see from these verses, it is by God's choice or God's will we are saved. Then there is the argument: if God alone decides, we are just robots; we have no freewill.

FREEWILL AND OTHER MISCONCEPTIONS

Another misinterpretation of John 3:16 is the use of the word "whoever" or "whosoever." Many evangelists and preachers have used this verse and this word to enshrine freewill as a Christian sacrament. As if "whoever" can mean "anyone" and "everyone"; that God is just waiting for you to make the decision.

In John 1:12-13 and 6:44 we find those who receive Christ are drawn by the Father and are saved by the will of God, not by the will of man. We are not saved because of our decision, but because of God's decision (1:13, Eph 1:4) and Christ confirmed this when He said no one comes to Him unless the Father draw him (6:44). Furthermore, Jesus said, "no one can come to Me unless it is granted him by the Father." [6:65].

Paul said we are saved by God's grace alone; not by works or anything else we can do, we cannot even "make a decision," lest any man should boast (Eph 2:8-9).

Contrary to the modern American gospel, we don't "give our hearts to Jesus." We don't give God anything. God gives to us; salvation is a gift. He gives this gift to whom He chooses. Our only participation in the Gospel of Salvation is that of recipient (1:12). We can only receive it; and even this ability and decision to receive is by the grace of God (1:13), because the Bible is clear we have all turned away from God. There is NO one who seeks after God (Psa 14:1-3; Isa 53:6; Rom 3:10-11). The natural bent of our hearts is rebellion toward God. Our natural freewill is to reject God. Only the heart regenerated by God can receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

To summarize a quote from Charles Spurgeon arguing against the theology of freewill: a man's will is either held captive by sin or it is held in the blessed bonds of grace. Does man have freewill? Yes, but the Apostle Paul explained in Romans chapter six, a slave to sin will always choose sin. Therefore, it is important to interpret John
3:16 in the context of God's sovereignty, not mans'. Our salvation is the work of God alone; it is for His glory alone.

It is not wrong to use "whoever" as a call to repentance, but it is wrong to use the word to promote or exalt choice or freewill. Our sovereignty never trumps God's sovereignty; salvation is by God's choice and His drawing. It is His work, alone.

**IS GOD A GENTLEMAN?**

This brings us to the subject of the gentleman God: Many preachers declare God is a gentleman and He will not force Himself upon you; that your salvation is your choice. This is blasphemous. This is to declare God is only sovereign where His sovereignty does not conflict with mans' sovereignty. This is blasphemy. God alone is sovereign and He will accomplish all His purposes (Psa 115:3; Isa 46:8-10). If God has chosen you, you will come to Christ.

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. [6:37].

Consider the case of the Apostle Paul: he was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians and bring them captive to Jerusalem for their execution. He was breathing out threats and murder (Act 9:1). But Christ called him. He did not give Paul a choice; He did not ask Paul for permission. He said, "get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do." [Act 9:6]. Paul obeyed under duress.

So too, if we believe, we who have been chosen in Christ. We were chosen before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4). We were chosen for His purposes and we were not given a choice (Psa 138:8). Jesus told the disciples, they had not chosen Him, but He had chosen them (15:16). We are not given a choice (Psa 139:16) and when God regenerates us, the response of our freewill is to gladly receive Him.

Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of Your power. [Psa 110:3].

When God regenerates us, He conforms our will to desire to receive Him and we are happy in the receiving. Just as those are not chosen
and whom remain in their rebellion; they do not do so against their will. They are happy to remain in rebellion, the natural state of man.

This brings the question: if God is sovereign, if He alone is in control, does this mean you cannot receive Christ? How do we know if we are chosen or not? My friend, if you hear Christ's voice, if you feel yourself being drawn to Him, receive Him today. God is drawing you; do not harden your heart (Heb 3:15).

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. [2Co 6:2].

God demands all men to repent (Acts 17:30-31). Do not delay.

**IN CLOSING**

Christ did not die for the whole world. He died for those who are His: the many.

Jesus said salvation is given to whoever believes. This "whoever" does not represent freewill, for our natural freewill is to choose sin. This "whoever" are all those chosen in Christ Jesus before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4). And Jesus said all those given to Him will come to Him (6:37).

If you hear Christ calling you, receive Him today.
In verses 16 and 17, Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus about national religious views of salvation. Jesus corrected the Jewish error. No longer was God's covenant salvation exclusive to the Jew; Jesus said whoever believes will be saved. Whoever, meaning Jew or Gentile.

Christ declared the Messiah had not come to condemn the nations of the world. Many take this verse out of context to mean Christ does not judge and that He is always kind and gentle. But in the next verse, He spoke of the condemnation of the individual who does not believe.

He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. [v18].

Immediately after Jesus told Nicodemus He did not come to condemn the world, He spoke of the condemnation of the unbeliever. He said the unbeliever is condemned ALREADY. John the Baptist explained this condemnation by saying God's wrath REMAINS on the unbeliever.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. [3:36 ESV].

Once again, in verse seventeen, the lack of condemnation is directed toward "the world," refuting the Jewish belief the Messiah would at this time judge the nations and raise up Israel above all the nations. In verse eighteen, the condemnation is directed to the individual unbeliever. Explaining further, He had come to die for mans' sin. Those who believe will receive everlasting life; those who remain in their sin are condemned.
This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. [v19].

Christ has come to the world, and John wrote, "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." [1:5]. In his epistle he wrote, "the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining." [1Jo 2:8]. But regarding those who have not believed in the name of the only Son of God, Christ said their judgment is due because they cling to darkness even after the light has come.

When we read this verse about judgment and evil deeds, we think of the evils of darkness in the context of bar rooms, prostitutes, pornography, drugs, thefts, murders and such things as this. But Jesus was talking to and accusing a "good" man; a man who lived by the Law. Already in this conversation, several times Christ told Nicodemus he was not saved by challenging the things he believed and taught against the actual words of Scriptures. Now, He upped the ante by telling Nicodemus the works of "good" and "religious" men were evil because they preferred the darkness and rejected the light.

There are many people who appear to be good who reject Christ and His plan of salvation. Many believe they have earned their salvation because they are good. But Jesus told us there is no one good but God (Mar 10:18; Luke 18:19). And didn't Isaiah say all our righteousness is like filthy rags (Isa 64:6)? Every person is full of evil. God said our hearts are continually evil (Gen 8:21). There is none who does good (Psa 14:3).

Jesus said people cling to the darkness because their deeds are evil. They may appear to be good people, upstanding citizens and such, but they do not want their deeds to be exposed. So they do not come to the light.

For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. [v20].
The Apostle Paul wrote, "all things become visible when they are exposed by the light." [Eph 5:13a]. The natural man does not want to be exposed, so he will avoid the light and cling to darkness.

In verses 19 and 20, Christ said:

1) Men love darkness rather than light;
2) They love darkness because their deeds are evil;
3) They do evil things because they hate the light, or God; and
4) They will not come to the light, lest their evil deeds be exposed.

They will not come to the light. You will not persuade them. Many who cling to the darkness are professing Christians. They believe their profession of faith will get them to heaven but they harbor darkness and do not want to be exposed.

- Many professing Christians, who appear to be good people, do not receive the authority of the Scriptures. They gnash their teeth against those who stand up against the against evils in our society, such as abortion and same-sex marriage. They call those who stand for truth hateful people and they hate them.

- Many professing Christians look to the wisdom of the world. They are offended when people call worldly wisdom foolishness. They do not understand what Jesus meant when He said, "If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!" [Mat 6:23b]. Those who believe they are wise in the world are full of darkness.

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. [1Co 3:18-19a].

You see, it is not the profession of faith which determines what is in you; light or darkness. It is what you cling to. Do you cling to Scripture or do you cling to the wisdom and way of this world?
If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. [1Jo 1:6].

Do not be deceived by people who claim to be believers, but will not stand up for the truth of the Word of God. Rather, test the spirits to see if they are from God (1Jo 4:1).

But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God. [v21].

Christ said those who come to the light, those who do what is true, will also be exposed. And this is the difference: those who come to the light, come in repentance; they want Christ's righteousness. They are not afraid to be exposed because they know there is nothing good in themselves and they want people to see how Christ has given them His righteousness and how every thing good in them is the work of God.

The man in darkness wants credit for all the "good" he has done. The man in the light wants the world to know his good deeds were the result of God working through him.

For You have done for us all our works. [Isa 26:12b ESV].

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. [Eph 2:10].

So this turned out to be hard news for Nicodemus; as it is for anyone who believes they can work their way to salvation or believes they are capable of doing good works by their own efforts.

The good news is this: there is no one good, but God (Mar 10:18; Luk 18:19). We are sinful and fallen and incapable of good works on our own (Rom 3:23; 5:6,8,10). We cannot come to the light unless we are drawn by the Father (6:44). Those who receive Christ are born of the will of God (1:13; 3:5-8). Christ has taken us out of the darkness and has taken our sin and nailed it to the cross and has given us His righteousness (Col 2:13-15; 2Co 5:21).
Everyone will be exposed: Those who do not follow Christ will be exposed to their condemnation (v18). Those who believe and follow Christ will be exposed, so it will be seen the good works done in them were not of themselves, but of God (3:21; 15:4-5).

IN CLOSING

The Light has come into the world and the darkness tried to overcome Him; they crucified Him in public display.

This is the judgment: men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Many professing Christians are in this camp. Those who love evil will cling to the darkness, believing they can prevent their deeds from being exposed. But everyones' deeds will be exposed.

Those who believe will come to the light and, just as it was the work of the Spirit to make them born again, it will be seen the good works in this new life are the work of God.

The Bible is not make clear whether Nicodemus received the words of Christ that night, but we know from Scripture he assisted with the burial of Christ (19:39) and we know from history he was counted among the early church.

Nicodemus came to Christ at night and Jesus told him he must be born again; not of his own works, but of God's will. He told him it is not enough to be born of Abraham, because the Messiah came to save men from every nation.

Christ told him the Messiah did not come to condemn the world and set up His kingdom in Israel. But He also said those who refuse to believe have sealed their condemnation and they will be exposed.

Nonetheless, Christ ended the conversation with good news: he who does what is true will come to the light because it is God working through him. The offer is given to leave the darkness and embrace the light. Will you receive and follow Christ? If you profess Christ but cling to some secret sin, you cannot be saved.

He who has a small view of sin, cannot have a big view of God. [John Owen].

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John 3:22-30 John The Baptist Directed Disciples To Christ

After Jesus had finished His conversation with Nicodemus, He went into the Judean countryside to teach and baptize. Whether to individuals or large crowds, Christ's purpose was to make the Father known; to teach.

After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and baptizing. John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and people were coming and were being baptized—for John had not yet been thrown into prison. [v22-24].

Here, John said Jesus was teaching and baptizing. In the next chapter, we read it was not Jesus, Himself, who baptized, but it was His disciples (4:2). Christ was giving his disciples hands on experience as witnesses, calling for repentance, for baptism can only follow repentance.

John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon, near Salim. Aenon and Salim were near the Jordan River, on the West side. There was probably a tributary flowing to the Jordan where he baptized.

In verse 24, the Apostle John cleared up a misunderstanding: According to the Gospel accounts of Matthew and Mark, one could get the impression John the Baptist was imprisoned about the time Christ began His ministry (Mat 4:11-12; Mar 1:13-14). By telling the reader the Baptist had not yet been imprisoned, the Apostle John clarified there was a period of time where Jesus and John the Baptist had parallel ministries.

Therefore there arose a discussion on the part of John’s disciples with a Jew about purification. [v25].

At this time, Christ and John were baptizing in close proximity and tensions arose between their disciples. An argument arose between a
Jew and the disciples of John the Baptist. Who was this Jew? Here are a couple opposing opinions:

As John and Jesus were the only teachers who baptized Jews, discussions might easily arise between the Baptist's disciples and such Jews as declined to submit to that rite. [JFB].

The parallel ministry of Jesus and John resulted in a dispute between admirers of the latter and a Jew who favored the former. [WH vol 1, pg 147].

So, you see there is some disagreement as to whom this Jew could have been. I think the William Hendriksen New Testament Commentary (the latter opinion) is on the right track here, because there is a clue in the text: The Apostle John always refers to himself by description rather than by name and I believe this is one of these instances. He also wrote of the incident as one having first hand knowledge; one who was there throughout the entire conversation.

Prior to following Christ, the Apostle John had been a disciple of John the Baptist. It is very likely he got into an argument with one or more of the Baptist's disciples about who had the better baptism or whether they should be following John the Baptist or following Christ.

Here we see some of the humanity of the Apostle John. He was known as one of the Sons of Thunder. He was competitive and had a temper. It is very characteristic he would take his fight with the disciples of the Baptist all the way back to their leader.

**HE MUST INCREASE BUT I MUST DECREASE**

When the quarreling band came to John the Baptist, his disciples complained about the man the Baptist had praised and promoted, "now He is getting all the business."

*Rabbi, He who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness; look, He is baptizing, and all are going to Him. [v26b].*
This may have been a complaint, but it could just as likely have been a rebuke and admonition to step up his marketing or expose Christ as an imposter. In either case, these men were jealous of Jesus' ministry; so jealous, they would not even mention Him by name.

1) "To whom you bore witness" [v26]. This is the blame his disciples put upon John the Baptist. John was guilty of promoting Christ, whom they saw as the competition.

   a) "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light." [1:6-8].

   b) "John bore witness about Him, and cried out, 'This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because He was before me.'" [1:15].

   c) "He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said.'" [1:23].

   d) "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even He who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." [1:26-27]

   e) "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! … And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." [1:29, 34]

2) "All are going to Him" [v26]. This was the result of the Baptist promoting Him and this was their complaint. But they were not alone in this complaint. In jealousy, the Pharisees also complained. In prophecy, Jesus foretold, He would draw all men.

   a) "So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him." [12:19].

   b) "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself." [12:32].
John the Baptist answered the complaint or rebuke by humbling his own value and giving God glory for all things, even for his mission in life. He pointed his disciples to Christ with four answers:

1) "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven." [v27 ESV].

2) "You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before Him.'" [v28 ESV].

3) "The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete." [v29 ESV].

4) "He must increase, but I must decrease." [v30 ESV].

Let's look at these four answers, given by John the Baptist, verse-by-verse.

**The first answer:**

*A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven.* [v27].

John the Baptist understood everything comes from God; both a man's work and the reward for the work. No man will receive one cent more than God has allotted to him nor will he receive one cent less.

Every man has his work and sphere appointed Him from above, Even Christ Himself came under this law (Heb 5:4). [JFB].

And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU." [Heb 5:4-5].

Even rulers are subject to the domain God has given (Pro 21:1). As Jesus said to Pilate, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above." [19:11].
In the same conversation where Jesus said no one comes to Him unless the Father draw him, He also said, "no one can come to Me unless it is granted him by the Father." [6:65]. We cannot have salvation unless it is granted or given by the Father.

Man's nature is prideful. This is why the unbeliever thinks he must have a role in his salvation. The Jew thought their obedience to the Law saved them. The truth is, we are saved by grace: lest any man should boast. John said we receive nothing unless it is given from God.

that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it. [1Co 4:6b-7 ESV].

If we are followers of Christ, God saved us for HIS glory.

Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace." [Eph 1:4-6a ESV].

Our talents, our work or career, all that we have are gifts from God. Pride in ourselves or in our stuff is idolatry and covetousness. We must remember the words of John the Baptist, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven." [v27]. He viewed his mission and any glory he should receive as from God. Everything we have; everything God has given us is for HIS glory.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. [Jam 1:17-18 ESV].

The second answer:
You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, "I am not the Christ," but, "I have been sent ahead of Him." [v28].

John the Baptist was famous, but he did not cling to his fame. He did nothing to exalt himself. He was on a mission to herald the Christ and turn the hearts of the people to the Messiah. He was determined to give glory to God, in everything he did and said.

It is a natural human tendency to grab for more power or attention when met with popular approval, but the Baptist resisted this. He was not jealous of Christ's glory. John stuck to His mission of pointing people to the Christ:

- "He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, 'I am not the Christ.'" [1:20 ESV].
- "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me." [Mal 3:1a ESV].
- "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.'" [Mar 1:2-3 ESV].
- "And Paul said, 'John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.'" [Act 19:4 ESV].

The third answer:

He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. So this joy of mine has been made full. [v29].

John the Baptist described Christ as the bridegroom and himself as the friend of the bridegroom. Christ laid claim to the bride; John did not. Even when others would point the bride to him, he was careful to point them back to Christ.
Christ referred to Himself as the bridegroom in the parable of the Ten Virgins (Mat 25:1-13). And another time, Jesus said, "The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast." [Mat 9:15].

The Apostle Paul explained marriage is a picture of Christ and the church or Christ and His bride.

FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. [Eph 5:31-32].

In the end of time, Christ the bridegroom will marry His bride, the church. This is the final part of the eternal covenant.

Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" [Rev 19:6-9a].

The fourth answer:

He must increase, but I must decrease. [v30].

As we pointed out above, John the Baptist did not use his popularity to gain social or political power. He resisted the urge to reach for the brass ring, if you will. The Baptist did not seek to establish his life or his estate down here; he was seeking to please His master.

He was humble. The Gospel of Matthew records him saying Christ was mightier than he and he was not worthy to carry Christ's sandals
(Mat 3:11-12). In the first chapter of John, he said he was not worthy to untie Christ's sandals (1:26). Here was a great man who denounced the teachers of the Law, calling them snakes and a brood of vipers (Mat 3:7). Yet, he did not consider himself worthy to clean Jesus' feet or even touch His sandals.

Our human nature seeks fame and fortune. Most people do not want to die without leaving some kind of legacy; even a small one; we want people to remember us. But to truly commit our lives to Christ is to release all claim to fame; to seek God's glory and His alone (5:44).

Here is the essence of John the Baptist's preaching: he preached the coming judgment of God and our need to repent.

As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. [Mat 3:11-12].

Some people think this approach to witnessing or preaching is unloving and judgmental, but this is the same strategy Jesus used when He preached, "Repent, for God's judgment is at hand." [Mar 1:15 restated].

John the Baptist did not preach the modern American gospel, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." But this kind of preaching is so common now, most Americans are convinced a loving God will not send anyone to Hell. Ironically, the modern American gospel has built up the sinners' self esteem but is patting them on their backs while on their way to Hell.

The Bible calls us to repent. Christ called for repentance. He didn't try to make people feel good or like Him. He confronted people with the very thing keeping them from God.

When the rich young ruler approached Jesus, asking how to be saved (Mat 19:16-30), Jesus did not say, "All you have to do is
believe in Me" nor did He say, "Repeat these words after Me." No. He exposed the man's unrepentant heart. This man thought he could obey the Law; but the law was given to expose our sin and our inability to please God with our own efforts. When the man refused to repent, Christ exposed his pride and his idols and the man left disappointed. This man would have gladly said the sinner's pray but he would not have been saved.

Nicodemus, too, believed keeping the Law would save him but Jesus said he must be born again. This was difficult for Nicodemus to understand because it went against everything he was taught. So, too, many modern American Christians do not understand what it is to be born again; to be a new creation; to turn from their sin and follow Christ.

What would Jesus tell you? Are you more concerned that people like you? do you seek the comfort of this world and the praise of man? or do you care more for God's glory? Jesus asked the question, "If you love the praise of man rather than seek God's glory, how can you be saved?" [5:44 restated].

God's Word is for God's glory. Our salvation is for God's glory. John the Baptist said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." [v30].

IN CLOSING

Like John the Baptist, Jesus was baptizing and calling people to repentance. Although, according to 4:2, it was not Jesus' disciples doing the actual baptizing.

It appears the Apostle John, who was previously a disciple of John the Baptist, got into a heated discussion with some of the Baptist's remaining disciples regarding who had the better baptism. It was not resolved among them, so they took the argument to the Baptist to sort out.

John the Baptist's disciples were jealous of this upstart, Jesus, and they complained everyone was going to Him. John answered, in four parts, each part pointing to Christ:

1. "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven." [v27].
2. "You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.'" [v28].

3. "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. So this joy of mine has been made full." [v29].

4. "He must increase, but I must decrease." [v30].

Here was the Baptist's opportunity to take some glory for himself, but he pointed men to Christ. Just as he encouraged John and Andrew to follow Christ (1:35-37), he now encouraged the rest of his disciples to do the same.

It is common in modern Christian witness to point man to mans' glory. We say things like, "I gave my heart to Jesus," "I made a decision for Christ" or we implore man to do the same or to test drive Jesus and see if He isn't what He said He is. All these things exalt man. John pointed man to humility and repentance. When we speak of God and salvation, do we exalt man? or do we humble man and glorify God?
John 3:31-36 Whoever Believes In The Son Has Life

This chapter began with a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. It will end with a conversation between John the Baptist and his disciples. The two messages are the same: those who believe, will have eternal life; those who do not, are condemned already.

He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. [v31-36].

Whenever in Scripture something is said twice, close together, we need to listen. It is the "verily, verily." There are four things said in this chapter by Christ, which are repeated by John the Baptist. These four things are important for life and fellowship with God.

1) The Son of God is from above and is above all (the Baptist in v31)
   a) No one can proclaim the glories of heaven, but the Son of Man who came down from heaven (Jesus in v13).

2) He bears witness to what He has seen and heard, but no one receives His testimony (the Baptist in v32).
   a) We (the Father and the Son) speak of what we know, but you do not receive our testimony (Jesus in v11).

3) Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life (the Baptist in v36).
a) Whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life (Jesus in v15, 16).

4) Whoever does not obey the Son of God shall not see life, for the wrath of God remains on him (the Baptist in v36).

a) Whoever does not believe is condemned already. (Jesus in v18).

John the Baptist declared the same gospel Christ gave to Nicodemus. As he was wrapping up his talk, John affirmed Christ was from above and was above all, while he, himself, was from below and spoke in an earthly way (v31). The message from above is the Son of God has come down to give life. If you do not believe, you will die in your sins.

You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am He you will die in your sins. [8:23-24].

John the Baptist said he was from the earth and, though his mission was from God, he can only speak in an earthly way. Or, as Paul wrote, "For we know in part and we prophesy in part." [1Co 13:9]. He contrasted this with Christ being from above; from heaven. Christ is not a mere man; He has been with the Father and He, Himself, is God. John tried to make a clear distinction: Christ is greater than any earthly teacher or prophet. He is above all.

This is why he iterated Christ's greatness before and after speaking of himself. He said, to paraphrase, "Christ is from heaven and is greater than all. Myself and the prophets are mere earthly voices and can only speak with limited understanding. Christ is from heaven and is greater than all. He speaks of what He knows from the courtyards of God (v31-32)."

...all things were created through Him and for Him. [Col 1:16].

Christ is above all: He is above all creation; He is above all rule and authority. Yet, His creation has rejected His authority. John the Baptist said "no one receives His testimony." [v32]. Jesus said, "you do not receive Our testimony." [v11]. He is above all, the Creator of
all things, yet the world did not know Him (1:10) and the people He set aside for His own, did not receive Him (1:11).

John the Baptist said in the next verse, whoever does receive the testimony of Christ sets his seal or confirms God's Word is true (v33). This contrast, "nobody receives" versus "whoever receives," is not a contradiction: he pointed out the vast numbers of those who reject the truth of Jesus Christ compared to the very few who receive this truth.

And someone said to Him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able." [Luk 13:23-24].

**SETTING OUR SEAL THAT GOD IS TRUE**

Whoever receives His testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. [v33].

During the time of Christ and John the Baptist, a seal was used for two purposes:

1) to insure no one opened the contents except the intended recipient and;

2) to warrant the contents came from the owner of the seal. It was used to insure against fraud.

John said if we believe, we are setting our seal, or giving proof or witness, that God is true.

Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning His Son. [1Jo 5:10].

Are these verses saying we have the power to make God into the truth or a lie? Far from it. They are saying if we believe in the Son of God, we testify with our seal, if you will, God is true. And, if we refuse to believe, we are calling God a liar.
The thing about a seal is this, if we believe, people know it because our seal or testimony is there to be examined by all. There is no private faith in Christ. If you believe in the Son of God, it is not a "personal matter." It is something you set your seal upon; anyone can see it and inspect it. I would suggest if you claim a personal relationship with Christ and you think it is nobody's business except your own, you might not truly believe. John said those who believe set their seal upon it that God is true.

If we set our seal that God is true, it is because God has set His seal upon us. In the same way, "we love Him because He first loved us." [1Jo 4:19].

... Who has also put His seal on us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. [2Co 1:22].

In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory. [Eph 1:13].

Christ's testimony is sure; He bears witness to what He has seen and heard (v32). In verse 34, he said Christ "utters the words of God." Indeed, for Christ said He only spoke what He heard from the Father (12:49).

For He whom God has sent utters the words of God, for He gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. [v34-35].

He continued this contrast or volley between the character of men and the witness of the Son of God by stating the Father had given the Son the Spirit without measure (v35). Jesus Christ was fully God. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell." [Col 1:19]. God gives man the Spirit in limited portions, but to His Son, the Spirit was given in full; without measure.
He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities; all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. [Col 1:15-17].

According to John the Baptist, the difference between the Son of God and man, including the prophets and himself:

1) He is from above is above all and speaks what He has seen and knows. Man is of the earth and is limited in understanding (v31-32).

2) He utters the words of God because the Father has given the Son the Spirit without measure; implying He gives the Spirit to man in limited measure (v34).

3) The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand (v35).

WHAT IT MEANS TO BELIEVE

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. [v36].

John wrapped up the contrast volley with a comparison between those who believe in the Son and those who don't. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.

In this, John gives a strong hint what it means to believe. If you believe in the Son, you will obey the Son. We understand this because of those who do not believe, the Baptist wrote, "whoever does not obey." The implication is, the believer obeys, while the unbeliever does not.

There are many who profess a faith in Christ, but they do not obey the words of Christ. Many of these people feel like they love Jesus "so much." But we cannot hang our belief on a feeling; if we truly
believe in Christ, our actions will show it. Jesus told us you can judge a tree by its fruit (Mat 7:16; Luk 6:44).

The second part of the comparison is the believer has eternal life, but to those who do not obey or believe, God's wrath remains on them. He did not say they will see God's wrath or lose God's love. He said upon them God's wrath REMAINS. This is in stark contrast to the modern American gospel, which says, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." In essence, John the Baptist said God does not love nor has He ever loved those who do not believe.

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life."

- "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." [5:24].
- "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life." [6:40].
- "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life." [6:47].
- "..., but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name." [20:31].
- "Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life." [1Jo 5:12].

"Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."

- "Jesus answered him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" [v3].
- "...whoever does not believe is condemned already. ..." [v18].
- "... unless you believe that I am He you will die in your sins." [8:24].

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In this passage of Scripture, the picture is of the disciples of the Baptist who were jealous of Jesus, the upstart, and wanted their leader to stand up for his rights. Evidently, what he had told them about the Messiah had not sunk in. So John used this occasion to compare the Son of God with man. He presented his arguments in a volley between mans' limitations and Christ's authority. After comparing Jesus and man, he admonished them to believe and warned them of judgment if they rejected the Son.

In essence, John the Baptist told his disciples why they were not saved.

IN CLOSING

John the Baptist assured the hearers, though Christ was a man, He was fully God. He said the Father has given the Son the Spirit without measure (v34) and has given all things into His hand (v35). Then he told his disciples, they must believe and obey, lest the wrath of God remain on them (v36).

But, you say, they were following John the Baptist, a man who witnessed for Christ; a man who spoke the truth. True, but John the Baptist warned his disciples and he warns us, it is not enough to follow the teachings of someone who explains and testifies to the Word of God. You must follow Christ.

- The preacher receives what is given in the Word. The preacher is not the Word or Christ.
- Christ must increase, the preacher must decrease.
- Christ is the Bridegroom; the preacher is the friend of the bridegroom. The preacher rejoices for the Bridegroom but does not seek His place.
- Christ is from above and speaks from above. The preacher speaks from the earth and has limited knowledge.
- No one receives Christ's words but the one who does set his seal on this, that Jesus is the Christ.
The Father loves the Son and gives all things to His hand; His command. The preacher points people to Christ.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God REMAINS on him. [v36].

SIDENOTE: to say "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life" or "God hates the sin but loves the sinner," is to compromise the Gospel to make it acceptable to man. This is seeking the favor of man and this is disobedience to God. John the Baptist said, "He must increase but I must decrease." And he warned, those who do not believe REMAIN under God's wrath.

The modern American gospel does not convict man of sin; it pats him on the back, on his way to Hell. You are not saved by good intentions; salvation comes by faith in Jesus Christ, alone. True faith will preach the same thing Jesus preached: "Repent and believe for judgment is at hand." [Mar 1:15, et al].
John 4:1-25 Jesus With The Sinner At The Well

Christ died to save sinners (1Ti 1:15). The Apostle Paul said God did not choose the wise and noble; He chose the weak and despised to call on Him, so that no man can boast (1Co 1:26-31). While Jesus was humanly present in the world, He sought out the lowly and despised. The Samaritan were considered the lowest of sinners. In this chapter, Jesus calls His lost sheep from among them.

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus Himself did not baptize, but only His disciples), He left Judea and departed again for Galilee. And He had to pass through Samaria. So He came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. [v1-5].

SYCHAR OF SAMARIA

Sychar was located just South of Shechem, at the site of present-day Askar. Joseph's tomb and Jacob's well were nearby. The mount of the blessing, Gerazim was to the West of the city (Deu 27:12). Ebal, the mount of the curse was to the North (Deu 27:13).

These two mountains were constant reminders to the people of the blessings and cursings for following God or leaving His ways. The Samaritans lived right in the middle of this history: Jacob, Joseph and the two mountains, yet they did not follow God. This is another example that a Godly heritage does not produce a Godly people.

The nation of Israel became divided during the reign of Solomon's son, Rehoboam, into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Jeroboam, who turned the people against Rehoboam, was the first king of Israel after dividing from Judah. He set up golden calves to represent God in Bethel and Dan (1Kings 12). This was to prevent people from traveling to Jerusalem to worship and eventually turning politically against the northern king.
So, the hearts of the people were turned against the God of Israel, all the while the people deceived themselves into believing they were engaged in the true worship of God. Man makes God in his own image; the image of his own choice to justify his life or the way he wants to live.

When Israel was conquered by Assyria in 722BC, some Israelites were deported by King Shalmanesser; who then brought back Eastern Gentile tribes to move into their place and intermarry with the remaining Israelites (2Kings 17).

The land became burdened with attacks by wild beasts so the Gentile residents requested the king to send them an Israelite priest who would teach them the ways of the god of the land. Now, the already corrupted Hebrew religion of Jeroboam became joined with the Gentile cults (2Ki 17:40-41). These pagan half-Israelites became known as the Samaritans. They were named after the region which had become known by the name of the capital city, Samaria.

The Samaritans developed traditions which were repulsive to Judah. They developed their own Pentateuch or Scripture and did not accept the poetic and prophetic books of the Old Testament. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah tell of the interruptions, confusion and delays to the rebuilding of the temple caused by Samaritans and surrounding peoples. This is another reason why the Jews despised the Samaritans; and the feeling was mutual.

After the temple was rebuilt in Jerusalem, the Samaritans built their own temple on the top of Mount Gerazim. They chose the mountain of the curses, rather than the mountain of the blessings to build their temple. However, it was destroyed around 128 BC by one of the Maccabees, John Hyrcanus. Even after this, the Samaritans refused to return to the true worship of God.

One time the Samaritans refused Christ any accommodation because He was on the way to worship in Jerusalem. The disciples wanted to call down fire from heaven to destroy them, but Christ rebuked them and they went on to another village (Luke 9:51-55). This event reflected the animosity, which was great, between the Jew and the Samaritan at the time of Christ.
To call a person a Samaritan was the lowest of the low for the Jew. In 8:48, the Jews condemned Jesus as a Samaritan and having a demon; they doubled down in their hatred for the Lord.

RETURNING TO GALILEE

In chapter three, we are introduced to Christ's public ministry of baptism (3:22). However, in this chapter we are told Christ Himself did not actually baptize; it was His disciples (v2).

This was probably for the same reason given by the Apostle Paul. Divisions and pride had erupted over who is greatest (1Co 1:10-17). Had the Lord baptized, there would likely develop divisions created by those who would consider themselves greater having been baptized by God, Himself. After the resurrection, they might even consider themselves saved and never come to repentance or they might consider themselves to have more authority than the apostles. This is most likely why Jesus did not baptize anyone but taught His disciples to do so.

The first of Christ's signs was in Cana of Galilee: turning the water into wine (2:11). Now, Christ was on His way to Galilee once again. He left Judea because, due to His popularity, He was coming under the scrutiny of the Pharisees and He was not looking to agitate them at this time. As the Apostle John often said, "His time had not yet come." On His travel to Galilee, He had to pass through Samaria.

About December of the year 27 AD the Baptist was imprisoned (cf Mar 6:17-20). The religious leaders of Jerusalem who, in the days of John's great popularity, had been filled with jealousy, rejoiced . . . But this joy was of short duration, for other tidings reached the Pharisees: namely, the multitudes surrounding Jesus . . . were more numerous than those who followed the herald. In fact, even before John's imprisonment Jesus had forged ahead of him in popular favor (3:22-26). Hence from the point of view of the members of the Sanhedrin, matters were becoming worse instead of better. [WH vol 1, pg 154].
Christ's travel to Galilee was around the time of John the Baptist's imprisonment. In any event, the activities of John the Baptist are recorded no more in the Gospel of John after chapter three.

There are three main roads from Judea to Galilee, but the shortest route is through Samaria. However, the reason the Apostle John wrote He "must" or "had to" go through Samaria was not likely due to any urgency or necessity of travel. It was because He was destined to speak to a sinful woman and lead many in her town to understand salvation and the true worship of God.

MEETING THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as He was from His journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman from Samaria came to draw water. [v6-7].

John commented that Christ was weary from His journey. This displayed the human side of Christ. Additionally, Christ revealed to the woman His humanity when He asked her for a drink. He was fully God and fully man, but He was not a superhuman man. He was weary and thirsty.

If we use Jewish time reckoning, the sixth hour would be noon. The Apostle John used Jewish time reckoning throughout the book. Therefore, this event took place about noon when it was getting hot.

The women of the town would go out in the morning to draw water to avoid this hard labor during the heat of the day. This woman, who met Jesus, drew water at noon to avoid the scrutiny of the other women. She was likely an outcast for her immoral living.

In chapters three and four, we see Christ in two opposite scenarios. In chapter three, Christ taught a man of high moral standing. This was in the region of Judea, the center of the Jewish faith. In the fourth chapter, He confronted a woman of ill-repute. this was in the region of Samaria; the place of the corrupted faith.
THE CONVERSATION AT THE WELL

1) Give Me a drink.
   • How is it that You, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?

2) If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you Living Water.
   • Sir, You have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.

3) Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.
   • Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.

4) Go, call your husband, and come here.
   • I have no husband.

5) You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.
   • Sir, I perceive You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but You say in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.

6) Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.
• I know the Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things.

7) I who speak to you am He.

Jesus was sitting at the well, resting from His journey, when the woman arrived. We can assume she had filled her pitcher with water when Christ asked for some.

As for the etiquette of this matter: It was allowable for Jew and Samaritan to engage in commerce and even public conversation, but it was not acceptable for men and women to converse in public; especially not for a Jewish man and a Samaritan woman. Furthermore, Jewish custom forbade Jew and Samaritan to drink from the same vessel. Jesus had no vessel with Him for the woman to pour water into. This is why she responded with the objection that a Jew would ask her for a drink.

In their conversation, Christ asked her for a drink. Then, He rebuked her for not asking Him for Living Water. This surely aroused her curiosity and, by now, she could sense there was something unusual about this man. So, after pointing out He had no vessel, she wanted Him to tell her how He was going to get this Living Water and explain to her how He was greater than her forefather, Jacob.

The Samaritans claimed their heritage in Jacob and Joseph. It seemed like a valid argument, for they were sitting on the land and the well Jacob had given his son, Joseph. They used this heritage to validate themselves as they were cut off from Judah, by land and by religion. The woman used this argument to make a point to this Jewish visitor. She argued as if Jacob gave the well to the Samaritans or as if possession of the well was a valid substitute for worshipping in Jerusalem.

The woman did not understand Jesus' message of the Living Water. She did not understand the Holy Spirit was this Living Water. At one of the feasts, Christ proclaimed, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of Living Water.'" [7:37-38].

Jew and Samaritan, alike, had changed God to the image which served their lifestyles. The Jew had kept the form of their religion,
while the Samaritan had left this altogether and followed pagan and worldly philosophy. They both rejected the Living Water promised by God; they followed empty religion.

> for My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of Living Waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water. [Jer 2:13].

> O Lord, the hope of Israel, all who forsake You shall be put to shame; those who turn away from You shall be written in the earth, for they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of Living Water. [Jer 17:13].

The Living Water has come. We should be constantly seeking Him and drinking from His Word. How easy it is to let other things get in the way of our time with God. We might even rationalize how busy we are, but we find time to watch a movie or hang with friends and at the end of the day, Christ gets the crumbs of what is left.

> "Are you greater than our father Jacob?" [v12].

In chapter eight, the Jews ask Christ if He is greater than their father, Abraham (8:53). The expected answer was "no" and in both instances, Christ did not answer directly, but directed them to their need.

Rather than defend Himself, Christ narrowed the argument to lead her to true faith and worship. Christ gave the woman a comparison between the earthly and the eternal. Earthly water leads again to thirst while heavenly water or the Holy Spirit, becomes a well of eternal life and satisfaction.

She heard the claim whoever drinks of the water Christ gives will never thirst again. This caught her interest. Now, here is the difference between Christ's invitation to eternal life and the modern American gospel: The modern approach after this woman asked for the eternal water would be to tell her to receive Christ; never ruin the moment by telling her she must repent. Christ's method was to confront her with her sin. Though the water is given freely, it is never given without repentance and turning from sin.
Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters . . .
let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. [Isa 55:1,7].

Christ told her to bring her husband, knowing full well she had no husband and she was living immorally with another man. Up to this point, the woman had desired the physical, thirst-quenching water. Christ confronted her with her sin to show her she needed the spiritual, sin-cleansing water.

It is a common interpretation, when confronted with her sin, the woman changed the subject, but maybe there is something different here. In part, sensing Christ to be a prophet, she was interested in His interpretation of an age old conflict between the Jews and Samaritans (v19-20). It may have been, she was offended by this Jew who judged her, yet if she could validate her religion, her lifestyle could not be condemned. For this reason or others, she appeared to change the subject.

Christ stayed on track; He was targeting her soul. He focused on truth, not controversy; He did not defend Himself when she was offended by His judgment.

1. He told her one day the controversy would not matter (neither this mountain nor Jerusalem (v21)).

2. He told her she and the Samaritans had been living a lie (You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews (v22)).

3. He told her God is looking for people to worship Him in spirit and in truth (v23-24).

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. [v23-24].

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In truth, there was no controversy as Jew and Samaritan both knew the truth had been given by God long ago to worship Him in Jerusalem. The Samaritans had compromised this truth for political expediency. Christ did not argue this to settle the controversy, but to open her eyes to her guilt. She was living in sin and the religion she was hiding behind was not going to save her.

How Christ finished the conversation, once again marks a big difference between His methods and the modern American gospel. He told her God is seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth (v23). The modern American gospel says God loves us the way we are and there is no requirement to change our ways. By saying those who are saved worship God in spirit and truth, Jesus made it clear there is a change in the lives of those who have truly tasted of this water.

In addition to this, Christ said God is a spirit. The modern American gospel says Christianity is not a religion, but a relationship; as if God is a man like you and me. This false gospel will tell you that you can vaguely desire eternal life from a God of mercy, if you just acknowledge Him. This is nothing more than tipping your hat to God and expecting to be saved from Hell. Christ clarified the walk of the true believer is religious by setting the terms: we worship in spirit and in truth.

Furthermore, God is not seeking friends. He is seeking worshippers.

THE MESSIAH IS HERE

I know the Messiah is coming, He will tell us all things. [v25]

She was under conviction, yet she resisted repentance. It is hard when you have been taught something all your life and someone comes along and tells you this is wrong. The Samaritans made God in their own image so they would not have to worship in Jerusalem. The woman used this false image to validate her lifestyle.

She viewed Christ as a prophet and when His words became convicting, she claimed a higher authority. Until then, she was free to continue her life as she saw fit.
IN CLOSING

Christ left Judea because the Jews wanted to kill Him. He did not need to escape, but He did not want to aggravate the situation. On His way to Galilee, He passed through Samaria; a people despised by the Jews.

Jesus' humanity was exposed, in that, He was tired and thirsty.

When Jesus met the woman at the well, He told her physical water satisfies for the moment, but spiritual water wells up to eternal life. He then exposed her sin to bring her to repentance. When she tried to dismiss herself on technicalities, He brought her back to the core: God must be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

Christ is calling to each of us. Some have responded in repentance and faith; others have been arguing with God and justifying themselves all their lives. Some use religion to justify themselves or they use it as a cover to continue in their sin.

Man makes God into an image which validates himself. God gave us His Word so we can know Him. Yet, man seeks shortcuts and is deceived to believe he is walking with Christ if he tips his hat to Him. We need to get into the Word so we can understand who God is and what His image looks like. We must surrender to Him in repentance. We must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

The Messiah has come. We must repent and follow Christ.

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead. [Act 17:30-31].
Is Christianity A Relationship Or A Religion?

Because religion has a bad name in our culture and it bears the image of hypocrites, many professing Christians want to distance themselves from this idea that following Christ is a religion. Rather than preach repentance, the modern American gospel preaches a relationship with God. This is a false gospel. We are told throughout Scripture our faith is religion. To make the gospel more palatable to sinners is a blasphemous effort to please man rather than God.

This idea that God is looking for a relationship implies several things:

1) Rather than repent, we can add God to our life. He will make our life better, more fulfilling.

2) We can define how we worship God and what this looks like. Some have made the worship service so worldly, they have this idea we can make our worship so cool and exciting, He might even worship with us.

3) God just wants to love us and He accepts us no matter what we do or how we live and on and on it goes. After all, He knows our hearts (as if He sees good in us, although our hearts have deceived us).

4) The relationship is centered around ourself. It is about how we feel about God.

This use of relationship implies we can be casual friends with God and the relationship is ours to groom as we see fit. Relationship says God is our friend and as long as we are sincere, we are saved. But this attitude makes us guilty of the same sin the Samaritans were guilty of: creating God in an image pleasing to ourselves.

. . . you thought that I was one like yourself. . . [Psa 50:21].

The easy-believism, seeker-friendly church came up with the idea God is looking for a relationship to make faith in Christ seem easy. This is the wide gate, where professing Christian preachers try to
crowd as many people as possible into the kingdom of God. Jesus warned us to beware of the wide gate and seek the narrow gate.

Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. [Mat 7:13-14].

Many want to believe Christ was inclusive, but while Christ was on earth, the people had a problem with His teaching because He was exclusive. At one point, a man in the crowd asked Jesus to clarify whether only a few would be saved.

And someone said to Him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able." [Luk 13:23-24].

The Bible does NOT say we need a relationship with God. It says we HAVE a relationship with God. John the Baptist said, those who believe have eternal life; they will be with God forever. Those who disobey REMAIN under God's wrath (3:36). Jesus said whoever believes is not condemned; whoever does not believe is condemned ALREADY (3:18). There is NO Scripture declaring God is seeking relationship. Jesus said God is looking for worshipers (v23-24).

He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, He will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. [Rom 2:6-8].

There are only TWO relationships with God: those who receive Him and obey are saved; those who pursue this life are condemned.

Christ also said God is a spirit, as in clarifying God is not a man. If we look at our relationship with God as we look at our relationships with man, we are bringing God down to our level. God is higher and greater than all mankind. If we follow Christ, our relationship with God is that of worshipers.
Furthermore, our worship is a lifestyle, not an event. It is not the going to church or a well displayed passion with arms in the air that God is looking for. The prophet Jeremiah warned the people of Judah having the temple of the LORD was not enough; nor was it enough to worship and rejoice in the temple while living our lives as we see fit (Jer 7:2-11). God is looking for repentant hearts and lives of obedience. He is looking for lives of worship; worship in spirit and in truth.

Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.' [Jer 7:4].

As for the true nature of Christianity: The Bible is a book of religion and Christ taught religion while He walked this earth; this is continually expressed. The Bible tells us to put our religion into practice (Jam 1:26-27); warns us not to allow our religion to be in vain (1Ti 1:3-7); and explains what is the religion God accepts or what God expects of our religious walk (Mic 6:8). Christianity has worship (v23-24); it has sacraments: baptism (Mar 16:16) and communion (1Co 11:23-25); it has requirements of obedience (Mat 16:24). Christianity is a religion.

Jesus called us to abide in Him (15:1-6). To follow Christ with all our heart, soul and mind is religion. To be in His Word, studying it and applying it to our lives, is worship. To live the Word in our lives is worship.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. [Rom 12:1-2].

Jesus told the woman at the well God is looking for worshipers. To worship is an act of religion not an act of relationship. This worship comes out in what we say and what we do; it is evidenced in how we live. True worship is religion. Those who worship God do not treat this as merely a relationship.
The mantra of the modern American gospel is God wants to have a relationship with you. He needs you. He is waiting for you. He has a wonderful plan for your life. The Bible has news for these people: He is not seeking a relationship; He is not seeking casual friends. You are either a child of God or you are His enemy and under His wrath.
John 4:25-42 Conviction Of Sin Leads Many To Repentance

The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ). When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." [v25-26].

As Christ and the woman were talking, they were going back and forth. Christ would convict and she would defend herself with technicalities. Finally, she called upon a higher authority: the Messiah. Until the Messiah proved her wrong, she was free to live as she had. When Jesus replied He is the Messiah, she may have been startled or overwhelmed, but she no longer argued, for truth had hit her square in the face, so to speak.

The Bible does not say whether she actually repented at this moment but it is strongly implied by the description of events. She left the water jar, leaving behind the urgency of her daily chores. She ran to tell others, confessing her sin and proclaiming the words of Christ who uncovered her sin and revealed truth. She was born again.

Someone who is born again does not hide their faith; they feel compelled to tell others. This is what Christ meant, when He told Nicodemus, "But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God." [3:21]. The born again do not fear the exposure of their sin, because this change God brings, reveals the work of God in their life.

Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did.
Can this be the Christ? [v29].

She was not confused any longer. She did not ask "can this be the Christ?" to resolve any uncertainty on her part. The question was for the hearer to come and see. She was affirming what the Lord said about Himself was true. Repentance had come to her; she was remorseful for her sin as she invited others to hear the message of salvation.
Once again, true salvation is never a private affair; it is never a mere believing; the demons believe and shudder (Jam 2:19; cf Mar 1:24, Luk 4:34). This is what the Apostle James meant when he wrote faith without works is dead (Jam 2:17; 26). Works don't save us but works are evidence of our faith. If we are truly saved, we will tell others. Jesus said we do not hide a candle under a basket and we are called to let our light shine so people will give glory to God (Mat 5:15-16).

**MY FOOD IS TO DO THE WILL OF HIM WHO SENT ME**

Just then His disciples came back. [v27a].

All through the Gospel of John, much is mentioned of timing. John is very precise in his timing. According to John's gospel, this is the first time Christ revealed publicly He was the Messiah and the disciples arrived in time to witness the declaration.

Christ also timed the disciples return to coincide with the woman being born again. They seemed oblivious to the miracle, but rather marveled Christ was speaking to a woman.

It is a wonderful thing that Christ would talk to anyone, man or woman. It is even more phenomenal Christ would leave His throne above to bring salvation to mankind. This was all lost on the disciples at this time and they falsely assumed Christ to have engaged in some petty conversation.

My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. Do you not say, "There are yet four months, then comes the harvest"? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. [v34-35].

When the disciples urged Christ to eat His response was He had so much spiritual nourishment (v31-32), He was no longer physically hungry. When He said this, giving example of the harvest, they should have understood a great work had just happened. The next few days, as they witnessed this harvest, and that among the
Samaritans no less, they would begin to understand the harvest God is looking for.

Christ said He came to accomplish the work of the Father who sent Him. He did not come to do His own work, as in the work of a man. The work of man seeks his own glory. He came to do the work of the Father, as in the work of God. The work of God seeks God's glory and Jesus came to do the work of the Father.

No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known. [1:18].

How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? [5:44].

. . . This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent. [6:29].

The Son of God, as incarnate man, subjected Himself to the will of the Father. He did not seek His own glory. The work of God seeks for men to know and believe. How much more are we, as mere temples of clay, obligated to live our lives for the glory of the Father rather than for our own glory? Jesus is our example.

Jesus talked about the harvest with His disciples, explaining how one man reaps and another sows. His comments revealed His excitement as He anticipated a great harvest of souls to come in the next few days while they stayed in Sychar. Jesus and the disciples were there to reap a harvest.

Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor. [v36-38].

Before the town's people came to hear Him, He prepared the disciples, telling them others have labored and the harvest was at hand. We must always keep in mind the wages or the return on the
harvest is always from the Father; it is not of our own efforts that we reap.

Many Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to stay with them, and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world." [v39-42].

Many believed because of the testimony of the woman at the well. The people asked Him to stay; so He taught them for two days. By the end of His stay, the people no longer believed just based on the word of the woman alone, but upon Christ's teachings they believed.

"We know" is an important declaration. This is not a head knowledge; this is not a private knowledge. When the woman declared Christ to the people, they believed enough to come and hear. After they heard Christ, they knew. Settled. They did not doubt Him. They were not confused about who He was. They heard and believed. They declared their belief. This is why it is important to speak the message of Jesus Christ: so people can know.

And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? [Rom 10:14].

When people hear, it is the work of God for them to believe (6:29). Those who believe, will know because God gives understanding.

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. [1Jo 5:20].

These were Samaritans; they were outcast from the Jews. Yet, they were willing to receive the truth, while the Jews were not. The
Apostle John told us Jesus came to His own (the Jews), but His own did not receive Him (1:11). Here is the singular recorded instance of conversion on a mass scale during Christ's ministry and it was not of the Jews, but it was among the despised Samaritans.

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world . . . so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus . . . so that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.' [1Co 1:26-31].

IN CLOSING

Jesus brought the woman at the well to faith via conviction. He convicted her of sin and the consequence of sin. He did not tell her "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." He told her God demanded righteousness; that we must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

She did not add Jesus to her life. She did not come to Christ for physical satisfaction or help with her life; this is what she sought while in her sin. The woman turned from her sin. She understood the water He would give was not physical, earthly refreshment; this was water unto life, eternal life.

When the people came to hear the message of Christ, you can be sure this message was the same message He delivered to the woman and all the other people whom He confronted. The message is this: God is righteous and, without Jesus Christ, we lack righteousness.

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. [2Co 5:11].

In the modern American gospel, there is no fear of God. Men try to persuade others to add Jesus to their life because God loves them. They tell them God loves them the way they are, to convince them
to join them. There is no fear of God; there is no conviction of sin; there is no desire for God's righteousness.

But the Lord of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows Himself holy in righteousness. [Isa 5:16].

The woman at the well found her righteousness in Christ. She repented; she threw off her sin. Out of her fear of God, she rushed to call others; to bring them out of their sin. Wasn't this her question? "Meet the man who told me everything I did; who convicted me of my sin. Isn't He the Messiah?"

Jesus said one sows and another reaps. We speak and sometimes the hearer responds. Sometimes we speak and people respond because others have labored. Sometimes they don't respond, but our job is to sow the seed.

The people of Sychar came to the Messiah from the testimony of the woman. This was God's doing. Upon hearing Christ, they did not "give their hearts to Jesus." The Bible says they believed. They knew; because God gave them understanding (6:45; 1Jo 5:20; Psa 25:8-9). God opened their hearts to understand (Act 16:14). This was God's doing.

This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent. [6:29].

When we say things like, "I gave my heart to Jesus" or "I made a decision for Christ," we defame God. We take the glory which belongs to God upon ourselves. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; while we were powerless to help ourselves and enemies of God (Rom 5:6,8,10). We were slaves to sin (8:34; Rom 6:16). Who do we think we are to claim we had anything to do with our salvation; that we could even help God bring ourself or anyone else to Him?

For You have done for us all our works. [Isa 26:12].

For My own sake, for My own sake, I do it, for how should My name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another. [Isa 48:11].
When we believe, it is not our own doing. When we receive Christ, even our receiving is of God; it is not through our will, but God's will (1:12-13). Jesus said, "the flesh is no help at all." [6:63]. When we share in the harvest and see others coming to Christ, it is not our own doing. The salvation of man is for God's glory.

Lest any man should boast. [Eph 2:9].

the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. [Isa 2:11].
**John 4:43-54 Arriving At Galilee And Healing A Son**

Christ spent two days with the Samaritans. After those two days, He continued His journey to Galilee. He was on His way to Galilee when He stopped in Sychar to minister to the Samaritans. He had left Judea because He heard the Pharisees were becoming aware of His reputation and about how He was becoming more popular than John the Baptist.

_After the two days He departed for Galilee (For Jesus Himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in His own hometown). [v43-44]._

**HOW CHRIST'S GALILEAN MINISTRY BEGAN**

This passage marks the start of Christ's Galilean ministry, which was about half His entire ministry. It began approximately December 27 and ended approximately April 29 the next following year. Sixteen months in all (WH vol 1, page180).

You might wonder why He would go to Galilee, with the knowledge or idea "that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown." [v44]. He left Judea to prevent a premature crisis. He left so He would not provoke the Pharisees; to keep everything in its time. He was leaving the place where He was becoming too popular and heading to a place where He would not be celebrated.

Many professing Christians think we must win the world to Christ. It is true, we do have a duty to witness because Jesus told us to go into the whole world, even among our own neighbors and teach others to follow Christ (Mat 28:18-20). But, if there ever was an opportunity to win the world, it was while Christ was on the Earth. He did not do this, in fact, He left a region when He became too popular.

Trust God where He has put you. Sometimes we judge by results or accomplishments and we can become discouraged. But if our goal is for our life to glorify God, we need to seek Him before we try to change our situation. Jesus was popular but He left it behind, to go
to a people who would reject Him. His goal was not to maximize His accomplishments, but to be where the Father wanted Him.

So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed Him, having seen all that He had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast. So He came again to Cana in Galilee, where He had made the water wine. [v45-46].

He arrived at Cana. The Apostle John said Christ was welcomed when He arrived in Galilee. He was known because of the miracles He had done in Jerusalem, during the feast. The people were impressed by what they saw but they were not convinced by His words.

The news was out and word got to a man in Capernaum. He heard Christ was in Cana and He went to see Him; to ask Him to come and heal his son.

And at Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill. When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to Him and asked Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. [v46-47].

This man, whose son was dying, was a servant of the king, a nobleman or bureaucrat. He probably had some authority and he could have sent a messenger. But he went himself; he wanted to make sure Christ would come.

Matthew and Luke tell the story of a Roman Centurion (captain of 100 soldiers) who had a servant who was ill and dying. He asked Jesus to speak the word and His servant would be healed, for he was not worthy to have Christ come. In fact, in the Luke account, he did not feel worthy to plead with Christ directly, but sent others. Jesus praised the faith of this man (Mat 8:5-13; Luk 7:1-10).

Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe. [v48].

What Would Jesus Do (WWJD)? Many speak of Jesus' gushy kindness, but here is a man whose son is dying and Jesus rebuked him. He was likely among those who had seen the miracles in
Jerusalem; which explains why he would travel sixteen miles of hill country to Cana to seek healing for his son who was at the point of death. Jesus rebuked him, for he had not come to hear Christ's message; he had not come to repent. The man's faith was more like a flicker of hope. This was his best shot, to find a man who could heal. To this came the rebuke from Christ.

Jesus spoke this rebuke for the crowd as well. The Galileans welcomed Him because they had seen His great deeds when they were in Jerusalem at the feast. They had come to be entertained and impressed. They would have followed Christ to the nobleman's house, sixteen miles away, had Christ traveled there. They, too, had not come to hear Christ's message and repent. These people believed in Him because they saw miracles, but they needed a steady dose of signs and wonders to remain convinced.

The believing crowd, the believing man: This was not a saving faith. Many believe in Christ, but are not saved. In chapter five, the man who was healed appeared to lack a saving faith. In chapter six, the crowd of believers began to murmur against Him and eventually left Him. Not all believers, not all professing Christians are saved. People go to church, but are not saved. Many profess faith in Christ, but are not saved.

The official said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." [v49].

Some commentaries make mention his faith was limited on another point: he believed Christ's powers were limited to this side of life because he urged Christ to come before his son died. Christ never addressed this, nor did He wait for the son to die to make the point, like He did for Lazarus. Certainly, Christ could have raised the boy from death; in Mark 5:35f, He raised up the ruler's daughter who died while He was on the way to heal her (cf Luke 8:49f) and in chapter eleven, when He heard Lazarus was ill and He waited for him to die. In this case, the issue did not come up.

Nonetheless, he wanted Christ to come. His faith was in a healer, one who had to be there to perform the miracle. Jesus was going to direct his faith to God. God did not have to be there, in the flesh, to heal.
Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. [v50].

When Jesus told the man to return home alone, his son will live, the Bible tells us simply the man believed what Christ told him and he went home. No whining, no begging; he simply went home; he acted upon what he believed. He faith was probably stronger now. We know faith is a gift from God (Eph 2:8-9) and He had just spoken with Christ.

As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering. So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." And he himself believed, and all his household. [v51-53].

The man appeared to have a good relationship with his servants, because,

1) they sought him out and
2) they were concerned about the condition of his son.

The servants told him what time his son was healed; it was the same time Christ had told him his son would live. Not only was there much rejoicing for the healed son, but this man now believed in the Son of God and his household believed with him.

This is similar to the story of the jailor with the Apostle Paul and Silas: when he was confronted with an extra-ordinary miracle of deliverance, he believed and his household with him (Act 16:34). This believing along with the household indicates a saving faith; a trusting in the Son of God rather than a mere belief in his power to do miracles.

Many people believe in God and they want Christ for what He can do for their life. They hope to prosper; they hope their troubles to be over; they hope for relationships to heal; or other such hopes. Their faith is based upon what they hope Jesus will do; maybe even
eternal life, but it is not based upon the work of Christ to redeem them to God. When trials come and their hope fades, they fall away. They are much like the people who needed a steady diet of miracles to believe. This believing is not a saving faith.

The Apostle John wrote this was the second miracle Christ performed in Galilee (v54). The first being turning the water into wine in chapter two.

We see the ruler and his household were grateful for the healing of his son and they put their faith in the Son of God. With the next healing, we will see a man who is grateful in a limited sense because his desire to please man is greater than his desire to repent and follow the Christ who healed him. Coming up next. . .

IN CLOSING

Christ left Judea because He was getting too popular. He was heading to Galilee. He would not be quite so popular there, as He said a prophet has no honor in His hometown. The natural man would have stayed in Judea to make the most of his fame. But, over and over in the Gospel, Christ said He came to do the Father's will, not His own.

The Galileans welcomed Him. They had seen and heard of His miracles while at the feast in Jerusalem. They were hoping to see more. Though they believed, they did not have a saving faith. They were looking for entertainment. Many professing Christians go to church for entertainment and too many churches are willing to accommodate them.

A man made a difficult trip to come ask Jesus to return with him and save his dying son. Jesus rebuked him saying, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." Too many people have this idea, Jesus was always compassionate and kind. In reality, Jesus calls out our need to repent, which is the ultimate compassion and kindness.

The man persisted. Christ told him, "Go; your son will live." There was no entertainment value in this healing for the man nor the crowd. But the man believed, he obeyed and went home. He did not
put forward his ideas to Christ; he did not whine; he did not beg; he
did not claim any promise; he did nothing but obey.
The son was healed and the man's household believed and were
saved. But first. . . he obeyed.
Many people have the belief that all people who were healed by Jesus were saved. Even today, many people believe they are saved because God did a miracle in their life or He answered a prayer. Many people believe the false gospel of the purpose driven life. In this story, we will study the life of a purpose driven man. He wanted the favor of the church, but he did not want to obey Christ.

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, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. In these lay a multitude of invalids: blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. [v1-5].

According to Nehemiah 3:1, Eliashib the high priest, along with his brothers, built the Sheep Gate. This was during the time Cyrus allowed the captives to return to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem. By this Sheep Gate, was a pool. There were five shelters where crippled people waited. One man had waited for 38 years.

The ESV leaves out the last half of verse 3 through verse 4, with a notation; the NASB brackets this portion, with a notation; the portion of the angel stirring the water, curing the first person to step into the troubled water. This is because the older manuscripts, from which they were translated, do not have the "missing" text. It is possible, this was added later to explain why the people were waiting. The King James has this text, explaining why the sick were at the pool:

In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. [v3-4 KJV].
Tertullian, an early Christian writer who lived about 145-220 AD, described this passage by telling the legend of the angel stirring the water, demonstrating this part was not likely in the text, but the story was well known during his time (WH vol 1, pg 190). In this case, it appears the words crept into the passage. The words might have originally been suggested margin notes, eventually creeping into the text (WH vol 1, pg 190-191).

However, whether John included this account in the original text or if it was added later, this did not attest to the validity of the miraculous story of the angel stirring the waters. The account only makes mention of the tradition and the belief, without commentary.

THE PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE

There is a book called "The Purpose Driven Life." The nut of the book, and this is not an endorsement, is instruction to find meaning and purpose to our lives based upon five essential purposes, as determined by the author. The book's theme and the words "purpose driven" suggest a person has control of their life and can set their priorities. However, we know from Scripture, "Man makes his plans, but God directs his steps." [Pro 16:9].

The emphasis of these false Christian self-help books is making your life better; or, as Joel Osteen put it, "Your Best Life Now." These are nothing more than Christianized versions of "Think And Grow Rich" and other secular theologies about putting yourself first. The wisdom of the world is foolishness to God (1Co 3:19).

This crippled man at the pool was there because he was purpose driven to find healing. He had faith in a legend. It is natural for us to pursue a better life for ourselves; it is not natural to surrender our lives to God's will and focus on glorifying Him. Most people going through trials will fight to maintain their dignity and pride; few will humble themselves and submit to God's will. I know this firsthand because I fail most trials God puts me through.

Think about this: What if the sole purpose of your life would be one event that would bring God glory, but it would also bring rejection for you among the people you esteem the most? Few would accept this; most would struggle for the acceptance of their peers. This is
the story of the crippled man at the pool, who was purpose driven to be accepted in the temple among his peers.

On the other hand, God had one purpose for the cripple at the pool: that Christ would be glorified by his healing. This is why he sat at the pool for thirty-eight years. All the while, his desire for 38 years was the vindication of his pride. So, when Christ healed him, rather than give God glory, he sought his own.

THE CRIPPLE'S COMPLAINT

When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. [v6-9a].

When Christ healed the man and told him to pick up his mat and walk, the man obeyed and the healing was immediate. So far the story is good.

But there is an indicator of his attitude just before this healing: Christ asked the man if he wanted to be healed. He could have answered, "yes," but he did not. He complained for he had allowed himself to become bitter in his estate. For thirty-eight years, no one had come to his aid; he was bitter. He was proud and, in 38 years, he never accepted the fact it was God's will for him to be crippled.

Sometimes God asks us to go through difficult times and sometimes the bad times can seem like they drag on forever. Do we give glory to God each and every day or do we allow bitterness to creep in? If we do not surrender our pride to God's will, bitterness will overtake us.

Christ went through a bitter time. He prayed to the Father, who could spare Him but did not. Nonetheless, Christ submitted to the Father's will and was obedient to death. Christ is our example. When
we pray, even if God does not answer according to our will, we must submit ourselves to His will. We must be obedient, even in our attitude.

In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence. Although He was a son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. And being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. [Heb 5:7-9].

THE TRADITIONS OF MAN

Now that day was the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed." But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'" [v9b-11].

When Christ healed the man, He chose to do so on the Sabbath. He fully intended to bring about controversy between Himself and the Jews. In this, He would have the opportunity to reveal who He was and why He had come.

The formerly crippled man was now walking along the road on the Sabbath, carrying his mat. A religious leader, or someone who followed the religious leaders closely, and others with him challenged the man for carrying his mat on the Sabbath; because it was against the law.

It was not against the Law as given by God. God never intended such tedious and oppressive rules. The Old Testament commanded Israelites not to carry commercial burdens or labor for profit on the Sabbath (Exo 20:10; Neh 13:15; Jer 17:21). There is no Scripture against carrying your mat on the Sabbath. The Jews made a tyranny of God's Law and a mockery of Christ's healing.

When confronted by this legalist and his entourage, the formerly crippled man explained he was doing what the man who healed him
told him to do; to take up his mat and walk (v10-11). The man who was healed did not know whom his healer was and he said so.

Not impressed by the miracle, the Jews wanted to know who it was who told him to take up his mat. They did not ask "who made you whole" as that would have exposed their hypocrisy (JFB). It should have been evident to him the Jews intended to prosecute this man. To this, he should have challenged them, as did the man born blind in chapter nine. But the formerly crippled man desired to please them and be accepted in the temple and by his peers.

Jesus asked the question, "If you desire the glory of your peers, rather than the glory of God, how can you be saved?" [v44, edited]

SIN NO MORE

See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you. [v14].

When Jesus met the man at the temple, He warned him to "sin no more." Up to this time, the Bible does not mention his spiritual condition. But the passage reveals he did not seek to glorify God; he sought to promote himself. When he blamed his healer, as the reason for carrying his mat, he justified himself, even if it condemned his healer.

Christ was warning him against sinful thoughts and attitudes. He warned him to guard against his desire to justify himself and please man. According to the Scriptural account, he was not rejoicing and praising God for his healing, while at the temple. Never once did he thank Christ when he saw Him again. From this we can assume his purpose at the temple was social rather than of worshiping God.

Many people go to church. Their purpose is not to worship; they seek to glorify themselves. They use church as a social network or a business network. But they do not seek God's glory.

After Christ warned the man, the Bible says he went away and told the Jews it was Jesus who healed him. He did not listen to Christ's warning and he expressed no gratitude. He wanted to get himself off the hook for carrying his mat. So he turned the information about Christ over to the Jews.
This description is similar to the activities of some who witnessed the raising of Lazarus, in chapter eleven; they went and told the Jews. Their intention was to bring harm to Christ. Though they witnessed a most awesome miracle, they were offended by Christ.

Think about this one more time: What if the sole purpose of your life would be one event that would bring God glory, but it would also bring rejection from among your peers? Few would accept this; most would struggle for the acceptance of their peers. This is the story of the crippled man at the pool. The whole purpose for the life of the crippled man at the pool, the reason God made him wait 38 years to be healed, was for Christ to reveal His power and authority.

Had this man professed Christ or defended Him, he would have been cast out of the temple and faced rejection among his peers. So, even though this man obeyed Christ and took up his bed and walked, it does not appear his faith was a saving faith.

1) He did not thank Christ or rejoice.
2) He did not defend his healer before the Jews.
3) When Jesus told the man to sin no more, he left.
4) He left to tell the Jews who it was who had healed him; knowing full well their animosity against Christ. In other words, he snitched (cf 11:46).
5) He was looking to please man rather than God.

IN CLOSING
We all have a unique life, because God made each and every one of us with His purposes in mind. Nonetheless, our human nature causes us to strive for our kingdom instead of for God's kingdom.

Many men, even professing Christians, strive to be rich or comfortable in this world and God appears to bless their efforts. When we see these apparent blessings, we think God blesses positive thoughts and man's efforts. We get the impression, somehow, wealth confirms a positive relationship with Christ. However, not everyone blessed by God are saved and this account
of the healing of the crippled man demonstrates not all those healed by Christ were saved.

For He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. [Mat 5:45].

God has a common grace to all, but not all who are shown grace are saved. Remember the ten lepers Christ healed (Luk 17:11-19). Only one returned thankful and worshiped Him. Not all who were healed were saved. God has given us an amazing grace in our salvation. Are we thankful? Do we take it for granted? Or, like this man healed, do we think we earned it or it was owed to us?

Though this man sacrificed 38 years of his life, albeit involuntarily, waiting for his special purpose, when he received healing from Christ, rather than giving God glory, he wanted his old bitter life back; healed, of course. He became purpose driven to please man.

God achieved His purpose in this man, but it is too bad, the man was shortsighted and his purpose did not include God's glory.

In all things God is glorified. The purpose of our lives is to glorify God; and every life will do just that. The Bible tells us every knee will bow (Php 2:10-11). The Bible says even the wicked have a purpose in God's economy.

The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble. [Pro 16:4].

It is a sad thing for our lives to be used for God's purpose, only to miss the joy and promise of living for His glory. If we cling to our goals and purposes and are unwilling to submit to God's purposes, we cannot be saved.

When life seems bleak, think about this: Some days the only purpose to my life is to be thankful and give glory to God.
John 5:16-29 Jesus Christ's Authority, The Son Of God

Christ intentionally healed the man on the Sabbath, to bring about a controversy. He exposed the Jews' hypocrisy and His mission to reveal the Father.

And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. [v16-18].

Jesus just demonstrated His authority with the healing of the crippled man at the pool. But the Jews were harassing Him because He healed on the Sabbath. When Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working" [v17] they wanted even more to kill Him.

1) He healed on the Sabbath; and

2) He made Himself equal with God by calling God His Father.

God ordained the Sabbath (Gen 2:3). Therefore, God is Lord of the Sabbath. Jesus claimed to be the Lord of the Sabbath (Mat 12:8; Mar 2:28; Luk 6:5). In this chapter, He confronted the Jews and their hypocrisy by healing on the Sabbath. And a reasonable person would understand He had the authority. How else could He heal on the Sabbath, if it were forbidden by God?

The Jews were not serving God in keeping the Sabbath; they were serving their own rules and traditions. They served these rules by demanding the man not to carry his mat on the Sabbath. The Jews had turned the Sabbath from a day honoring to God into a burden of rules to control people. By making rule upon rule, the priests and their law had become the lord of the Sabbath. Jesus confronted them to reclaim His authority.
For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. [Rom 10:3-4].

Jesus Christ claimed He was equal to the Father when He said, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." [v17]. The Father and the Son are equal. Here is how Jesus further explained it in the following verses:

1) The Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing; that is, the Son glorifies the Father in His work (v19);

2) Greater works than these will He show Him, so you may marvel; that is, the Father glorifies the Son in His work (v20); and

3) Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him; that is, you cannot honor God without honoring both the Father and the Son (v23).

The Jews professed to love the Father, but they hated the Son. But you cannot be saved if you deny the deity of Christ. Therefore, professing Christians, who have a unitarian view of God, such as Pentecostals, cannot be saved. Cults which deny Jesus is God, such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, cannot be saved. A profession of faith does not make you saved.

Who is the liar, but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. [1Jo 2:22-23].

THE SON DOES WHAT HE SEES THE FATHER DOING

So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but
only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise." [v19].

 Twice in this chapter, Jesus said He could do nothing on His own:

  1) v19: The Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing.

  2) v30: I can do nothing on My own … because I seek … the will of Him who sent Me.

 When Jesus said He could do nothing on His own, He did not mean He lacked the power. There is a two-fold meaning to this:

  1) Christ, though fully man, was not conducting His life as fallen men do; He was not acting to promote His own glory; and

  2) Christ did the work He saw His Father doing. This is because the Father and the Son (and the Spirit) are always in complete union with each other and in complete agreement. Not that He needed the Father's permission; they operate together in full accord.

 What Christ told the people was this: What they saw in the healing was not the work of a mere man; it was not the work of a man looking for wealth, power or fame. What they saw was the work of God. In other words, Christ was telling them this: "You say you serve the Father, but God is here."

 The purpose of the work Jesus did on the Sabbath was to demonstrate the work of mercy. From Scripture we know the Father continually performs the work of drawing people to the Son (6:44) and bringing to completion the good work He began in us (Php 1:6). This is a great mercy because we all deserve God's wrath. Jesus performed miracles of healing. These were a sign; not only of the power of God, but also a physical demonstration of His mercy.

 In verse seventeen, Jesus said, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." And, in verse nineteen, "the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise." Not only is the Son working because the Father is working, but they are doing
the same thing. Christ does not work in opposition to or separately from the Father. This is why He said, in verse 30, "I seek not My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

This is not to be confused with a popular heresy that claims Christ was continually adjusting what He was doing to bring His works into conformity with the Father. Over and over, Christ told His disciples He and the Father are one. It was the natural state of Christ while He was on earth to be in conformity with the Father. They were and are in complete communion with each other.

This was a fulfillment of prophecy. This is what God told the people through the prophecy of Moses.

And I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And whoever will not listen to My words that He shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. [Deu 18:18b-19].

THE SON HAS AUTHORITY BECAUSE THE FATHER LOVES HIM

For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all that He Himself is doing. [v20a].

Before the creation of the world, throughout eternity past, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were in perfect fellowship; celebrating each other in perfect love. Here are a few verses from the Gospel of John which confirm the Father loves the Son:

1) [3:35] The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.

2) [10:17] . . . the Father loves Me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.

3) [15:9] As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you.

4) [17:23-24] . . . so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me. . . because You loved Me before the foundation of the world.
In this love between the Father and the Son, the Father shows the Son what He is doing. This is more of a celebration together, rather than a revealing. In the first chapter of Genesis, in the creation account, God made all creation through His Son (Col 1:16). The account says daily God saw all He made was good. This, too, was not a revealing but a celebration.

And greater works than these will He show Him, so that you may marvel. [v20b].

After Christ told the hateful crowd the Father loves Him and confides in Him. He told them He will do greater works than this healing, so they will marvel; or hate Him more. He gave a list of proofs, confirming the Father's love toward the Son and the authority given Him by the Father:

1) **As the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will.** [v21].

Christ's authority will be shown to the world when He raises the dead. He raised the ruler's daughter (Mar 5:22-43); He raised the widow's son (Luk 7:11-15); and He raised Lazarus (11:1-44). In Luke's account, he said "Fear seized them all, and they glorified God." [Luk 7:16]. This should be the reaction, for raising the dead would be a frightful thing to witness. Who can raise anyone from death, except that one have the power of life and death. In this world, there is no greater evidence of authority than raising the dead.

2) **For the Father judges on one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father.** [v22-23a].

Jesus Christ is judge of all the earth (Gen 18:25). Just as Christ has the power of life and death, He will judge; He will judge those who will have eternal judgment or death. Jesus said if you do not believe, you are condemned already (3:18). This, too, should cause men to fear Him; yet these men were not ashamed to condemn the One who will judge them at the end and send them to Hell. Can man rightly judge the Judge of all mankind?

3) **Whoever does not honor the Son, does not honor the Father who sent Him.** [v23b].

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The Jews professed to hold the Father in highest honor. Yet the Son is equal to the Father in honor. Those who wanted to kill him for claiming this honor are guilty of blaspheming the Father. Christ's authority is equal to the Father and this should be a cause of great fear; especially for those who have judged Him. If you do not honor the Son, you cannot honor the Father.

4) **Whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. [v24].**

Christ's authority is demonstrated in mercy granted toward those who receive Him. For all man is guilty of rebellion against God and deserves death; eternal death. Yet, Christ gives mercy to those who call upon Him; those who believe the Father sent Him. No one can grant this mercy without having the power of life and death.

5) **The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. [v25].**

The Apostle Paul wrote, "even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ." [Eph 1:5]. Christ brought life to a dead people. Those whom He has called will hear. Who can raise people to eternal life, except the one who has authority over life and death?

> In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. [1:4].

6) **As the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself. [v26].**

The Father has power over life and death and He has granted this power to the Son. Now, a man has come to earth, with the power of life and death. This should have caused the Jews to awe and fear; they were speaking to the man who had the power of life and death.

7) **He has given Him authority to execute judgment. [v27].**

Not only has the Father granted the Son, or shared with the Son, the power of life and death, He has granted the Son to be the final judge; to be the one who will send a man to Hell. This should have caused great fear, yet the Jews continued to judge Him and mock Him and they set out to kill the One who could send them to Hell.
8) An hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out. [v28-29a].

Even the dead will honor His authority. After Christ rose, graves were opened and the dead testified to Christ's authority.

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. [Mat 27:51–53].

"[T]he Father Himself, who will accept no homage which is not accorded to His own Son." [JFB]. There is no competition among the Godhead. They seek each other's glory and, in this passage, we see this of the Father to the Son and the Son to the Father. The Father has given the Son authority and demands men to honor His Son. The Apostle Paul tells us, the Father is glorified in the Son's glory; "...every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." [Php 2:9-11].

In verse 20, Christ said the Father will show the Son even greater works so the people would marvel. They marveled at the miracles, though most still did not believe. Then in verse 28, after listing several proofs the Father has given Him authority, He told them not to marvel at this, but marvel that all the dead will come at His call and on His command they will be sorted to eternal life or eternal death.

Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear [the Son's] voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. [v28-29].

In a nutshell, He told those who wanted to kill Him it would be His decision whether they would live or die; for eternity. Those who believe in Him will have life (v24). But this did not deter the angry crowd. They continued to set their judgment against the Judge of all the earth.
All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. [Mat 28:18].

Christ is the final judge of all; He gives life and He condemns to death. In verse 23, He said the Father judges no one; it is the Son who judges and the Father gave Him this authority so all may honor the Son. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "every knee will bow and every tongue confess."

Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. [Php 2:9-11].

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. [v24].

The two points to escaping the judgment are:

1) Hear Christ's words: to listen is to obey the words of Christ, the Bible; and

2) Believe in the Father who sent Him: to believe is to do what the Father requires, namely to receive the Son and follow Him.

A man is condemned who will not believe in the name of the only Son of God and whoever does not obey Christ will not see life (3:18, 36). Obedience is the key. Outward form and profession of faith cannot save us. In several passages, the Bible tells us to obey is better than sacrifice (1Sa 15:22; Psa 51:16-17; Pro 21:3; Jer 7:21-23; Hos 6:6; Mat 7:21-23; 12:7).

The modern American gospel says, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." However, Christ never tried to convince unbelievers of the love of God. He warned them of their
judgment if they continued to refuse to believe. Without the fear of God, there can be no repentance. After Christ explained how to be saved, He told His listeners the time is coming "and is now here" when those who are spiritually dead will hear Christ's words and will live (v25). He is calling those who are dead in their sins to hear, repent and be saved.

Christ has the authority to execute all judgment and in this passage He said He will judge. This goes against the modern American gospel, which says Christ did not come to judge, He only came to love and to save. We contended against this false teaching in our examination of 3:17.

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. [Dan 12:2].

Christ has warned us of the judgment to come, when everyone in the tombs will come out to be judged (v28). Those who believe will go to eternal life and those who refuse will go to eternal damnation. The Jews were judging Him and wanted to kill Him, but Christ warned them, He will judge and His judgment is just because He seeks the will of the Father. His judgment will be final; He will sort those who will have eternal life or eternal death. The people did not hear and they did not fear.

This is Christ's call to repentance. Take notice: He did not woo nor did He beg; He gave warning. There is no salvation in Christ without a fear of God. He warned those who harden their hearts, but He spoke promise to those who listen. He said, "those who hear will live" and "those who have done good to the resurrection of life." [v25,29].

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead. [Act 17:30-31].
IN CLOSING

Christ was faced with an angry crowd of Jews. They preferred to accuse the Messiah, rather than give glory to God for healing a man who was crippled for 38 years.

Christ's defense was simple: 1) He said He was working as His Father was working, even now; and 2) He spoke of the Father's love for Him and the authority which was given to Him.

Christ's authority is an important matter. It is for this reason we are commanded to teach and preach the Gospel.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. [Mat 28:18-20].

In the passage, Jesus said, "truly, truly" three times. Truly, truly means we need to pay attention.

1) [v19]. Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing.
   • The Son and the Father are one and Christ came to make the Father known (1:18).

2) [v24]. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.
   • Once again, the Father and the Son. You cannot have one without the other.
   • To escape the judgment, listen to what Christ has to say and believe, because He comes from the Father.

3) [v25]. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.
• Christ was speaking to a hard hearted crowd who refused to listen.

• Christ has brought the words of life. Will we hear them?

Christ used the opportunity of giving His defense to share the Gospel. He did not preach the modern American gospel of God's love. He warned the people He is the judge and they will be judged. He told them whoever hears His words and believes in the Father who sent Him will not be judged. He has promised life to dead men; if they listen, they will pass from death to eternal life.

God calls all men to repent and believe. Have you turned from your sin to follow Christ?
In the last passage, Christ gave a call to repent and a warning of judgment. In this passage, He continued with His warnings.

I can do nothing on My own. As I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I seek not My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. If I alone bear witness about Myself, My testimony is not true. There is another who bears witness about Me, and I know that the testimony that He bears about Me is true. [v30-32].

When Jesus said if He alone testified of Himself, His testimony was not true, He did not mean His testimony was false. He was using the Old Testament standard of two or three witnesses, Jesus said if He, as a man, testified of Himself, this would not be enough to be true or reliable. With this reasoning, what makes His testimony true or reliable for evidence sake, is the Father testifies as well.

A single witness shall not suffice. . . Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. [Deu 19:15].

Christ's testimony of Himself is valid, because He is God. But for the sake of the law, He produced the Father's testimony as evidence. Even to this day, the Father testifies to the truth of His Son and He has left us the Scriptures, the Word of God, to confirm this testimony.

In verses 21-29, Christ gave a list of reasons why the Father loves the Son and has given Him authority. In this passage, because the people were unwilling to receive His testimony, Christ gave a list of five witnesses:

1) **John the Baptist**: You asked John the Baptist and he bore witness to the truth (v33-35);

2) **The works**: The works that the Father has given Me to accomplish bear witness about Me (v36);
3) **The Father**: The Father who sent Me has borne witness about Me (v37-38);

4) **The Scriptures**: You search the Scriptures and it is they that bear witness about Me (v39); and

5) **Moses**: If you believed Moses, you would believe Me for he wrote of Me (v45-47).

The Apostle John recorded the questioning of John the Baptist by the Jewish leaders in 1:19-28. Jesus recalled this event to the crowd. He said, "You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth." [v33].

The Jews thought the Baptist may be the Messiah; so they questioned him because they wanted to know. They may have accepted it if the Baptist would have claimed this glory for himself. For, surely, many times before and even after this, the Jews were deceived by false christs. Here and now, stands the true Messiah before them and they are not willing to accept His testimony.

> Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. [v34].

In referring to the testimony of John the Baptist, Jesus said He did not need man's testimony. John was a fallen, imperfect man and Christ had the testimony of the Father. Nonetheless, the Jews held the Baptist's word to be credible: "He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light." [v35]. Though Christ did not need man's testimony, His aim in presenting it was to hand them proof at the level they would accept "so that you may be saved."

God knows those who are His and He calls to them. In calling to the elect, the carnal are given opportunity to hear and believe, but they will not receive the message.

> But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about Me that the Father has sent Me. [v36].
Mans' testimony is fickle and untrustworthy. Christ reiterated to the crowd He had the testimony of the Father and this testimony was evidenced by the works the Father had given Him to do. Even the very work of healing a man on the Sabbath was from the Father and was evidence He had the Father's testimony. The very work for which He was being attacked and accused was evidence of the Father's testimony. It should have been obvious, if God was against Him, He could not perform the miracles.

And the Father who sent Me has Himself borne witness about Me. His voice you have never heard, His form you have never seen, and you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom He has sent. You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me, yet you refuse to come to Me that you may have life. [v37-40].

Jesus told them the Father testified He is the Christ. But they do not hear His voice because they do not have the Word abiding in them. Jesus said His sheep hear His voice (10:27). The Jews studied the Scripture, but the Word was not in them.

Jesus told them they have not seen the Father. Jesus told Philip, if he had seen Him, he had seen the Father (14:9). Even the Scriptures testify of Christ, but they cannot see Him; therefore, they cannot see the Father. The Jews studied the Scripture, but the Word was not in them.

You can be in the Word all day long, but if you do not believe the words of Christ, the One sent by the Father, then the words of Scripture do not abide in you.

The Jews studied the Scriptures diligently, but Jesus said they did not have God's Word abiding in them. Many people read the Word daily but they do not know the Scriptures nor do they have understanding. Jesus said they do not hear because they are not His sheep (10:26). You can find peace and contentment in the Word and still be on your way to Hell.
Jesus said they believe they have eternal life from their much study of the Scripture, but they cannot; for the Word they study bears witness Jesus Christ is the Messiah, but they refuse to believe. Here is the Messiah telling them to their face what is the core of the Scriptures and who it is standing before them and they still are not convinced. They refuse the truth.

The Jews picked which Scriptures they wanted to believe. Many people pick and choose what passages they want to believe to justify their lifestyles. They read the Word because it makes them feel good. They believe their diligence in the Word will save them in the end. These people have a head knowledge of Scripture but they do not carry it in their hearts. They do not have the Word abiding in them.

Many people read and study the Word of God but are not saved. Jesus said we must be in the Word and the Word must abide in us, for us to know the truth and to be set free (8:31-38). Does the Word abide in you?

I do not receive glory from people. But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. [v41-43].

His final witness in this list is Moses, but, first, He reminded them of four things:

1) Christ needs not the testimony of people for His account of Himself to be true.

2) The Jews do not have fellowship with God, they are not saved, therefore, their testimony cannot be true.

3) The Messiah stands before them but they will not receive Him.

4) The Jews have been deceived by false christs, therefore, their judgment cannot be trusted.

Yes, Jesus brought up the fact they have been deceived by false christs before and willingly so. However, when the real Messiah
stands before them, they refuse to receive Him. The false christs never threatened their authority, while the real Christ claims all authority for Himself. This is the core problem.

The Jews patted each other on the back and elevated each other to positions of authority. They looked for the glory of themselves and their peers. Their glory was built on a foundation of lies, while they ignored the glory of the truth. This led Jesus to ask the question, "If you are looking for the approval of man, how can you be saved?"

How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? [v44].

The Bible contains many passages warning us to trust in God and not in man.

It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. [Psa 118:8-9].

As professing Christians, we may agree with this in theory, but what do we actually do? Do we seek God's glory?

How do we look at the world and how do we express the truth of God? Do we look to the Word of God in the formulation of our opinions or do we mix it up with the wisdom of this world? Do we look for ways to make the Gospel pleasing to the world or do we preach and teach the Word as written? Do we declare the authority of Christ and the glory of God?

How do we view our position? Do we accept where God has put us or do we desperately seeks man's help to advance our situation? Do we struggle for the comfort of this world or is our hope in God's glory?

The list of comparisons could go on: we can say we seek God's glory but our actions can show we are seeking our own. It is natural to seek the approval of our peers, but if we are truly saved, we will lay this aside to gain God's approval.

For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still
trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. [Gal 1:10].

Christ did not need the testimony of those who were accusing Him. Though studied in the Scriptures, the Jews were not saved and were easily deceived. Furthermore, they could not be saved because they took glory in the praise of others rather than working for the praise of God.

With this foundation laid, Christ brought out the ace card; His ace witness, if you will: Moses. Once again, Christ did not need the testimony of man, but the accusers did and Moses was the highest testimony in all in their book.

Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words? [v45-47].

The five books of Scripture which Moses wrote are called the Pentateuch. The Jews called these books the Torah and they include Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Some Jews expand the Torah beyond these five books, but for the sake of this conversation we are limiting the definition to this. The Hebrews called these books the words of God, written by Moses with tears (Jewish tradition).

In the Torah, Moses prophesied the Messiah would come.

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers; it is to him you shall listen. [Deu 18:15].

This verse and the surrounding passage set the criteria for all prophets God would send. All the prophets spoke of the Messiah who would come and these words of Moses were the prophecy of the Messiah.

According to Moses, God would put His words in the Messiah's mouth and He would speak everything God commands (Deu 18:18).
This prophecy was fulfilled in their hearing, yet they refused to listen.

And whoever will not listen to My words that He shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. [Deu 18:19].

Christ warned them He was speaking the words the Father had given Him; He did not speak of His own accord (v19,30).

He warned them He would judge who would live to eternal life or go to eternal death (v28-29).

He warned them they were more interested in their own glory than in the glory of God and, therefore, could not believe or be saved (v44).

He warned them of judgment because they did not believe Moses or the Messiah (v46-47).

Moses warned them whoever does not listen to the Messiah will face God's judgment (Deu 18:19).

ABIDING IN CHRIST IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

1) [5:38] "… you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe the One whom He has sent."

2) [6:56] "Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."

3) [8:31-32] "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

4) [15:4] "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me."

5) [15:5] "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."
6) [15:6] "If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned."

7) [15:7-8] "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples."

8) [15:9] "As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Abide in My love."

9) [15:10] "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."

**IN CLOSING**

Christ presented five witnesses who declared He was the Messiah. But the people still refused to believe.

Many people say they believe in God, but Jesus said, "you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe the One whom He has sent." [v38]. Without the Word of God in you, you cannot truly believe in Christ.

But reading the Bible is not enough. The Jews knew the Scriptures and had much of it memorized, yet they were not saved. They knew the writings of Moses and the Prophets, yet they refused the Messiah when He came.

Jesus made the case that when people come with pomp and ceremony professing great works and ministries we are quick to go see them and praise them to others. Nothing has changed, because most people today are fascinated by popular, self-professed spiritual leaders.

How often we hear the praise of famous professing Christian writers. We read their books, yet we spend so little time studying the Scriptures. Most of these authors focus on making the reader feel good rather than convicting the reader to draw closer to God, but we love them for it; don't we? We are so easily deceived.
Jesus asked the question, "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?" [v44]. Let His words sink in.

When we are chasing after man's glory, or the praise of man, whether this be for man's approval, status at work, building a network for business or political gain, money, power, fame and such, we are building our kingdom and not seeking after God's kingdom.

"How can you believe?" This is a convicting question; and Jesus was talking to people who studied and memorized the Scripture. Many people profess a faith in Christ because they think they believe, but they seek after praise from one another; they seek the approval of the world. They cannot be saved.

Like the Jews, many may spend much time in study of the Word. But please understand, studying the Bible is not going to save you. Do you seek the glory that comes from the only God?

Jesus said, "I can do nothing on My own." He said He did all things through His Father. Jesus is God, yet as a man He relied solely upon the Father. Do we as mere men glory in our own strength and wisdom? Or do we cling to Christ and rely upon Him for our life and walk? The Apostle Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ." [Php 4:13].
John 6:1-9 Large Crowds And The Disciples' Small Faith

John chapter six gives the account of Christ's rise and fall in popular opinion. His rising popularity was due to the miracles of healing and feeding thousands of people. The people loved what they could get from Him. But watch His fall as His followers desert Him when He said they must desire Him more than food and drink.

A LARGE CROWD WAS FOLLOWING HIM

After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberius. [v1].

The Sea of Galilee, or Tiberius, was central or hometown to the lives of the disciples. By this sea, is where Peter, Andrew, James and John lived and did their fishing and where Christ met the disciples and revealed Himself after His resurrection (Mat 26:32; 28:7,10,16).

The words "after this" in verse one, refers to the event where Jesus healed a man who was crippled for thirty-eight years and after He declared to His critics He was equal with the Father and had authority to judge all men.

And a large crowd was following Him, because they saw the signs that He was doing on the sick. [v2].

The leaders were accusing Him for healing on the Sabbath, but the people were curious of the man who could heal the sick. One could say the desire for free healthcare is not unique to our current generation.

All the Gospels have the story of the feeding of the five thousand (Mat 14:13-21; Mar 6:32-44; Luk 9:10-17). The Apostle John seldom repeated events found in the other Gospels and, then, only to add something of significance. In this story, John brought out more clearly the kind of Messiah the people wanted would be one who would be able and willing to provide for their physical needs (WH, vol1 pg 216).
Human nature does not change: Man wants a king or a hero to look up to. Rather than seek and worship his Creator, man desires the exaltation of man.

- Not long after the flood, the nations came together to exalt man at the Tower of Babel (Gen 9).
- After God brought the people of Israel out of slavery and into the promised land, they demanded a king to provide them safety and economic status among the nations (1Sa 8).
- Prior to the arrival of Jesus, the Jews under Roman dominion were looking for the promised exaltation of Israel. The Jews envisioned a Messiah to bring them out of oppression and exalt their status among the nations as the prophets foretold.
- After Jesus fed the five thousand, He became that hero. With their new hero, they would have the added benefits of free food and healthcare.

Man does not change: Here we are, two millennia later, still looking for heroes; glory for ourselves. After two centuries of freedom under God in America, the people are willing to throw God-given freedoms out the door for the promise of financial security and government provision. Mans' natural desire is not for God, His provision and His worship. Mans' desire is to exalt himself, oppress his enemies and get free stuff.

If Jesus Christ had been an aspiring politician or community leader, He could have used this popularity to propel himself to greater fame and power. In Philippians chapter two, Paul wrote the Son did not count His equality with the Father as something to be grasped or clung to, but He was willing to become a servant (Php 2:6-7). Incarnate as man, Jesus Christ was at the height of His popularity, still He did not grasp this power.

The Book of Hebrews describes Christ's incarnation as "learning obedience" (Heb 5:8). This is not in the same sense we learn obedience. We learn obedience by failure and discipline. There was no disobedience in Christ to correct. He was obedient to reveal the Father to man and He never sought His own glory.
COMMON GRACE IS NOT SALVATION

Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. Lifting up His eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward Him... [v3-5a].

According to several commentaries, these mountains were on the East side of the Sea. The Passover was close at hand and soon they would be making their way across the sea and back to Jerusalem.

Jesus sat down on the mountain with His disciples. The context implies the opportunity was for rest and for teaching His disciples.

Jesus saw the crowds coming. He was filled with compassion for them. He was concerned the people would need food to eat.

His compassion for the crowds is an example of God's common grace. The Bible says, "For He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." [Mat 5:45] It also says God "is kind to the ungrateful and the evil." [Luk 6:35b]. He fed the crowds, who were ungrateful and questioned His authority.

Many people have the mistaken idea that every person Christ healed, fed and blessed are saved. When people believe God worked a healing or other miracle in their life, they often have the false belief this is evidence they are saved. They have mistaken God's common grace for His saving grace.

When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, "Lord, open to us," then He will answer you, "I do not know where you come from." Then you will begin to say, "We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets." But He will say, "I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from Me, all you workers of evil!" [Luk 13:25-27].

The only evidence of being saved is the work of God in our lives. Are we a new creation? Is our desire for God rather than for...
ourselves? Do we spend time in the Word and in prayer? Do we see a love for others in our lives where once we were filled with anger and hate? This is the work of God in our lives and these are examples of His saving grace working in us.

A TEST OF FAITH

Lifting up His eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward Him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" He said this to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little." [v5-7].

As a test, Christ asked Philip where they would buy bread to feed these people. Now Philip had witnessed several miracles of the Lord. One would think his natural response would be to affirm he knew Jesus had everything under control. But he did not say anything like this. He spoke from what he saw and he saw even two-thirds of a years' wages was not enough money to buy bread for all these people. Philip failed the test.

The Apostle Paul wrote God is able to do more than we can ask or imagine (Eph 3:20). We have seen God work miracles in our lives and the lives of our Christian brothers. Yet, how often when we pray, do we limit God to the resources we see at hand? or we see the problem larger than we see God?

We are like Peter, who, while walking on the water, was distracted by the storm around him (Mat 14:28-33). He sank because he was trusting in what he saw, rather than staying fixed upon Him who is in control.

One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" [v8-9].
According to Mark's account of this event, Jesus instructed the disciples to find out what food was on hand. In John's account, Andrew brought what he found to Christ: a young boy with a little bread and a little fish. He brought the boy and his small lunch, but he expressed his doubt, saying this could never begin to feed the people. So, Andrew also failed the test.

Nonetheless, Christ used these small items to feed a multitude of people. The people were fed from the handful and there were basketfuls left over.

For the benefit of the people, Christ used what was at hand, but the fact of the matter is He did not need this, as He is the same One who created the earth and the heavens out of nothing, by His spoken word.

The next time we are faced with trying circumstances, whether they be financial, physical, relational or even persecution, we can choose to be distracted by the problem and our lack of resources or we can bring the little we have to Christ. Knowing this: He already knows what He is going to do and He is able to do more than we can ask or imagine.

  casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you. [1Pe 5:7].

God sits on His throne. He is not moved or distressed by all the commotions going on in our lives or around the world. He does not react to world events. Everything is going according to His plan. And the seraphim, which stand around His throne, praise Him, crying "Holy, holy holy." [Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8].

**IN CLOSING**

After Christ healed the man who was crippled for thirty-eight years and then defended His deity to the cynical leaders of the temple, He went away to the mountains on the Eastern side of the Sea of Galilee.

He sat down to rest and to teach His disciples, but a large crowd had followed Him because of the miracles He had performed. It was a large number: 5000 men plus women and children.
The disciples had no idea how Jesus was going to feed all these people. They did not believe; they expressed their doubt. Nonetheless, Jesus performed this miracle, despite their lack of faith. God does all things for His glory and does not depend upon man.

How often when we need God's help do we express our doubt? We know we serve a God who can do anything. We know He cares for us as much as He cared for this crowd of people who needed food. Let us not fail the test; let us not express our doubt; let us glorify God by acknowledging all things are under His control and look to Him to provide our needs.

He has designed all things and wherever we are, right now, is absolutely where He wants us. He makes no mistakes and no situation causes Him distress. For He is holy, holy, holy.
John 6:10-21 Feeding Five Thousand And Walking On Water

In this passage of Scripture there are two great miracles: Jesus feeding the great crowd of people and Jesus walking on the water. These miracles proclaim He is the Creator and He is Lord over all He created. These miracles are also a test of faith for His disciples.

Christ had the people sit down in the grassy area. There were about five thousand men, plus women and children. Some historians speculate as many as 20,000 people were there.

Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted.

[John 6:11]

Jesus took the food and gave thanks. Here is the Son of God; He who made all creation and He certainly could make as much food as He wanted, but He gave thanks to the Father for His provision. He is our example: we ought always to be thankful and we ought always thank God for His provision of food. Nothing comes to us but what the Father has provided (1Co 4:7). Our thankfulness and our fear of God should outweigh our hurry or our fear of what others may think.

Everyone received as much food as they could eat. Then Christ had the disciples gather up the left overs; the food the people had not eaten. He did this "that nothing may be lost." Even though He made enough food to feed this large crowd from five loaves and two fish and He could make abundantly more, He did not want any of it wasted. The message here is, God gives us all we need, but when we waste, we take His provision frivolously.

The disciples gathered twelve baskets filled with left overs. We are not told how large were these baskets, but if they were used for gathering, we can be certain they were not small. Five barley loaves and two fish, which was not enough food to fill one of these baskets, became enough food to feed more than five thousand people and fill twelve large baskets with left overs. This was some miracle.
When the people saw the sign that He had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!" [v14].

This Prophet was the one prophesied by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15. This prophecy laid the foundation for future prophets, but it was also a specific prophecy of a singular, special prophet who would be the Messiah.

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers; it is to Him you shall listen. [Deu 18:15].

Many of these people realized the Messiah had come. What did they want now?

Perceiving then that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by Himself. [v15].

They wanted to make Him king. They believed, like Nicodemus and the Jewish leaders, the Messiah would overthrow Israel's enemies and establish them above all the nations. They wanted this to happen. They were looking for someone to deliver them from oppression and exalt their nation.

But Moses had told the people how to know this was the Messiah:

And I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And whoever will not listen to My words that He shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. [Deu 18:18b-19].

Jesus said He did nothing except what He saw the Father doing (5:19) and He spoke what He heard from the Father (8:28; 12:49). This was a fulfillment of prophecy. This is what God told the people through the prophecy of Moses. He warned the people not to neglect the words of the Messiah.

The people saw the miracles and enjoyed the free food and the free health care but they did not want to know God. They were not interested Christ's mission was to make the Father known (1:18).
They wanted more comfort in their lives: they wanted to honor the man who would exalt their nation.

This should have put the fear of God in the people. God said the Messiah will tell them everything God commands and if anyone does not listen they will be condemned. If they truly believed what Moses had written, their desire would have been to learn what God commanded. But, just like the Israel and Judah of old, they preferred the comforts of this world, rather than the discipline of living in the fear of the Lord.

The natural man strives to live a life of comfort. Few desire to know God and be right with Him. Sure, many desire to escape eternal Hell and they want to be assured of eternal life in Heaven. Most professing Christians want to be satisfied with a god they have made in their own image; one who approves of them. They want to know they are going to Heaven, but they don't want to learn of God; to know who He is and what He requires of man.

No one understands; no one seeks for God. [Rom 3:11].

We can become so preoccupied with having to make a living, paying bills and seeking for comfort and peace that we can miss out on fellowship with God. The natural man does not seek after God. It takes time and effort to seek after God. Ask yourself if you truly have time for God or whether you are professing a hollow faith.

CHRIST'S WALK ON THE WATER

When evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." Then they were glad to take Him into the boat, and immediately
the boat was at the land to which they were going. [v16-21].

In this passage, there are two miracles, which are evidence that Christ is God; He is Lord over all creation.

1. The first miracle was His walking on the water. He overcame the laws of physics and nature to walk on water. He did this in the midst of a storm and the storm did not deter Him. This gave evidence He is Master of creation.

2. The second miracle was as soon as He got into the boat, which had taken four hours to row half way across the lake, the boat and all the people in it arrived at their destination. He is Lord over time and space.

According to Matthew and Mark, as soon as Christ got in the boat, the storm ended; this is a third miracle. All these miracles prove He is God; He is the Creator and He is Lord over all He has made.

It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. [v17b].

Before the miracles, before they left the shore, the disciples waited for Him, thinking He would come. But they finally left when it was dark. This happened in early Spring and without Daylight Savings Time; so darkness likely fell between 6:30pm and 7pm.

From the evening, the disciples were rowing while Jesus remained on the mountain to pray. The first watch of the night was between 6pm to 9pm. Early in the morning, during the fourth watch of the night (between 3am and 6am), Jesus approached the boat, walking on the water.

The men rowing the boat were experienced fishermen. Nonetheless, after eight to nine hours, they had barely navigated three to four miles. They were fighting a fierce storm and they were likely exhausted by the time Jesus caught up with them.

When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." [v19-20].
Matthew and Mark gave the account the disciples thought He was a ghost (Mat 14:26; Mar 6:49). The accounts of Matthew, Mark and John each tell us the disciples were afraid when they saw Jesus walking on the water.

When He revealed it was He, the disciples believed Him and took Him into the boat. Matthew gave the account of Peter requesting to walk on water, which Christ granted. Peter became filled with fear when he took his eyes off Christ to focus on the storm around him (Mat 14:30).

The disciples took Him into the boat and immediately the boat was at the destination shore. It had taken these experienced fishermen eight to nine hours to row half way across the lake (three to four miles). When Christ got in the boat, the travel was completed; immediately.

Christ is in control; whether this be control of the forces of nature, performing miracles, providing food or completing our destination.

We work hard and sometimes we think we "make things happen." But Solomon wrote, man makes his plans, but God directs his steps (Pro 16:9) and man has many plans, but it is God's purpose which will stand (Pro 19:21). It is God who "makes things happen." Nothing happens outside of God's will and purposes. Just as it was futile for these experienced fishermen to be rowing against the storm, it is futile for us to try to make things happen outside God's will. When we take Christ into the boat, if you will, He works all things for His glory and we get to participate in this.

... For You have done for us all our works. [Isa 26:12].

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths. [Pro 3:5-6]

IN CLOSING

After Jesus fed the great crowd of people from five small loaves and two small fish, they believed He was the promised Messiah and they
wanted to make Him king. They had seen the miracles of healing and had tasted the free food. They wanted to make Him king so they would have relief from their oppressors, free food and free health care. They wanted their nation to be great again.

This is the modern American gospel: come to Jesus, He will make your life better, easier. Ask and it will be given... The natural tendency of man is to make God in his own image; a god who will do everything man wants. He is willing to make God king in exchange for prosperity, peace and comfort. But he is not willing for this King to be Lord of his life.

To escape the crowd, Christ sent His disciples off to the other side of the lake. He tarried to spend time in prayer with the Father. After 8 or 9 hours, these experienced fishermen had rowed no more than three or four miles, because the storm was so fierce.

Christ walked on the water to get to them. This was not frivolous; this was to prove to His followers He is God. He caught up to them, which means He walked on the stormy waters faster than these experienced fishermen were rowing.

The disciples were afraid when they saw Him. Upon His reassurance, they took Him into the boat. Though they were in the middle of the lake, immediately, the boat reached their destination. This again proved Christ is God Almighty.

Christ is the Creator and is, therefore, Lord over all creation. Everything will happen in God's time for He is not limited by time and space.

- Are we like the crowd Christ fed, seeking what we can get from God or do we heed the warning of Moses and listen to all Christ the Messiah has told us?
- Are we seeking to know more about Christ and what God requires from us or do we search the Scriptures for promises to make us more prosperous and comfortable?
- Are we making God in our own image? Do we conform God to our standards or do we seek to become more like Him?
John 6:22-35 Jesus Christ Is The Bread Of Life

The crowd Jesus fed professed to believe Him and they sought after Him. Jesus used this opportunity to speak to the people about bread from Heaven and to proclaim Himself the Bread of Life. But these professing believers, who were bent on making Him a king, would reject Him altogether.

On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but that His disciples had gone away alone. [v22].

The crowd remembered He had sent the disciples away in a boat; and there was only one boat. The Bible is not clear whether the people suspected Christ had performed another miracle or whether they thought He had walked all night and didn't sleep. No mention is made that anyone suggested Christ might have walked across the sea. Nonetheless, the people noted the anomaly.

Boats from Tiberius picked up the people and took them to the opposite side of the lake where Jesus was (v23-24). It is possible these boats had been fishing. Maybe fishing wasn't so good this morning and there was more money to be made ferrying the people who were eager to follow Jesus to Capernaum.

When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" [v25].

When the people found Him, they wanted to know the secret how He had arrived without a boat. If the Son of Man had been self-seeking, this would have been a glorious time to tell them how He had walked across the water and maybe could have given them a short demonstration. This would have been the response of a natural, self-seeking man. However, although Christ's miracles were signs of His Deity, He did done of them to glorify Himself.

He preformed the miracle of healings as an exhibit of God's common grace and, among the elect, it was proof He was God.
Special miracles, such as walking on the water, calming storms and transfigurations were reserved for the disciples, so they would know for certain He was the Messiah sent from God. But to the people, His response was the same as always: He cut to their need; their need to repent and follow Him.

**DO NOT WORK TO SATISFY YOURSELF**

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on Him God the Father has set His seal." [v26-27].

Christ got to the heart of the matter. He rebuked them because they were seeking Him to enhance their personal prosperity: free food and healing their maladies. The signs He did proved He was God. They could not see this, because they were not seeking to know Him.

How many professing Christians are truly following Christ in obedience and the fear of God? How many have just added their faith to their lifestyle, if you will, because they feel Christ completes them in some way or He answers their prayers in ways which satisfy them? We should look at our life and consider our motives for professing Christ. Do we proclaim God's kingdom or do we prefer to build our own with God's help?

Christ's four part admonition in verse 27:

1) Do not work for food that perishes.
   a) That is, food which satisfies physical desires.

2) Work for the food which endures for eternal life.
   a) We find in verse 29, this food is to "believe in Him whom He has sent." We find in verse 50, this food is to eat of Christ; chew on the Word.

3) Work for the food the Son of Man will give you.
a) He gives us life. He will lay down His life for our sins to satisfy the wrath of God (v51). Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life (v40).

4) For on Him God the Father has set His seal.

a) We know we love God if we keep his commands and we receive this seal, the promised Holy Spirit (14:15,23; Eph 1:13).

We looked at what it meant to set a seal. The verse is, "Whoever receives His testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true." [3:33]. To set a seal is to certify; the seal certifies the genuineness of the article and certifies who sent it. In any case, it is not a private thing, it is a public display.

In this verse (v27), the Father has set His seal on the Son. The Father certified who was sent and who sent it. He has made it known Jesus Christ is His Son, the chosen Messiah and that the Son was sent by Him. Not only did the Father certify Him through many prophecies in the Old Testament; He also certified Him by voice at Christ's baptism (1:31-34) and He certified Christ through the miracles He performed (10:38; 14:11), including the feeding of the five thousand, which these people witnessed. Finally, He certified the Son by raising Him from the dead.

Then they said to Him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" [v28].

In verse 28, it appears the people may have taken His admonition to heart, but they also misunderstood what He said. They were accustomed to the Jewish faith, which was salvation by works. So, they asked Christ what they must do to be doing the works of God.

Their question was, "What work could we do to be saved?" Their religion already exceeded God's Law with rule upon rule and they foolishly prided themselves they kept these rules. They believed salvation was based upon what they did They believed their righteousness would bring them salvation. They believed they already did more than God required, so what more could they do, was the question.
Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." [v29].

Once again, Jesus' answer struck to the heart of the issue. Jesus' answer was, if you believe, this is the work of God. The natural man cannot believe unless God draws Him (v44).

To know Christ and to believe in Him is no achievement of man, but the gift of God. God alone can create and preserve faith in us. [Martin Luther, Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, pg 19].

Salvation is based upon what God has done through Christ. To be saved, we must believe; to believe is a gift from God.

For God has done what the Law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. [Rom 8:3].

Our work cannot accomplish nor earn our salvation. Without God's Spirit working our regeneration, our hearts are in opposition to God. Therefore, salvation is the result of God's work in our lives.

Jesus told them they must believe in the One whom God sent. The people knew Christ was referring to Himself. So, despite the miracles of healing and the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, they demanded to see a sign for proof He was the One sent by God. They continued to resist the teachings of Christ, because they had hard hearts, indeed.

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's Law; indeed, it cannot. [Rom 8:7].

MANNA IN THE WILDERNESS

So they said to Him, "Then what sign do You do, that we may see and believe You? What work do You perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" [v30-31].

If Christ had come to fulfill their needs, they could accept Him as the Messiah. But Christ called man to repentance; to trust God to
work salvation in their lives. This was a stumbling block to them; it went against everything they were taught. It went against their pride.

The crowd wanted a sign He was the Messiah. Just the day before, they were convinced and planning to make Him king, by force. These were professing believers. This demonstrates the fickleness of man. It also demonstrates man's tendency to make God into a god of man's own imagination; a god man can accept; a god who serves man. Few are willing to fear God and repent; and this is the work of God.

The people challenged Him, in verse 31, "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness. . . " We can see God is in full control, even to directing the thoughts and arguments of man. They turned the conversation to bread and Jesus fully intended to talk to them about the Bread of Life. Christ fed the people physical bread the day before and now He called the people to come and eat the food which endures to eternal life (v27). He would reveal He was this Bread of Life.

"Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness. . . " [v31]. In other words, "sure you fed five thousand yesterday, but Moses fed hundreds of thousands in the desert every day." Though John's account does not say they ascribed this work to Moses, we know they did because Jesus corrected them in the following verse.

Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave 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." [v32-33].

Not only did Jesus take the credit the people had given to Moses and gave it rightly to God the Father, but He told them the Father gives the true bread. The Father gave manna and the Father gives the Bread of Life. In this explanation, Christ used the manna as a type of the Messiah. Therefore, the true bread or the Messiah is greater than the manna.

1) This bread comes down from Heaven; and
2) This bread gives life to the world.

They said to Him, "Sir, give us this bread always." [v34].

Just like the Samaritan woman at the well, after learning of the water which quenches all thirst, she wanted this water. These people, after learning of the bread which gives life, they wanted this bread "from now on..." or "always" because they were looking to satisfy a physical need. Just the day before, they wanted to make Christ king so they would not have to toil for food anymore.

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

When the people asked for this bread, Jesus told them it was He.

I am the bread of life; whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst. [v35-36].

1) Whoever comes to Me shall not hunger;

2) Whoever believes in Me shall never thirst.

These are not two options of the faith: you cannot come to Christ without believing and you cannot believe without coming to Him.

These people were self-professed believers. The people were there: they were physically present with Christ. However, He rebuked them because they had not come to Him, they did not receive His words and obey.

These people thought Christ was a great man and they saw and testified He could do great things; in fact, they were going to make Him king. But knowledge is not believing and even in their believing they were arguing with Him. Many professing Christians argue with Christ; they contend against Scripture they do not like. Just as these people professed to believe, some professing Christians "feel" like they believe but they are not saved.

IN CLOSING

So, here we have seen the unbelief of professing believers.
When they arrived on the other side of the lake and found Him, they asked how or when He arrived there. He did not answer their questions; He revealed their motives. He told them they were not seeking Him because the signs of His divinity; they were seeking Him because they wanted physical satisfaction.

The modern American gospel says, "Come to Jesus. He will make your life better." Many people think they believe but they believe in a god made in their own image. They seek to use their faith to validate their comfort or pursuits. They do not believe in the God of the Bible.

Jesus said, "this is the work of God that you believe." Salvation is all of God; all effort on our part is useless (v63). The next time we look at this chapter, Jesus will tell us, "No one can come to Him unless the Father draw him." [v44].

Has the Father drawn you? If you seek Jesus to become more like Him, this is the work of God. If you seek Jesus for what He can do for your life, this is a false faith. Remember, this crowd was largely professing believers, but Jesus will soon tell them, they are not saved at all.
I AM In The Gospel Of John

1. [6:35] I AM the bread of life; whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst (see also 6:48, et al).

2. [8:12] I AM the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

3. [8:24] . . .unless you believe that I AM, you will die in your sins. ["he" (I AM He) is not in the Greek].

4. [8:28] . . .When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM, and that I do nothing on My own authority, but speak just as the Father taught Me. ["he" (I AM He) is not in the Greek].

5. [8:58] Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

6. [10:7,9] Truly, truly, I say to you, I AM the door of the sheep. . .I AM the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

7. [10:11,14] I AM the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. . .I AM the good shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me, just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

8. [11:25] I AM the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live.


10. [15:1] I AM the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser (see also v5).

11. [18:5] Jesus said to them, "I AM." ["he" (I AM He) is not in the Greek] (see also v6,8).

12. [18:37] You say that I AM a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world. . .
Several of these declarations come with additional titles, such as bread or life, light of the world, door, Good Shepherd, resurrection and the life, way, truth and life, true vine and such. Some of these declarations are plain and simple: "I AM."

**HISTORY OF I AM**

The first instance of God using the name "I AM" to make an absolute declaration who He is, was in the book of Exodus. God said to Moses, "I AM who I AM." [Exo 3:14].

Moses had run away from Egypt after killing a man. He fancied himself a deliverer of Israel, but after killing an Egyptian who had struck an Israelite and knowing he had been discovered, he ran to escape the authorities (Exo 2:11-15). Now, he was tending sheep in the desert and he came upon a burning bush which would not quench. God appeared to Moses through this burning bush and told him He was going to bring Israel out of Egypt and He would send Moses to speak to Pharaoh. Not only was Pharaoh the last man Moses wanted to see, but he doubted even the people of Israel would listen to him.

Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM who I AM." And He said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" [Exo 3:13-14].

Before Moses' time, God declared Himself to Abram, saying, "I AM your shield." [Gen 15:1] and said to him, "I AM God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless." [Gen 17:1]. He said similar things to Isaac and Jacob, Abraham's son and grandson. To Jacob, God declared Himself and commanded him to go to Egypt, leaving the land of promise.

I AM God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you [Israel] into a great nation. [Gen 46:3].
Jacob went to Egypt and settled with his family. After time had passed, the Egyptians forgot all the good Jacob's son, Joseph, had brought upon them by delivering them from the great famine, which God had inflicted upon the whole world. They enslaved Israel and for 400 years, Israel was oppressed in the land of Egypt. But God declared:

The Egyptians shall know that I AM the Lord, when I stretch out My hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them. [Exo 7:5].

Showering upon Egypt terror upon terror, God brought Israel out of Egypt with His mighty hand, finally killing every firstborn son. And, after bringing Israel safely through the Red Sea upon dry ground, He destroyed the mighty armies of Egypt and every chariot, covering the Red Sea upon them. Up to this time, Egypt was the greatest and most powerful nation upon the earth, but by the hardness of their hearts, God reduced the nation to nothing.

All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing and He does according to His will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand or say to him, "What have you done?" [Dan 4:35].

THE MEANING OF I AM

About thirty years ago, it became popular to describe anything impressive, even vaguely so, as "awesome." To this day, it continues, even among professing believers. But to be awesome, something must be dreadful or fearsome; this cannot be a flippant impression. It may be delightfully impressive, but it also carries fear of the one who does the impressing. A good example is when Jesus calmed the sea. The sea is powerful, and when it is violent, it can be overwhelming and fearful. Many of these disciples were men of the sea. They had experienced the terror of the sea. But Jesus calmed this sea with His spoken word. The disciples were impressed but it also brought fear among them, so that they declared, "Who is this man?" and they worshipped Him.
Say to God, "How awesome are Your deeds! So great is Your power Your enemies come cringing to You. All the earth worships You and sings praises to You. . ." [Psa 66:3-4].

He is the God of all creation, who spoke the world into creation. He sustains the world by the word of His power (Heb 1:3). When man defied Him, He brought unthinkable catastrophe. He brought a flood upon the whole earth, He divided continents, He raised up mountains and flattened hills, He changed languages and halted man's understanding, He made the Sun stand still, He brought huge tragedy to Egypt, He reigned down destruction upon armies and cities. We could go on and on to recite and describe the details of these events and we would be forced to come to one conclusion: **God, alone, is awesome.**

. . .Does disaster come to a city, unless the Lord has done it? [Amo 3:6].

O Lord, I have heard the report of You and Your work, O Lord, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy. [Hab 3:2].

To the Jew, "I AM" was the name of the Lord; reserved only to God. The name is significant because it declares God is God of the past, the present and the future; it declares He is sufficient in Himself; it declares there is no other; and this is the God who brought Israel out of Egypt with dreadful signs and miracles.

I AM the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. [Rev 1:8; cf 21:6].

When Jesus declared Himself to be "I AM," He made Himself equal with God. For man to declare himself equal with God was blasphemy and punishable by death. But Christ was true to declare Himself to be the I AM.

THE SEVEN COMMON I AMs

THE BREAD OF LIFE

In 6:35, Jesus said, "I AM the bread of life." He fed the five thousand and the people were about to make Him king. The next day, though, they wanted a sign. He told them He was the bread from God. When the people were offended, He doubled down and told them they certainly must eat this bread to have eternal life. To eat this bread is to chew on the Word. To have the life of this bread, we must desire the Word like we desire food; we must drink in the Word like we thirst for water. In Christ, alone, is this life.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

In 8:12, Jesus said, "I AM the light of the world." He promised those who follow Him will not walk in darkness. John said God is light and in Him is no darkness at all (1Jo 1:5). Jesus said men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (3:19). Many professing Christians believe they can mix the light of the Word with the light of the world. But Jesus said if the light in you is darkness, how great is this darkness (Mat 6:23). And John affirmed, if we profess faith in Christ while clinging to the wisdom of this world, we lie, because we are full of darkness (1Jo 1:6). Reject, therefore, the light of this world, which is darkness no matter how positive it sounds, and cling to the light in the Word of Christ.

I AM THE DOOR

In 10:9, Jesus said, "I AM the door." Christ protects His sheep from thieves and robbers. Jesus said Satan seeks to destroy man and he is so cunning, he could deceive those who belong to Christ IF THAT WERE POSSIBLE (Mat 24:24). This means it is NOT possible for Satan to deceive those who belong to God. Jesus said His sheep hear His voice and they will not follow the voice of a stranger (10:5). No one can take His people out of His hand or His Father's hand (10:28-29). Be warned: if you follow every new wind of doctrine rather than keeping to the Word, you are not saved. Repent and follow Christ, alone.
I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

In 10:11, Jesus said, "I AM the Good Shepherd." The Good Shepherd leads His sheep and protects His sheep and Jesus said He lays down His life for His sheep. He did not die for everyone. Jesus died for the sins of His sheep; He faced the wrath of God, alone, for the sins of His sheep. He did this of His own choosing (10:17-18). Christ, alone, gives His sheep eternal life and He will preserve His sheep to the end (10:28-29). If we could lose our salvation, we would; but Christ keeps those who are His. To know this should quicken us to stay in His Word and feed upon Him daily.

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

In 11:25, Jesus said, " I AM the resurrection and the life." Christ has conquered death (1Co 15:55-57). In Genesis 3:15, after man fell into sin, God promised to send a Redeemer who would crush Satan's head and the Apostle Paul wrote Christ "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." [2Ti 1:10]. And he wrote, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." [Rom 16:20]. When Christ took upon Himself the wrath of God on behalf of those who follow Him, He nailed our sins to the cross (Col 2:14) and His resurrection from the dead became our resurrection. If we follow Christ, we no longer face death, for we will be raised up to life.

I AM THE WAY AND THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

In 14:6, Jesus said, "I AM the way, and the truth, and the life." He is the bread of life: we must chew on His Word to have this life. Jesus said, if we abide in His Word and His Word abides in us, then we will know the truth; because He is truth (8:31-32). And, He said He is the way, "No one comes to the Father except through Me." How can we profess to be in Christ, if we are not in His Word and following Him?

I AM THE TRUE VINE

In 15:1, Jesus said, "I AM the true vine." The branch cannot bear fruit unless it abides in the vine. In each of these I AMs, the declaration is about who Christ is, but the call is for us to cling to Him; to rely upon Him alone and to abide in Him, eat Him, drink
Him, walk in His ways. In this passage, Christ warns the branches, who are the professing Christians or believers, those who do not produce fruit, will face the fires of Hell (15:6). But, this fruit is not something we can produce. It is what He produces in us, as we abide in His Word (15:4-5).

In each of these I AMs, He is the I AM, if we are saved, we will abide in Him.

**TWO SIMPLE I AMS**

**BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM**

In 8:58, Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." Here is Christ, a man, who claimed, not only to have been alive when Abraham walked the earth over 2000 years before, but He claimed to be I AM; to never have come into existence. He incarnated into a man, that is, He was born into human flesh, but this was not His beginning. Before that, He was, as He always was, before the beginning of time. It is an incredible claim.

His miracles proved He was from God, but rather than regard His claim as truth and worship Him in awe, the people rejected Him on the face of it. They picked up stones (8:59). This conversation was over and they were going to kill Him. But Jesus hid Himself in the crowd, an impossible feat when the whole crowd had turned against Him. The demons, when faced with the Christ, exclaimed with awe, He was the Son of God (Mar 3:11; Luk 4:34,41). But these people, the professing believers, did not marvel; they hardened themselves because they would not have a God who fell short of the image they had created.

**I AM WHOM YOU SEEK**

In 18:5, Jesus said to them, "I AM." The question was, "Whom do you seek?" They answered Him, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus said to them, 'I AM.' [18:4-5]. Some Bibles say Christ responded with "I AM He." However, the Greek does not have the Word "He." This was added later for clarification or grammar. Nonetheless, this fix has clouded Christ's answer or His claim.
Christ had foretold He would give of His life and no one would take it. Often, when the people sought to kill Him, John would attribute their failure to accomplish this as due to "His time had not yet come." Now the time had come and He announced to them, "I AM." The one who always was, was now here and His time had come.

They were put on notice, the man they sought to kill was God, Himself. The people would take Him and murder Him, yet He would rise again, giving proof He is the One He claimed to be: He is the I AM.

**IN CLOSING**

The seven I AMs are Christ's declarations with His call to respond to abiding in Him. The two I AMs were met with hardened hearts and rejection.

Jesus Christ is the Great I AM. Will you reject Him, professing believer, because He is not the God you want Him to be?

Do you give lip service to following Him, yet will not give Him time and be in His Word, chewing on it and drinking it in?

We are put on notice, Christ is the I AM; He is God. Cling to Him; be in His Word.

...unless you believe that I AM, you will die in your sins. [8:24]
John 6:36-45 Jesus Told Believers Why They Don't Believe

Jesus was speaking to a crowd, among whom were those who professed themselves to be His disciples (v60). Some in the crowd considered their heritage to be sufficient evidence of following God (v31). They were Jews. They were sons of Abraham.

Many were interested in Christ; they were following Him; they believed He was a prophet, the Messiah; they wanted to see and experience more of His miracles. Jesus invited them to taste the Bread of Life (v27,33,35).

But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. [v36].

These people professed to believe; yet, they did not believe. Many professing Christians think they believe in Christ, but they do not have a saving faith. Though they appear to follow Christ, they resist Him just like this crowd resisted Him. They think they can believe without hungering and thirsting for His Word.

How did Christ witness to a people who thought they were right with God? He did not pat them on the back; He revealed their unbelief. Jesus told the people (v35-36):

1) whoever comes to Me shall not hunger;
2) whoever believes in Me shall never thirst; and,
3) you have seen Me, yet you do not believe.

He invited them and, lest they presume they already believed, He told them they did not so they could do something about it.

After this, did He plead? did He beg the people to pull off their blinders and receive the truth? No. He explained to them all whom the Father has given Him will come to Him. Even though man is invited and admonished to come, the decision is not left to freewill; it is left to the Father's choosing.

All the Father gives Me will come to Me. [v37a].
It is the Father's choosing that determines who will come, but the second part of the verse demonstrates the responsibility to come is on the part of man.

**Whoever comes to Me, I will never cast out.**  
[v37b].

This promise requires action; we must come. If God has determined a man to be saved, he will come, for God has regenerated his heart so he is no longer in rebellion to Him, but desires Him. Coming to Christ, though it is our responsibility, is not what saves us; it is evidence God has drawn us.

This phrase, "Whoever comes to Me, I will never cast out," is thrown around like a promise while evangelists plead and beg for unbelievers to come forward to receive Jesus. However, this is not the intended meaning. This promise applies to those God has given to His Son, as expressed in the first part of this verse, "All the Father gives Me will come to Me." So, this coming is not self-motivated. This verse is not about convincing souls to come forward at a meeting. It is confirmation, those God chooses will come.

Coming to the Son is more than a mere willingness and God does more than stimulate a man's emotion, according to Charles Spurgeon. God motivates the entire will of the one who is chosen. The will of man is changed from slavery and clinging to sin, to a desire to have fellowship with God.

In essence, Christ told the people, "I turn you away because you don't believe. But I am here for those whom the Father has given Me. They will believe and I will turn none of them away."

When it comes to evangelizing, we should use Jesus' example. We should not beg and we must not water down the Gospel to be a pleasing message to the unsaved. We should profess and declare the truth, knowing God will draw those who are His.

It is easy to get caught up in results, but we need not worry our witness is ineffective if no one appears to listen. God told the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah to preach even though the people would not listen (Isa 6:9; Jer 7:27). God calls us to stand and sow seed. He will determine the harvest; it is not ours to measure.
CHRIST CAME TO DO GOD'S WILL

In verse 36 and 37, Christ told the crowd, though they had seen Him, they did not believe; but He had come for those whom the Father had given.

Jesus intended to make His point stick. In the next three verses, He doubled down: He explained He did not come to win their favor. He was not there for His own glory, but He came to do the will of the Father. He was there to save those whom the Father had given Him. And twice He said, He will raise them up on the last day.

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. [v38-40].

Christ had come to save those the Father had given Him. He did not come to promote His own glory; His glory as a man. He came to do the will of the Father. The will of the Father was that He should lose none of those the Father had given Him. This is why He died: He came to redeem His own; not everyone in the world, but those the Father had given Him and He will raise them up on the Day of Judgment.

While I was with them, I kept them in Your name, which You have given Me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. [17:12].

The will of God is never thwarted. He is sovereign and He is almighty. If you are chosen by God, you cannot be lost.

Christ told the people He will raise the believers up on the last day. This is a promise and a warning; a warning of the judgment to come. If He will raise up the elect to life, what will become of those who do not believe?
He offered the crowd of people the opportunity to repent. He said everyone who looks to Him with faith will have eternal life and will escape the judgment on the last day.

**GRUMBLERS CANNOT BELIEVE**

So the Jews grumbled about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" [v41-42].

Jesus announced Himself to be the Bread of Life. He promised whoever came to Him would never hunger or thirst (v35). He offered a promise that those who believe would not be turned away and He would raise them up at the last day to eternal life (v37,39).

The unbelievers grumbled.

How could Jesus be God if He was familiar? They knew His family and He grew up near them. Many believed He was the Messiah or a great prophet but they could not believe He had come from Heaven, that He was God. They watched Him grow up in their neighborhood.

If they understood the prophecies, they would have seen it was foretold the Son of God would come to earth and live as a man. Here are three verses which declare this:

I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to Me, "You are My Son; today I have begotten You." [Psa 2:7].

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." [Isa 7:14; Immanuel means "God is with us"].

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. [Isa 9:6].
Christ's response to the grumbling was to tell them to stop grumbling because they cannot believe unless the Father draws them.

Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. 
[v43b-44].

In other words, He told them it was pointless to complain against His claim to be the Son of God because they were not chosen and could not benefit. He said they will not be a part of those who are raised up to eternal life on the last day. Being excluded from hope should have caused them to fear, but they had no understanding.

For the third time, He made the promise those who believe He will raise to life on the last day. He said this three times, so if we are following Christ, we can count on it.

This audience was composed largely of people who were physically following Him and many in the crowd were professing believers. Some claimed to be disciples (not to be confused with the twelve). But Jesus said they cannot come to Him. They saw Him, in the flesh, they tipped their hat to His authority, but they did not believe.

No one can come to Christ on their own decision or effort. Only those drawn to Christ by the Father. Those the Father has given to the Son, will come to Him (v37). No one else can come. They may scoff and complain or they may appear to seek Him out, but they cannot come. They will not come.

This is why Jesus did not argue with the scoffers and complainers. He simply told them they cannot come. There are a lot of professing Christians today who are not chosen (Mat 13:24-30; 1Jo 2:19). It would be well for us to remember Christ's warning not everyone who claims His name will be saved.

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons,
and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.' [Mat 7:21-23].

Not everyone who professes to believe in Christ is saved but all who are chosen to be saved will come to Christ.

**It is written in the Prophets, "And they will all be taught by God." Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. [v45].**

- Isaiah had written the children would all be taught by God (Isa 54:13).
- Jeremiah had written God would write His Law on their hearts and no longer would they need to teach each other (Jer 31:33-34).
- Jesus explained those who come to Christ are instructed by God and He used Old Testament Scripture to validate His claim.

God's Word is given to the world but not all will hear. The natural man is in rebellion toward God and cannot hear the Word without God making him new; making him born again.

When God makes a man born again, he desires the Word and the Father opens his heart to understand it. He is taught by God.

These people thought they believed but their hearts were hard. Many people go to church and think they are saved but their hearts are hard.

Unbelievers are skeptical of the Word. How about you? Do you doubt the words of Scripture or do you cling to them? Does the Scripture convict you? Are you repentant or do you cling to your sin?

**IN CLOSING**

Here again we have seen the unbelief of professing believers.

Christ told these people, who claimed to be believers, they have seen Him but do not believe. Many people profess to follow Christ, but
they do not obey Him. They are not in the Word and prayer and their lives do not produce fruit.

Though Jesus was a celebrity, He had not come to promote Himself; He came to turn people to the Father. He told the crowd, "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out." [v37]. We know from this:

1. All who come to Christ were first given to Him by the Father; and
2. All who come to Christ will never be cast out.

The will of the Father is

1. None of those He has given to Christ will be lost;
2. All who look upon the Son and believe will have eternal life; and Christ will raise them up on the last day.

The last day is the Judgment Day. On this day, one will be judged to damnation in Hell or be raised up to eternal life with God.

When a man has been born again, he desires the Word and the Father opens his heart to understand it. He is taught by God.

These people thought they believed but their hearts were hard. Just like many people who go to church.

Have you been born again? Has your heart been made new?
Have you been taught by God? Have you received Jesus Christ?
Christ preached man’s lost condition and need for repentance. To those who scoffed, He explained to be saved is exclusively the Father's decision. He came from the Father and He came to make the Father known (1:18).

Not that anyone has seen the Father except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. [v46-47].

The people could not see God the Father; He had not come down to physically teach the people. Nonetheless, Christ came from the Father; He has seen Him and declared Him to the people.

In the past, Israel heard God. When He spoke, it was a fearful sound; and the people begged Moses to speak on God's behalf.

You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die. [Exo 20:19].

Only the Son has seen the Father and He was here, speaking to the people, revealing the Father. He had come in the flesh and He was teaching, giving them the words of life. To eat His words is to eat of the true bread; the bread which gives life.

I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh. [v48-51].

This was one of Christ's "I AM" statements. "I AM the Bread of Life." He always was, He is, He always will be. Christ spoke the words of creation; He is the founder of life (1:1-4). By these words He sustains the world and the universe (Heb 1:3). And He gave Himself as bread to man. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Mat 5:6).
Jesus repeated His claim, He is the Bread of Life. The manna in the wilderness was a great miracle but it did not prevent those who ate it from dying. The manna was a common grace provision for daily food. Those who experienced God's judgment in the desert had eaten the bread, but this did not lead to eternal life. The manna falling from heaven was a type and foretelling of the Bread of Life from Heaven. The Bread of Life is food for eternal life and given to those who believe.

Many grumbled in the desert because they did not like this bread and they died (Num 11). Now the Bread of Life is here and many will grumble again.

But the Bread of Life came down from heaven "so that one may eat of it and not die." [v50]. And, just so the people understood the importance of this statement, He repeated His claim to be the Bread of Life, in verse 51. In verse 50, He said anyone who eats this bread will not die; in verse 51, He said anyone who eats this bread will live forever. So, He emphasized this from the negative and the positive side. Christ came to give life to those who were dead in their trespasses and sins.

The physical bread does not give life, but everlasting life is found in the true, spiritual bread, which is Christ. As He said in Mathew 4:4, man does not live on bread alone, but on every word which proceeds from the mouth of God. John 1:1 tells us Jesus Christ is the Word of God; He is the mouth of God.

In this context, believing is clinging to the words of God which give eternal life. The bread is symbolic of His words, which lead to life. To eat this bread is to chew on His words.

Christ said, "the bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh." [v51]. During the Last Supper, Jesus broke bread and said, "This is My body which is given for you." [Luk 22:19]. He spoke of His death; His sacrifice. Christ said He gave His life; His life was not taken, He gave it. The bread is symbolic of His flesh which He gave of His own accord to die for sinful man.

Christ told the crowd, the Messiah came to die. Their view of the Messiah was fulfilled in an earthly kingdom centered in Jerusalem and they could not understand the spiritual significance of what
Christ was teaching. Much more, they could not understand a Messiah coming to die.

but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles. [1Co 1:23].

THE JEWS ARGUED

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" [v52].

In Matthew chapter thirteen and Mark chapter four, Jesus explained the purpose of parables was so the people might see and hear, but not understand; lest they should turn and be saved. Here, Jesus spoke symbolically and the people misunderstood; maybe intentionally. When Christ said the bread He gave for the life of the world was His flesh (v51), the Jews mocked Him by twisting the meaning to cannibalism (v52).

What was Christ's reaction to this misunderstanding? Did He back down or rephrase what He said so that it would be more palatable to the people? No, He did not. Instead, He doubled down on His claim and reaffirmed, with double emphasis, if they did not eat His flesh and drink His blood, they had no life, but those who do will be raised up for eternal life on the day when all the rest of mankind are judged.

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. [v53-54].

Jesus said His sheep hear His voice and they follow Him (10:27). Those who are not chosen are unable to understand the truth.

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. [1Co 2:14].
There is no effective purpose in watering down the Gospel to make it pleasing to man. Christ did not do this. Those who try to conform Scripture to be palatable to the hearer err on three accounts:

1) They fail to follow the example of Christ. When confronted by grumblers, He did not change His message. In fact, He reiterated and emphasized those parts which were the stumbling blocks to the people;

2) They err in doctrine because they change the message in order to attract those who will not believe and they build God into their own image or an image they will believe; and

3) They compete with God because they think they can draw man to Christ, when Christ, Himself, said no one comes to Him unless the Father draws him (v44).

Every word of God proves true; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you and you be found a liar. [Pro 30:5-6; cf Deu 4:2; 12:32; Jos 1:7; Rev 22:18-19].

But Christ did not limit His teaching to rebuking the naysayers. He called out to those who would listen. He gave hope and instruction to those chosen by God.

For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on 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 whoever feeds on Me, he also will live because of Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever. [v55-58].

He said His flesh is true food and His blood is true drink (v55) and all who eat of Him are those who abide in Him (v56). In John 15, He said He is the vine and we are the branches. The branches drink and get nourishment from the root or the vine. He said we cannot bear fruit unless we abide in Him.
To abide in Christ is more than a feeling; it is more than spending a quick five or fifteen minutes with Him. It is to desire Him like food and water. Just as the human body needs food and water, if we are saved, we need to eat and drink in the Word every day.

O God, You are my God; earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh faints for You, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. [Psa 63:1].

Christ said as He has life through the Father, so those who abide in Him will have life in Him (v57).

At the end of His teaching all His disciples abandoned Him, except the twelve. When He asked the twelve if they would leave also, Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." [v68]. Those who abide in Christ are in the Word, chewing His words and drinking them in. This is how we learn of God; this is how we find life in Christ. Where else can we go?

Christ ended this teaching, repeating every claim: He is the bread that came down from heaven and, unlike the manna, which people ate and died, whoever eats of the bread from heaven will live forever (v58).

In verse 29, Jesus said it is the work of God that we believe. We know this believing is more than a head knowledge. This believing comes from God and the fruit or evidence is clinging obediently to the words of Christ; this is abiding in Christ.

Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. [v56].

The true follower of Christ is not concerned with the cares of this world, including food. He leaves these things to God. The true believer is concerned with getting to know God and becoming more like His Son. He eats the flesh and drinks the blood of Christ in the Word. He desires God like the body needs food and water.

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?
Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. [Mat 6:25-33].

IN CLOSING

You can have your fill of bread and be satisfied but you will die. Those who eat of the Bread of Life will not die. Christ said He came to give His life, His flesh, so we can have this eternal life (v47-51).

Eating this Bread of Life is not to taste it once. It is to constantly seek and eat as a necessity of life. Nobody is saved by saying the sinner's prayer and going their own way or even cleaning up their life a bit. Salvation belongs to those who abide in Christ; this is what it means to be eating His flesh.

"Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him." [v56]. Abiding in Christ, feeding on His flesh or His Word, is the ONLY way to eternal life. Desire His Word, chew on it and drink it in, just as you desire food and drink. There is a feast in His Word.

...I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my portion of food. [Job 23:12].
John 6:59-71 The False Believers Grumble And Turn Away

Jesus was at the height of His fame when He fed the five thousand. The people wanted to make Him king. But when He offered them the Bread of Life, they rejected Him and turned away.

He was speaking to professing believers and He was speaking in the Jewish church or synagogue (v59), near the Sea of Galilee. In this passage, we will see professing faith does not a believer or disciple make.

When many of His disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" [v60].

Influenced by the grumbling around them, many of the disciples began to do the same. Rather than seeking to understand Jesus, they joined in the complaining. There is much peer pressure within the crowd.

Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe. [v61b-64a].

Faced with complaints, Jesus did not try to please the crowd or make His teaching easy to digest. Instead, He doubled down again by telling them even more difficult things. Jesus told them He would ascend to Heaven, where He came from (v62). The Jews were already offended because Christ said He was equal with God. This new claim to ascend to Heaven is not going to satisfy His disciples who are eager to please the Jews.

It is hard for man to come to Christ. These people believed He was the Messiah but could not accept His teaching. Many professing Christians today believe Jesus is the Son of God but cannot accept His teaching; they pick and choose the teachings of the Bible they
agree with. Jesus said it is the Spirit who gives life (v63); it is the Spirit who reveals truth to man and draws him to Christ.

The flesh cannot help us (v63). It is not our desire or seeking which leads us to Christ. Worldly wisdom cannot lead us to God. In fact, the natural man, the flesh, is blind to the things of God and is powerless to come to Christ without being regenerated by the Spirit.

You see, being saved is more than a head knowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. There are multitudes of people who rely on their own wisdom for their hope of eternal life. They think they can do good to earn their way to God; or they think God grades on a curve and as long as they are not as bad as the average bad guy, they will still win their way to heaven. A head knowledge of Jesus cannot save.

But most to be pitied are those who think faith in Christ is a mere event; they say the sinner's prayer and confess Jesus is the Son of God; they confess Him as Lord. But they have no idea what this means. They foolishly believe God accepts man as he is and requires nothing of him. They go through life thinking they are saved only to have a rude awakening in eternity.

If the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness. [Mat 6:23].

The flesh is no help at all (v63); whether by will or by wisdom. It is the Spirit who gives life. He it is who quickens man and draws man to Christ. It is the Spirit who makes us born again (3:7) and Jesus said just as we cannot understand the wind, we cannot understand the working of the Spirit (3:8).

The Spirit gives life. The Gospel of John is the story of the Light overcoming darkness and the Life overcoming death; this story begins with the first chapter. If we rely upon God, we have life. If we rely upon our own wisdom, logic or effort, we have death (v63). Christ's words are spirit, that is they are from God the Father, brought forward by the Holy Spirit, and they are life (v64). If we desire everlasting life, we must cling to Christ's words, which are spirit and life.
For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray Him. [v64b].

Christ knew from the beginning. When was this "beginning"? We know it was at least prior to the time He called His disciples because this text says He knew from the beginning the one who would betray Him. But from Scripture, this beginning points to a time before creation, as the Apostle Paul wrote God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4). Christ knew before He came to the world to die for mans' sins, who were the chosen and who would not believe.

After He emptied the temple, many believed He was the Messiah, but the Bible says, "Jesus on his part did not entrust Himself to them, because He knew all people." [2:24]. This is not passive, as in merely foreknowing; it is active, as in predestined, as in God drawing those He has given to the Son. Jesus said we cannot come to Him unless the Father grants it or authorizes it.

This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted him by the Father. [v65].

Once again, Christ did not plead with the unbelievers. He did not beg them to come. He warned they cannot come unless it was granted or allowed by the Father.

In this passage, the Bible gives us an example of a willing audience. By their freewill, many in the crowd were followers or disciples of Christ. But they have not been quickened to believe His words because they have not been chosen by the Father. So, they believed Jesus was the Messiah but their freewill was satisfied in their sin and their freewill rejected the hard teachings of Christ and in their freewill they left Him. Freewill cannot bring us to God.

How foolish are those preachers who believe we can win the world for Christ. If ever there was a time this could happen, it would have been when the Son of God lived among man. If God's prevenient grace applied to all men, Jesus would have beseeched them to use this grace to believe. But God's saving grace applies solely to those chosen in Christ. Thus, Jesus told the scoffers and complainers, they cannot come.
MANY DISCIPLES TURN BACK

After this many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him. [v66].

The many disciples are about to turn away. Voddie Baucham has been known to say something along the line of "if man could lose his salvation, he would." Freewill brought these people to Christ, but it could not keep them. When Christ doubled down on what they refused to believe, they left and followed Him no more.

In this one chapter of the Gospel of John we see Christ's rise to fame and His fall. Christ was at the height of His popularity when He fed the five thousand, but He lost it all by teaching hard truth and sticking with it. Nonetheless, He did not come to win a popularity contest. He came to do the Father's will (v38).

Hard teachings drove His followers away:

1) Christ claimed to come from God and be equal with God;
2) Christ claimed to be the bread from heaven, which must be eaten to have eternal life;

The ones not chosen by God cannot choose God. Like these disciples, some are attracted to the Gospel and appear to be saved. Like the seed on the rocky soil (Mat 13:5-6), when difficulties come, they wither and fade.

As the freewill believers were leaving, Christ sealed their doom by saying, "This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted him by the Father." [v65]. If the Father does not draw you, you cannot come to Christ. This is a call to repentance for the elect; for those who can hear.

   Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts. [Heb 3:7].

His word is our food and His salvation is our drink. To be saved, we must eat His flesh and drink His blood. This means we must be in His Word, chewing on it and drinking it in; we must desire Him like food and drink. This is impossible for the man who is not drawn to Christ.
So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that You are the Holy One of God." Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil." He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him. [v67-71].

Eleven of the twelve were drawn to Christ; they were of the sheep who heard His voice (10:27). Was Christ relieved the twelve had stayed? Christ did not respond by thanking them for choosing Him nor did He thank them for staying while others left. No. He declared they were there of His choosing (v70).

He warned the twelve, one among them would betray Him. This was a prophecy, but it was also a call for them to examine their lives; a warning not to take their faith for granted.

IN CLOSING

The crowd following Jesus believed He was the Prophet or the Messiah who was to come, but as the cynics began to complain, many who professed to believe were swept along with the protests and accusations.

If your desire is to please the world, then it will wear you down as it grumbles and complains against God. If you find yourself swept along by the logic, reason or complaints of the world and if you find yourself explaining away the word of God to satisfy the cynics, then you need to examine yourself to see if you are in the faith.

When the Jews grumbled, Jesus did not beg them to believe. He gave no altar call to receive Him. He did nothing to salvage what appeared to be His faltering ministry. On the contrary, He told them they could not believe unless the Father drew them to Him (v44).

He told the people, the true believer will eat His flesh and drink His blood. When the people stumbled on this, He emphasized it more.
Then, for the sake of those who could hear, He explained this means we must desire Christ, His Word, like we desire food and water, because He is the true Bread which gives eternal life.

After this, many of his disciples or believers turned away and would have nothing to do with Him.

Jesus asked the twelve if they were going to leave as well, but Peter answered Him, saying they had nowhere else to go. "You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." [v68-69]. This is evidence of what Jesus said; He said those who come to Him were taught by God. The unregenerate heart could not come to the conclusion Peter expressed. In chapter ten, Jesus said His sheep hear His voice.

Jesus gave the words of life. The crowd did not understand but the eleven heard and believed. Make note, it was eleven, rather than twelve, because one was not a believer. When Jesus said, "Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil," He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot who was going to betray him.

Judas is an example of one who believes they are following Christ and they think they are saved but their hearts are constantly longing for more of the things of this world. Eventually, they leave. The Apostle John wrote, they went out from us because they were not of us (1Jo 2:19).

We need to examine our hearts constantly. Our desire for the things of this world can lead us away from Christ. Our discontent or grumbling of spirit can cause us to leave Christ, just as these believers left Him. If we are like them, we were never saved at all.
Can We Come To Christ Via Freewill?

Jesus said, "Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life. . . abides in Me and I in him." [v54,56]. Christ did not give His life so man could add to his life or complete himself. He gave His life so man could be restored to God, abide in Him and have eternal life with Him.

Consider this: In verse 35, Jesus said whoever comes to Him will never hunger or thirst; in verses 50-51, Jesus said if anyone eats of this bread he will not die, but will live forever; and, in verses 54-57, Jesus said whoever feeds on His flesh and drinks His blood will be raised up by Christ to eternal life because they abide in Him. Christ was saying to be truly saved we must desire Him like we desire food and water. For, as we eat food and drink to sustain life and we cannot live long without it, so we must abide in Christ and desire Him if we are to have true and eternal life. We, like Peter, confess, "to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." [v68].

Upon Peter's confession, Christ did not thank the disciples for choosing Him. No. He reminded them, they were chosen by Him (v70). He let them know, they had not come to Him of their own freewill.

Spurgeon's claim that a man's will is either led captive by sin or is held in the blessed bonds of grace, affirms the Scriptures. In this passage, Jesus said it is the Spirit who gives life and the flesh, our will, is no help at all (v63). The Psalmist David and the Apostle Paul wrote there is no one who seeks after God (Psa 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Rom 3:10-12). The Prophet Isaiah wrote we have gone astray, like sheep, everyone has turned to his own way (Isa 53:6). Freewill cannot bring us to Christ.

In the Biblical example of straying sheep (Luk 15:1-7), there is no mention of the sheep returning of its own choosing. The sheep is sought after by the shepherd; he collects it and returns it to the flock. The Prophet Ezekiel wrote the sheep are scattered for lack of a shepherd (Eze 34:5). Without a shepherd, the sheep are lost.

My friend, if you are following Christ today, do not give glory to yourself. Do not take God's glory upon yourself by claiming you
came to God by your own freewill. Remember Ephesians 2:8-9, "...Lest any man should boast." Give glory to God and thank Him for choosing you and drawing you to His Son (v44).

Here is the Bread of Life. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever (v51). Is the invitation given to all? Jesus said, "whoever believes..." [v47]. Who are these "whoever" if not this crowd or if they are not the people going to church every week? Like this crowd, many at church believe Jesus is the Christ, but they have a difficult time believing what is written in the Word and the sufficiency of the Word. They are not the sheep who hear His voice (10:26-27). Many of these people might even appear to be saved. But Jesus said, these cannot come because they have not been drawn by the Father (v65).

In this invitation, Christ appeared to invite all, but He told the crowd they cannot come. Wait. What?

In 2:23-25, many claimed to believe, but Christ had no confidence in them because He knows the heart of man. In other words, these people claimed to believe, but they were not saved. We see examples of this throughout the Gospel of John. So, unlike the modern American gospel or easy-believism, which boils salvation down to a recitation of the sinner's prayer, Jesus said the truth is hidden from those not chosen.

I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was Your gracious will. [Mat 11:25-26].

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. [1Co 2:14].

The battle of freewill is settled: we can only come to true faith in Christ if the Father draws us.

When I was young in the faith, I had a difficult time with this. I believed if the decision was left to God, I might never have eternal
life; for there was absolutely no reason He would choose me. Therefore, I clung to the idea I had chosen Him. However, as God opened up the Word to me, I understood more about my deceitful heart and my will being bound to my desire to sin. I had no desire for righteousness before God regenerated my heart and even now my sin nature seeks to overcome my faith. Therefore, I can only praise Him for drawing me to Him; for my sin nature would never have allowed me to choose God, but God chose me; as undeserving as I am. Now, I rejoice and I am grateful the choosing was God's.

Speaking of the promise to Abraham and the rejection of the Messiah by his offspring, the people of Israel, Paul wrote, "But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel. . . " [Rom 9:6]. He explained why this promise of the Messiah extends to those chosen by God and not to everyone in Abraham's physical line: "This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring." [Rom 9:8].

Paul explained from Isaac were two flesh, Jacob and Esau, and to demonstrate salvation is for the elect and not of the physical lineage, God chose only one of these two sons to continue the promise; He chose the lesser of the two sons. "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." [Rom 9:13]. Then Paul doubled down on this idea of election by saying God hardened Pharaoh's heart and for God's glory he was destined for destruction. The point Paul made is God chooses.

Many Christians have a difficult time with this. I have heard people say about Romans chapter nine, "My God would never. . . " Be careful with this, for the Bible just said He did. Be sure your God is the God of the Bible. I have listened to many try to explain this away, saying God did not harden his heart, but Pharaoh hardened his own heart and God used this or other such arguments. Here are some problems with this reasoning:

1) Read the Scriptures. God told Moses beforehand He would harden Pharaoh's heart (Exo 4:21; 7:3). That some passages refer to Pharaoh hardening his heart (about equally split between Pharaoh and God) can only be explained as the result of what God determined and directed would happen.
God did not, however, harden Pharaoh against his will. Pharaoh was willing to be hardened against God.

. . .There is no discharge from war nor will wickedness deliver those given to it. [Ecc 8:8].

2) Do you think God left the exodus of Israel from Egypt to chance and that He was waiting for the right moment when there should be a defiant Pharaoh? Is God subject to mans' freewill and must He work around mans' choices to accomplish His will? Or does He bring about history according to His predetermined plan. Ephesians chapter one tells us God determined all things before He even created.

The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He will. [Pro 21:1].

3) The Apostle Paul refutes these attempts of man to water down this passage in Romans nine, by stating, "Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy." [Rom 9:14-16]. This is not an anomaly in Scripture; this passage makes it plain, some are chosen and some are not. Period. God said it.

Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? What if God, desiring to show His wrath and to make known His power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of His glory for vessels of mercy, which He has prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He has called. [Rom 9:21-24a].

Does man have freewill? Yes. Can he be saved by it or use it to come to salvation? He cannot. Man is bound to the will of his flesh unless and until he is regenerated by God. No one comes to Christ unless the Father draws him (v44) and no one comes to Christ unless
the Father grants it or gives permission (v65). Praise God, He did not leave the decision to you.

Does this mean you cannot come to Christ? If you feel yourself being drawn to Christ, do not delay. "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." [Heb 3:7]. Come.

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out. [v37].
John 7:1-10 Jesus’ Brothers Challenge Him To Seek Fame

Although Christ was rejected by those who professed to follow Him, He stayed around in Galilee and continued to minister. After all, He knew He was going to be rejected (4:43-44).

After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. [v1].

In chapter five of the Gospel of John, the Jews in Jerusalem were plotting to kill Christ because He healed a man on the Sabbath and claimed to be equal with the Father.

In chapter six, Christ was at the peak of His fame in Galilee after feeding the five thousand and the people were conspiring to make Him king. However, His fame fell to the lowest of lows for teaching one must feast upon Him to have eternal life.

Now, in chapter seven, though He continued His ministry in Galilee, He returned to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Booths and the Apostle John gave a list of reactions to Him.

Reactions to Christ in chapter seven:

1) His brothers did not believe (v5);
2) Some said He was a good man (v12);
3) Some said He was leading people astray (v12);
4) Jewish leaders claimed He was unaccredited (v15);
5) The crowd said He had a demon for claiming the Jews were trying to kill Him (v20);
6) Some were in awe He was speaking openly when His life was in danger (v25-26);
7) The Jewish leaders issued an arrest warrant (v32);
8) The people were divided on the Christ (v40-43);
9) The arresting officers were amazed by His teaching (v46);
10) The Pharisees were arrogant, sneering and condescending (v47);

11) Nicodemus appealed for justice on Christ's behalf (v50).

Christ's miracles attracted the crowds while His teachings repulsed them. This seems to be a common theme throughout the Gospel of John.

In our churches today, there are a lot of people in the pews who cling to a feeling or they like what they see going on in their local church and they profess a faith in Christ. They seek doctrine which affirms their way of living but are repulsed by doctrine which speaks to repentance, obedience, purity and faithfulness.

We need to examine our lives to see if we are following the teachings of Christ or merely tipping our hat to Him.

GOING TO THE FEAST

Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand. So his brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works You are doing. For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." For not even His brothers believed in Him. [v2-5].

It seems Christ's brothers misunderstood His motives. They accused Him of looking for fame and they mockingly told Him to show Himself to the world.

He had reached His peak popularity in Galilee and was as quickly abandoned by the crowds. His brothers likely noticed His decline in fame and were rubbing His nose in it.

They challenged Him to go to Jerusalem and make Himself known to the world. A man seeking his own glory would have done this. Although Jesus was fully man and fully God, He did not use His humanness for His own gain; He was resolved to glorify His Father.

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me. [6:38].
His brothers told Him to go to Judea so the people who believed could see the miracles He performed (v3). They recognized His works were supernatural, but they did not believe He was the Son of God (v5). They did not believe He had the words of life.

To know or to acknowledge the works of Christ is not the same as believing. His brothers knew Him and saw His works, but they did not recognize His divinity nor His sovereignty over their lives. They had a head knowledge of His works but did not see Him as God. They did not believe and would not worship and obey.

I have become a stranger to My brothers, an alien to My mother's sons. [Psa 69:8].

MY TIME HAS NOT YET COME

Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. . . You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come." [v6,8].

Christ told His brothers, "My time has not yet come. . . " [v6]. This is the same thing He said to His mother, at the wedding of Cana, when she told Him they had run out of wine (2:4). At that time, she believed her son could remedy the shortage and was coaxing Him to reveal Himself. In this situation, His brothers did not believe, but were coaxing Him, mocking Him, to reveal Himself.

In the previous chapter, Christ made it clear He did not come for His own fame; He came to do the Father's will. In the Father's will, everything has its proper time and in the Gospel of John, much is said about God's time.

• We can understand from the Apostle John's constant reference to time, Christ's life was designed, minute-by-minute.

• Solomon wrote in the third chapter of Ecclesiastes there is a time designated for everything. God has already ordained the past, the present and the future.
• David wrote in Psalm 139, God knows every word on our tongue before we say it and this is more than a mere foreknowing because all our days were written in His book before our first day even came to pass.

• The Apostle Paul said, in Ephesians chapter one God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world.

• The Apostle John wrote in Revelation chapter thirteen and seventeen, the Book of Life was written before the creation of the world.

• Before creation, God designed the world and everyone in it, minute-by-minute.

If God has measured all things before the creation of the world and nothing happens apart from its time, why does it say in the first verse of this chapter, "He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill Him"? [v1]. If they could not kill Him before His time, what did He have to fear from the Jews? These are legitimate questions.

In Luke 4:30, Christ faced a hostile crowd, in fact, they were ready to throw Him off a cliff, but the Scripture said He walked right through the crowd. In John 8:59 and 10:39, there are similar accounts of His escape from those who sought to kill Him. And, in 10:18, Jesus said no one will take His life from Him but He will lay it down of His own accord; by His own authority.

The answer to why Christ avoided Judea and Jerusalem, was to avoid provoking the crowds. To avoid working up the mob before His time. This is why he traveled to Jerusalem in secret and arrived unannounced.

Jesus told his brothers, He was not going to the feast (v8). Many manuscripts say "not going to the feast yet." When His brothers left for the feast, traveling with the crowds, Jesus stayed in Galilee (v9). Later, Jesus and His disciples, traveled privately (v10).

No one saw Him arrive, although many were looking for Him and asking if anyone saw Him (v11). He did not go to the feast in public array. He went privately and without ceremony.
THE LOVE OF THE WORLD

The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify about it that its works are evil. [v7].

The world cannot hate you. Jesus told His brothers to go to the feast and have fun. Although the purpose of the event was to worship God, there was no repentance. Therefore, the crowd at the feast loved those who were like minded, religious and confident in their good works, but they hated those who bring up repentance. Many professing Christians go to religious or church events to have fun and the mood is destroyed by conversations of repentance or deep theology.

When Christ said the world will hate Him because He testified against their evil deeds, He included His brothers in the condemnation. They did not believe and they resented His constant convicting messages and His claim to be God.

Jesus told His disciples the world will hate them because of Him (15:18-19; Mat 10:22). Many professing Christians try to escape this. They work for the approval of the world; some want the Gospel to be popular with the world. What did Christ say? Did He tell us to work for the approval of the world or did He tell us the world will not approve us?

The Apostle James warned us friendship with the world or looking for its approval, is enmity or hostility toward God (Jam 4:4). If pleasing people and making them feel good is more important than standing up for God's truth, how can we say we are following Christ? Jesus asked the question in John 5:44, "If you are working for the approval of man, how can you be saved?"

IN CLOSING

The chapter starts off stating, "After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He would not go about in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill Him." Some commentaries say this was a period of about one year and one-half years. This would be half His three year ministry.
The Feast of Booths was coming up in Jerusalem. His brothers egged Him on to go; to show Himself to the world. They did not yet believe in Him. Jesus told them His time had not yet come.

The Apostle John refers to time and timing many times in this Gospel. God worked out every detail and nothing happened at the wrong time; no plan of man could interfere with God's purposes.

When His brothers left with the public caravan to go to the feast, Christ remained in Galilee. He left later, traveling in private.

Christ's message to His brothers was those who please the world will be loved by the world. But the world hates Him because He testifies against the world, that the world is evil. Those who work to please Christ will be hated as well, for the message of Christ is to repent and follow Him.
John 7:11-24 God Fearing People At A Religious Feast

Christ waited in Galilee for the caravan of rejoicing religious people to leave for Jerusalem before He and His disciples went to the feast in private (v9-10). For the people, the feast was all show. Christ's mission was to reveal the Father and call for repentance.

The Jews were looking for Him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?" And there was much muttering about Him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, He is leading the people astray." Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of Him. [v11-13].

So, here we have a group of religious, "God-fearing" people. They claimed to follow God and they were in Jerusalem for a religious feast. But their religion was not going to save them.

These were religious people but they did not worship God; they worshiped their religion. The evidence of this is, they were more afraid of getting kicked out of the temple by the Jewish leaders than they were of facing God's judgment. This is why they did not defend Christ openly.

Some said Christ was a good man, while others said He was leading people astray; away from the truth. Both groups had wrong ideas because they did not know the truth. Christ was the Messiah sent from God and His words directed people to the Father; to the truth. Jesus said, if anyone truly follows God, this person would know His words were truth (v17).

To follow Christ requires faith in a God you cannot see. Often people are attracted to a faith they can touch and feel; such as a church with a building, real people they can relate to and a relevant pastor. Such are most of the modern American Christians. It is not Christ they are following; they are committed to the group, the visible church congregation.

Many professing Christians glory in their church. They believe they are spiritually safe by belonging to a local church. They are
comfortable following a Christ they can add to their lives but they will not follow a Christ who calls them to repentance and calls them to take up their cross daily. They are deceived to believe they are saved because they go to church and have warm thoughts of God.

The Prophet Jeremiah warned about this:

Do not trust in these deceptive words: "This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord." [Jer 7:4].

TEACHING AT THE FEAST

About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. The Jews therefore marveled, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when He has never studied?"

So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. [v14-16].

Jesus began teaching at the temple in the middle of the feast; three or four days into the feast (v14). Rather than present Himself while everyone was talking about Him and looking for Him, He waited for the stirring to die down.

The Jews were impressed with His knowledge, but knew he had no formal training. So they rejected what He said without examination. The Jews were formally trained men, educated to know God's Word. They were well versed in Moses and the Prophets and most had memorized generous portions of each. Christ, who was prophesied by Moses and the Prophets, was teaching them from Moses and the Prophets but they were blind to see it and deaf to hear it. They could not see nor understand when prophecy was being fulfilled right in front of them.

Jesus said His teaching was not His own, but was from the Father who sent Him (v16). He didn't take credit for His own wisdom, for He came to make the Father known (1:18). Christ came to speak what the Father commanded Him to say and speak (12:49). Those who belong to Him will hear (10:27).
If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on My own authority. The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him is true, and in Him there is no falsehood. Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill Me? [v17-19].

These people were not seeking God's will. In answer to their marveling about His amazing teaching, Jesus replied this teaching came from God and if they were seeking God's will, they would know this was so. At another time, Jesus said His sheep hear His voice (10:27) and if we abide in His Word, we will know the truth (8:31-32).

We know these people were not seeking God's will because in verse nineteen, Jesus directed these people to their knowledge of Scripture but said they violate this same Scripture by seeking to kill Him. They thought they knew the Word but they failed to understand and accept the truth. They claimed to seek God, but they reacted violently against the truth.

Many are the professing Christians who are well versed in the Word, but they torture the doctrines of grace. When we read and study Scripture to confirm our own worldviews rather than seek the truth, we are truly in darkness and cannot know the truth of the Word of God. Jesus said, if the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness (Mat 6:23).

You will know if the teachings of Christ are true if your will is to do God's will and do not to seek your own gain or bias (v17). Only when our desire is to please God can we properly interpret Scripture and know God's truth. The Holy Spirit gives us understanding.

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. [1Co 2:14].
Christ said the one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory (v18). Many claim to speak for Christ today but they compromise or pervert the Scriptures to gain a following. When people pick and choose which Scriptures are true; when they validate sin in the name of compassion; when they tell lost sinners God loves them and has a wonderful plan for their life; or whenever they change the Gospel just a bit to please the world, they are not seeking the will of God and they are speaking on their own authority.

What Would Jesus Do? This lifestyle question was a fad a few years back and it was a fad just over one hundred years before. The fads have faded, but it is still a popular phrase to bring up among professing Christians. However, when people talk about what Jesus would do, most do not consult the Scripture and their conclusion is a kinder, gentler Jesus they perceive, instead of the Man of Truth.

Most professing Christians view Jesus as the man who healed the sick and hung out with sinners without judging, as if He took a light view of sin. Forgotten is the man who warned professing believers they were not saved; who called people to repentance; admonished them to abide in the Word; or the man who made a whip and drove out the money-changers from the temple. We need to study the Scriptures, looking for God's will, so we can discern truth.

In chapter five, the last time He was in Jerusalem, Christ confronted a crowd, maybe the same crowd, who professed to know the Word of God; similar to professing Christians, if you will. He rebuked them, for they searched the Scriptures which speak of Him, but they could not recognize Him because they were more interested in their own glory and pleasing their peers (5:39-47). He warned them, "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" [5:46-47].

Now, in this chapter, He confronted the crowd and warned them, they may know the law of Moses, but they don't keep the law because they want to kill Him (v19).
Why do you seek to kill Me?" The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill You?" [v19b-20].

The Jews professed a zeal for Moses but did not heed his words. For Moses promised the Messiah would come and warned the people to be careful to obey everything He told them (Deu 18:15). But they did not listen to Moses and they held the Messiah in contempt.

What could be more defaming of the Messiah than to claim He had a demon? Especially when said to cover up a lie.

As Christ said, you will seek God's will or you will seek to kill the Christ (v17-19).

I did one work, and you all marvel at it. Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with Me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment. [v21-24].

Now we get to the center of the controversy: The last time Jesus was in Jerusalem, He healed a man on the Sabbath (5:1-16). When the crowd claimed no one sought to kill Him, Jesus reminded the people of the controversy.

Jesus acknowledged they marveled at this miracle (v21). This is why some in the crowd said He was a good man. However, many were stumbling over the fact He healed on the Sabbath. This is why they said He was leading people astray (v12).

Jesus reasoned with them, doubling down on the truth, again. The law required a male child to be circumcised on the eighth day, one week after birth (Lev 12:3). The law makes no distinction for the Sabbath, the circumcision shall take place regardless the day. Christ asked the crowd, if a man can be circumcised on the Sabbath, to fulfill the law of Moses, why were they angry with Him for making a man's body whole on the Sabbath.
Christ had violated no law of God, only a rule of man. Man's religious rules are for appearance sake, but God knows the heart.

If Christ had healed the man on any other day, there would have been no controversy. But it was God's intention to create a controversy. The purpose, stated in verse 17-18, to see if anyone is truly seeking God's will and to expose those who seek their own glory.

Jesus warned the crowd not to judge by appearances, but with right judgment (v24). Judging by mans' rules, He had violated the Sabbath, but judging by truth, this miracle of healing was a validation Christ had come from God. We cannot reach right judgment if we are worried what other people think or if we judge truth by the opinion of our peers. Only when we seek God's glory can we truly see with right judgment.

If our religion is composed of rules and traditions, and if we seek to please man with our appearance of goodness, our religion is in vain and we are not saved. In this passage, God fearing people were at a religious feast but could not recognize the fulfillment of Scripture when He stood among them. Rather than seek truth, their desire was to kill Him, because He violated their bias.

IN CLOSING

Some claimed He was a good man and others claimed He led people astray but no one defended Him openly because they did not want to get kicked out of the temple. Fear of man causes many to stand down when they should be defending God and His Word.

These were "God-fearing people." Yet, we can see most of them were rebellious in their hearts. Going to church does not make you saved; going to conventions or feasts does not make you saved. These people had religion but they did not seek God.

When we try to be religious by keeping rules, we will miss the truth. Jesus' call was to honor God; to glory in His miracles and what He has done; to worship Him. This is true religion and this is truth.

We have the authority of God's Word. When we speak His Word, we speak for the Father. When we start inventing things from
Scripture or build salvation around man's glory rather than God's, as false teachers do, we are seeking our own glory. True religion seeks God's glory.
John 7:25-32 Using Peer Logic To Disprove The Christ

So, the people were not willing to accept Christ's authority because He did not respect the rules made by man. When Christ claimed they were trying to kill Him, they said He had a demon (v19-20). But after He reminded them of the controversy and rebuked them for holding man's laws above God's (v21-24), they suddenly remember why they want to kill Him.

Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, "Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? And here He is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to Him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where He comes from. [v25-27].

So then, the people were wondering why the Jewish leaders let Him speak openly (v26). This would be the greatest conspiracy of all, if it turned out the Pharisees wanted to kill Him, but also knew Jesus was the Messiah.

The crowd rationalized they knew more than the religious leaders. He could not be the Messiah, they argued, because when the Christ appeared no one would know where He came from. They knew He had come from Nazareth and many in the crowd knew His family (v27). So, they reasoned, he could not be the Messiah. Once again, peer logic got the facts all wrong.

The Prophet Micah said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2). When the wise men came from the East, the priests and scribes used this Scripture to direct them to the Christ child (Mat 2:1-6). The Bible clearly stated where Christ would be born and the wise men found Him by using this Scripture. So, the people relied upon bad doctrine when they claimed no one would know where the Messiah came from.

Later in this public discussion, some of the people admit to the Christ being born in Bethlehem (v42), but mistake Jesus as having
come from Galilee. He was raised in Nazareth and they must have presumed He was born there.

Nonetheless, the purpose of their speculation and reasoning, about where Christ was born, was not to get to the truth. For if Christ was the Messiah, they would have to obey His teachings. They were comfortable with their sinful lives and their religion of works, which disguised it. Therefore, they disqualified Christ, so they would not have to believe.

You know Me, and you know where I come from. But I have not come of My own accord. He who sent Me is true, and Him you do not know. I know Him, for I come from Him, and He sent Me. [v28-29].

So Christ spoke out above the crowd in the temple. Using their own words (they know Him and where He comes from), He revealed they did not know Him at all. He did not get involved with arguing where He was born. Instead, He went right to the point, telling them He was sent by the Father, whom also they did not know.

These people prided themselves in the Law and saw themselves to be children of God through Abraham. Now, this man, Christ, told them He knows the Father, but they do not. He told them they were not saved.

No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known. [1:18].

Christ made the Father known. This is why He came. A man seeking fame would have been promoting his own glory, like His brothers encouraged Him to do. But Christ did not come to promote Himself. He was sent; He was sent by the One who is true. "And Him you do not know." [v28]. To know God is to understand He is holy and repent of our sins.

Not exactly the way the modern American Gospel would have put it. Jesus did not tell them God loved them and had a wonderful plan for their life. He condemned these people, because they were here for a feast in celebration before God; they were zealous in their religion, but they refused to leave their sin; they did not know God.
You can see very clearly, Christ was not concerned about their feelings. He was not concerned He might come across as unkind or hateful. He was concerned about God's glory and their lost souls.

Once He established they did not know God, He doubled down and declared to them He came from God and it was God who sent Him (v29). Once again, this was not for His glory, and He certainly was not winning any friends here.

Remember Jesus' example the next time you use the phrase, "What Would Jesus Do?". This was for God's glory, and there were those in the audience who were called. As Christ proclaimed the Word, the lost sheep would hear and understand (v17, 31). The rest would harden their hearts, but the Gospel was preached to them and they are without excuse.

So they were seeking to arrest Him, but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. Yet many of the people believed in Him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will He do more signs than this man has done?" [v30-31].

"So," "therefore" or "because He said these things," they were seeking to arrest Him. Nonetheless, those who sought to apprehend him were powerless to do so, because God is always in control. He sets the timetables of history (v30) and everything is subject to "the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will." [Eph 1:11b]. Though Christ's words upset them, they were powerless to stop Him.

Earlier, no one spoke openly about the Christ for fear of the Jews (v13). But once Christ declared plainly who He was, there were many who did believe (v31). They testified about Him openly by reasoning with the people whether the Messiah could do more miracles than this man (v31). So the people were divided: many believed but most looked for every logical reason not to.

The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest Him. [v32].

What were "these things" the Pharisees heard the crowd muttering?
1. Is this the man the Pharisees were seeking to kill, but do they now know He is the Christ? (v25-26).

2. If the Pharisees do believe, they must be wrong because we know when the Messiah comes, we will not know from where He comes (v27).

3. The believers were starting to defend Him by claiming no one could do more signs than Jesus (v31).

The crowd was divided, mostly in favor of the Jews. Yet the Pharisees noticed Christ was winning some of the people. So they sent officers to arrest Him, falsely assuming they could overcome the One God sent.

IN CLOSING

After Christ's rebuke, some were willing to admit the Jews were trying to kill Him. But they went into logical contortions to defend their lack of faith in Him. They did not want to believe.

When the crowd used logic to explain why Jesus could not be the Messiah, He mocked their false wisdom, throwing their words back in their faces.

Jesus rebuked them because they did not know the Father, even though in pretense they were holding a feast to Him.

The Pharisees wanted to arrest Him but it was not His time, so they could not. Their inability should have made obvious to them everything was in God's control. This attested to Christ's claim He was sent by the Father.

The Apostle John wrote many believed in Him. They defended Christ by saying no one could do more signs than He had done. If someone truly believes, they will defend Christ.

Most, however, were attracted by His miracles but repulsed by His teaching. Today, many desire Christ to do things for them or fix their lives but they want nothing to do with following Him in obedience. Like most of this crowd, they profess to believe but they are not saved.
John 7:33-39 The Living Water Satisfies Our Thirsty Soul

Christ put out the call to repent (you do not know the Father), but few believed. Now He will warn them the time to believe is short.

Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me and you will not find Me. Where I am you cannot come." The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What does He mean by saying, 'You will seek Me and you will not find Me,' and, 'Where I am you cannot come?'" [v33-36].

Earlier in this chapter (v16-18), Jesus said He was sent by the Father. In this passage, He said He would go back to the Father, but this was bad news for the unbeliever. He said, "You will seek Me and you will not find Me. Where I am you cannot come." [v34].

He was talking about Heaven; He was talking about their hard hearts, which would keep them from being with God in Heaven. The Jews stumbled upon the meaning and they mocked Him as if He said He was going to hide somewhere here on Earth.

They were amazed by His warning, but they failed to understand the spiritual depth and the eternal implication. He told the Jews, those who wanted to get rid of Him, He was going to the Father and they cannot come. They cannot be in Heaven with God. Jesus is the only way to the Father (14:6). If you reject His teaching; if you refuse to follow Him, "you cannot come." [v36].

At the Last Supper, Jesus had a similar conversation with His disciples. He said, "A little while, and you will see Me no longer." [16:16]. He told them sorrow was coming but He would see them again and their joy could not be taken away. How different Christ spoke of those who followed Him, than of those who opposed Him and mocked Him. Jesus told His disciples they could ask the Father
anything they wanted (16:23-24). But to the unbeliever, He told them they will never see God.

Can you see why it is blasphemous to tell unbelievers, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life"?

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Now this He said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. [v37-39].

On the last day of the feast (the eighth day; cf Lev 23:39), Jesus stood up and cried out. His purpose was so everyone could hear Him. God speaks to all; all men are accountable for the words of Christ, but few are chosen to receive and understand the meaning.

Are you thirsty to know God more? Christ's message was not one of making your life better. It was a message of satisfying the thirsty soul. Not all souls are thirsty: only the soul which is drawn by the Father. So, He was calling out to those whom God was drawing. If you don't thirst for the Word, God is not drawing you and you are not saved.

Jesus used the theme of the last day of the feast to illustrate His call to follow Him. The theme was, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." [Isa 12:3]. Several Old Testament Scriptures referred to this theme (Isa 58:11; Joe 3:18; Zec 14:8).

It was a sabbath, the last feast day of the year, and distinguished by very remarkable ceremonies. "The generally joyous character of this feast broke out on this day into loud jubilation, particularly at the solemn moment when the priest, as was done on every day of this festival, brought forth, in golden vessels, water from the stream of Siloah, which flowed under the temple-mountain, and solemnly poured it upon the altar. Then the words of Isaiah 12:3 were sung, With joy shall ye draw water out of
the wells of Salvation, and thus the symbolical reference of this act, intimated in John 7:39, was expressed" [OLSHAUSEN]. So ecstatic was the joy with which this ceremony was performed, accompanied with sound of trumpets, that it used to be said, "Whoever had not witnessed it had never seen rejoicing at all" [LIGHTFOOT]. [JBF Commentary].

This was the setting: a jubilant celebration, celebrating with the water from the river under the temple. This water represented the Holy Spirit; it was a type or forerunner of the promise of the New Covenant.

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes and be careful to obey My rules. [Eze 36:26-27; cf Deu 30:6; Jer 31:31-33].

Jesus cried out, announcing this Living Water is now here; He was promising this water, the Holy Spirit, to all who would follow Him. God had planned this celebration beforehand, and that it would reflect the joy of salvation. The Holy spirit is our jubilation; He is our cause for rejoicing, because He seals us in Christ Jesus for eternal life (Eph 1:13; 2Co 1:22).

Christ shouted, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture says, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of Living Water.'" [v37-38]. On other occasions He made this same proclamation:

- He told the woman at the well whoever drinks the water He gives will never thirst again, "The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." [4:14].
- He proclaimed in Capernaum He was the Bread of Life and whoever comes to Him will never hunger or thirst (6:35).
He spoke at the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled." [Mat 5:6].

Christ has promised us, if we devour His Word, He will satisfy our hunger and thirst and we will be filled. If you do not desire the Word or if you are satisfied with a only short reading of the Word, it cannot well up in you and you can be certain you are not saved. The Holy Spirit is God's seal upon us (Eph 1:13). Jesus said when we have the Holy Spirit, rivers of Living Waters will flow out from us. Therefore, this is how we know we have the Holy Spirit: we desire the Word and Scripture flows through our words and deeds.

Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. [Isa 55:1].

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. [Isa 12:3].

Christ extended this call to the thirsty and hungry. This feast celebrated the waters flowing below the threshold of the temple. The prophet Ezekiel talked of these waters and said, "so everything will live where the river goes" (Eze 47:1-12). Christ compared the Holy Spirit to these waters, which bring life.

The people should have been ready to hear the voice of Jesus Christ calling them to come and drink. This feast was the illustration and celebration of this message and Christ sending the Holy Spirit upon those who follow Him was the fulfillment of it. The Living Water was at the feast and Christ was calling, but few could heard Him and many mocked Him. Most people went to the feast but missed the message of it.

These people felt confident they were right with God because they were celebrating a religious feast. Many people feel confident they are right with God because they do the right things and attend regularly to church. But they are not saved. They tip their hat to God but they do not truly believe and obey, because they do not have the Holy Spirit.
Christ promised spiritual prosperity to all who follow Him. "Out of his heart will flow rivers of Living Water." [v38]. Modern American preachers proclaim following Christ leads to financial prosperity. They pervert the Gospel with a call to self-satisfaction. Search the Scriptures: God does not promise money; He promises to give us Living Water. To be marked or sealed by the Holy Spirit is our assurance of a prosperous spiritual life and an eternal life with God.

Regarding the Holy Spirit, the Apostle John wrote the Spirit had not yet been given because Christ had not yet been glorified (v39). Luke explained, in Acts 2:1-4, the Jews who believed received the Spirit in an outpouring while together in one place. This event was repeated for the Gentiles (Act 10:44-46; 19:2-7). Some professing Christians twist the Scriptures to depict this type of event as the means of being filled with the Spirit. But this was not a prototype; it was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel and others.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. [Joe 2:28].

"All flesh" meaning the Jew and the Gentile. No longer is the filling of the Spirit a mass outpouring. The Apostle Paul explained we who are saved, receive the Spirit when we receive Christ (1Co 12:13; Eph 1:13-14; cf Rom 8:9) and Luke affirmed this in Acts 2:38. All who are saved have the Holy Spirit as promised.

Some professing Christians rely upon outward signs, such as speaking in tongues and prophetic utterances. Though this was necessary in the early church before the work of Scripture was completed, this is not needed today (1Co 13:8-11). Outward manifestations are no longer required because we have the Word of Truth.

When we are born again, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13). He works in our lives to make us more like Christ (Rom 8:28-29). He directs us to truth through Scripture (2Ti 3:16; 2Pe 1:21). We need to be in the Word, because from the Word, the Holy Spirit gives us understanding and directs us into truth (1Co 2:12-14).

Rather than seeking preachers via "manifestations," which are often manufactured, we should be looking for fruit, as Jesus said (15:1-6;
Mat 7:16-20). If we find a professing brother who speaks in tongues but has no spiritual fruit, he is no brother at all.

Most professing Christians are not in the Word and many of them claim to rely upon the Spirit leading them. Often what this "spirit" says is opposite the message of the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit will never speak what is not true to Scripture. We have the Word, the Bible; God has nothing new to tell us. Keep the Word; Jesus told us to hunger and thirst for it.

Christ told His disciples He had to leave them so the Spirit would come and the Spirit would teach them all things and bring to remembrance the things Jesus told them (14:26; cf Heb 1:1-2; 2:3-4).

- He continues to teach us by opening up the Word so we will understand (2Ti 3:16-17).
- When the Holy Spirit leads us into truth, we will abide more in the Word and not rely upon "manifestations" outside of it (1Jo 2:26-27).

IN CLOSING

Jesus told the crowd He would be with them a little longer and where He was going they could not come. He warned them, they were not saved. Rather than heed the warning, they speculated and in their rebellion, they mocked Him.

The last day of the feast was the biggest celebration; it was a celebration of water. Jesus cried out if anyone follow Him, out of them will flow rivers of Living Water. Christ proclaimed the prophecies of the Holy Spirit were being fulfilled.

If we are truly saved, the Holy Spirit is working in our lives and we will have this Living Water.

- we will desire the Word;
• we will be in the Word;
• we will speak the Word.

This is what it means to have rivers of Living Water flowing out of us.
John 7:40-53 Faced With Truth, Consensus
Theology Brings Division

Christ's words were angering the crowd as He exposed their hypocrisy and lack of understanding of Scripture, but some were coming to conviction.

When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This really is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." [v40-41a].

Some in the crowd were convinced Jesus was the Prophet; the one prophesied by Moses.

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers; it is to him you shall listen. [Deu 18:15].

Some people understood this prophet Moses spoke of would be the Christ or the Messiah; while others just tagged this prophet to be one in a long line of prophets. In this verse, some called Jesus the Prophet and others made the correct distinction He was the Christ or the promised Messiah. These were likely the same people who said, "When the Christ appears, will He do more signs than this man has done?" [v31].

But, then, there were the doubters:

But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" [v41b-42].

Some people need a technical reason not to believe. They look for a reason to doubt. For, if Christ was the Messiah, they would be accountable to His teaching. If He were not, they could dismiss His teaching. But they got their technicalities wrong.

1. The record is Jesus Christ is of the lineage of David on His mother's side (Luk 3:23-38) and on His earthly father's side (Mat 1:1-16), though Joseph contributed nothing toward His
birth. These records would have been available because Jews kept close records for every family through the captive years and resettlement. This is how the gospel authors were able to list Christ's family lineage with accuracy.

2. These public records and the record we have from Scripture confirms Christ was born in Bethlehem (Mat 2:1; Luk 2:4-6). The Jewish leaders were able to point the Wise Men to the right location when they were searching for the Christ child.

This evidence was not unknown, but it is the nature of man to cling to hearsay and rumor to support what they want to believe, dismissing all other information which does not suit them. Some people call this confirmation bias or cognitive bias.

The day before or a few days before, the crowd had argued Jesus could not be the Christ because they knew where He came from but when the Messiah comes nobody will know from where (v27). Maybe someone corrected these people, pointing them to Scripture, Christ would be born in Bethlehem. So the discussion evolved, to where they now argued Christ will come from Bethlehem, but they saw Jesus as a native of Galilee. When we look for theological accuracy from among our peers, we will be in error every time.

Quite often, people tend to rest their theology upon the majority view. I remember when I was young in the faith, I wrestled with the prescriptive methods of the easy believers, the modern American gospel. The consensus was, as long as you checked off all the boxes, you were saved. If you accepted Jesus into your heart and said the sinner's prayer and professed Him as Lord and were sincere when you said it, then the consensus was you were saved. I questioned this against Christ's claim we must take up our cross and follow Him, but my Sunday School teachers and youth ministers assured me, this was "another level" of the faith. Though I thought this was in error, I trusted the idea or theory that, if not exactly correct, God would not send so many professing Christians to Hell. We tend to want to reach salvation by consensus, but this is dangerous.

The modern American gospel is full of theology which does not come from Scripture, but we feel comfortable with it because everyone speaks it. Among these are "give your heart to Jesus," "say
the sinner's prayer," "I made a decision for Christ." We are no different than these crowds, who reached salvation by consensus. Most professing Christians do not have a Biblical understanding of the means of salvation. We need to examine ourselves in the light of Scripture to see if we truly believe or to understand if we have been following with the masses, hoping we will flow into Heaven.

We have become so obsessed with the gospel of "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life," but have forgotten the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is "repent, for the kingdom of heaven (judgment) is at hand." [Mat 4:17; Mar 1:15]. We have forgotten Jesus told us to count the cost and to take up our cross and follow Him (Luk 14:27-33). We have forgotten Jesus said we must be born again and this is the work of God (3:3-8). We have forgotten those who disobey REMAIN under God's wrath (John 3:36) or, as Jesus said, "are condemned ALREADY." [3:18].

Today, if you hear Christ calling, do not harden your heart (Heb 3:15).

So there was a division among the people over Him. [v43].

The people were divided. Earlier in this public conversation, they were arguing whether He was a good man or leading people astray (v12). This time, they were divided whether He could be the Messiah or had come from the wrong town (v40-42). They were not listening to the Gospel; they were arguing over technicalities.

Jesus Christ claimed to come from God; to be equal with the Father (v29). He claimed to give of the Holy Spirit to those who followed Him (v38). There were three responses to His message:

1. Some believed (v40-41a);
2. Others want to water the message down or argue over the minor points (v41b-42);
3. Many wanted the message to go away (v44).

Some of them wanted to arrest Him, but no one laid hands on Him. [v44].
Twice, the Apostle John brought this up: some wanted Him arrested (v30,44). Many people cannot handle conflict and want to eliminate the cause. The Pharisees viewed Christ as a threat to their domain and authority. Others viewed Christ as leading people astray (v12). However, no one could lay hands on Him because His time had not yet come (v30;44).

An objective heart would have understood this was of God and, as such, the matter should have been settled and Christ should have been worshipped. But a freewill bound by sin clings to a sinful, hardened cognitive bias and cannot see truth. Therefore, the blasphemies against Christ continued.

The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?" The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!" The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed. [v45-49].

The Pharisees were angry and accused the officers of being duped. They set themselves up as the standard for truth, claiming the people were cursed because they did not know the law (v49); the masses were not smart like the leaders.

Times do not change: those who rise to power believe themselves to be superior and smarter than the common man. But God chooses to reveal the truth to those of low estate.

I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was Your gracious will. [Mat 11:25-26].

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame
the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world . . .so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus . . .so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." [1Co 1:26-31].

How often we look to leaders and famous preachers for truth, when they are not following the Scriptures, but they make good sound bites. The Apostle Paul wrote, "None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." [1Co 2:8]. The rulers of this age, to which Paul referred, were the famous leaders, preachers and teachers: the Pharisees.

The irony was the Jewish leaders had so twisted the Law to become what they wanted, it could no longer be recognized as the Law of God. But they were experts in this fabrication of regulations.

So, Jesus called them out. In verses 19-24, Jesus accused them of failing to keep Moses' Law by trying to kill Him. He also accused them of not understanding Moses' Law by failing to understand the purpose of the Sabbath. The Pharisees had created so many laws, confusion prevailed and "masters" were needed for proper interpretation. Therefore, God's Law was mocked in practice.

At another time, Jesus called out seven woes to the Pharisees. Regarding the tithe, He said they strained out a gnat to swallow a camel. They made themselves look clean while inside they were full of greed and self-indulgence. He berated them for their hypocrisy and condemned them in their sin (Mat 23:13-36).

The Pharisees had twisted the Word of God so violently, the people could not see the fulfillment of the promise when He stood before them, in the flesh. But there were some whom God had opened their hearts to the truth.

This is how the coming of the Christ brought division: He exposed the lie; He exposed the hypocrisy of those who professed to speak for Him.

Nicodemus, who had gone to Him before, and who was one of them, said to them, "Does our law
judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee." [v50-52].

Nicodemus was concerned. The officers had not returned with Jesus and it was obvious from the reaction of the Pharisees, they wanted to make haste in the execution of this man. Nicodemus considered Jesus to be sent by God (3:2). He tried to slow this rush to execute Him. He wanted Christ to have a fair hearing and he questioned, as a point of law, whether a man can be judged without a trial (v50-51).

Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a believer, had not yet professed faith in Christ openly. We know this, in part, because of the Apostle John's rebuke in 19:38-39. Further evidence of his silence is when the Pharisees made it clear to the soldiers, none of them had believed in Christ, but Nicodemus did not speak out (v48). At this time, he feared man more than he feared God.

The Pharisees' response to Nicodemus was to rebuke him for siding with a Galilean and challenged him to search the Scriptures and see no prophet comes from there. But a search of Scripture does reveal Jonah was from Gath-hepher, which was in Galilee (2Ki 14:25). Elijah was from Thisbe and possibly Nahum and Hosea were from Galilee, as well.

To accuse someone of being a Galilean, was a put-down. So, it appeared the intent of this rebuke was to shut Nicodemus up and it seemed to work. For the passage does not record a response from him. He was not yet willing to reveal he was a believer. At this time, Nicodemus did not have a saving faith.

The people were divided: some believed He was the Messiah; some believed He was merely a prophet; and others wanted Him dead. Of the Pharisees and leaders, most did not believe, but the few, like Nicodemus who did believe, were afraid to confess. Jesus said He came to bring a sword (Mat 10:34-39). He came to bring division, not peace (Luk 12:49-53). This crowd could never be a happy crowd. Furthermore, they could never come to a consensus because few among them were looking for the truth.
They each went to their own house (v53). The plot to kill Jesus just lost wind in the sails and would have to resume another time. 

[THE Earliest manuscripts do not include 7:53 to 8:11. It is probable these verses were added sometime later.]

**IN CLOSING**

The people were divided. Some saw Him as the Messiah while others wanted to water down His message. Some tried to disprove Him. What was at stake was His teaching: if they believed, they would be accountable.

Though the Pharisees tried to arrest Jesus, it was not a simple matter. The officers who were sent, were taken by Jesus' teaching. They told the Pharisees, "No one ever spoke like this man!" God had intervened because it was not yet time.

Seeing the Pharisees were intent on killing Christ, Nicodemus raised the question whether it was lawful to sentence a man without a trial. The Pharisees argued back there was no prophet coming out of Galilee. A technicality, which if true, would disprove Jesus as Messiah, but it was not true.

This second half of the chapter is similar to the first: Christ spoke truth and division ensued. Often times, when divisions arise, men will compromise truth to achieve unity. Christ never did this; when truth divided, He doubled down with more truth. He never watered down His message for the sake of acceptance or unity. He stood on truth and we are called to do the same.

The modern American gospel has created a Jesus who loves everybody, a Jesus who is kind and would never offend anyone. This is a false Jesus and a false gospel. The truth offends, and Christ never let other people's feelings get in the way of His preaching. He claimed to bring division and a sword (Mat 10:34; Luk 12:51).

There is division within those who profess Christ. Some believe in the easy gospel, while true believers cling to the Gospel of Jesus Christ; which is to be born of God and living a life of repentance. Beware of efforts to create unity among professing Christians, based
upon claims of kindness and tolerance, rather than on Scripture. We cannot achieve salvation by consensus.

God is not a God of love to those who disobey and do not believe. Today, if you hear Christ calling, do not harden your hearts. Repent and follow Christ.
John 8:1-11 Jesus Said Leave Your Life Of Sin

[THE EARLIEST MANUSCRIPTS DO NOT INCLUDE 7:53 to 8:11. It is probable these verses were added sometime later.]

Whether or not this passage was added or was in the original text, it appears in verse 12 Jesus was still in Jerusalem. In chapter 7, Jesus was talking to the crowd at the feast. In verse 52, He was speaking to people on the last day of the feast. So, here, in this passage and the rest of this chapter, He must be speaking to people left over from the feast or the usual daily crowd in the temple. Regardless, we will look at this passage as if it was included in the original text.

The accusers of Christ had gone home, but He had spent the night praying on the Mount of Olives. This day, He will be teaching in the temple.

Even though most Jesus' professing disciples or followers had left Him in chapter six, there were still a great many people who wanted to hear Christ's teaching. When He came to the temple early in the morning "all the people" or a large crowd of people met Him. This passage says He sat down to teach, which indicates it was informal teaching as opposed to a lecture.

After He began teaching, the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery (v3). The Pharisees had not given up their quest to kill Jesus. Just the day before, the Pharisees had sent officers to arrest Him. Their plan now was to find something to charge Him with. After all, Nicodemus had brought up an important
legal point: Christ would have to be put to trial before they could execute Him. So, they wanted a judgment from Jesus regarding this woman. Their motive was to set a trap. Would Christ overstep His authority by condemning this woman? or could they accuse Him of debasing the Law by exonerating her? They were willing to put this woman's life on the line to bring a charge against Jesus.

The Pharisees claimed the Law of Moses commanded them to stone this woman (v5). This was a setup and framed upon half the truth. The Law, according to Deuteronomy 22:22, said to put to death both the man and the woman caught in adultery. Certainly, it was not possible the Pharisees caught only the woman. Where was the man? And, how did they conveniently find an adulterous woman this very morning, unless this adultery came from among their own? The Apostle John confirmed this was a setup and the purpose was to bring a charge against Christ, because they still wanted to kill Him (v6).

Jesus bent down and wrote with His finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask Him, He stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." And once more He bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones. [v6b-9a].

In Matthew 7:1, Christ commanded us to judge not, lest we be judged. People use this Scripture, inappropriately, to shut people's mouths when speaking the truth. But elsewhere in the same chapter of Matthew, Christ explained what and how to judge. So, we see the command against judging refers to our motive; we must not judge with malicious intent. When we judge with harmful resolve, as these Pharisees did, for the sake of our own self-interest, power and glory, we are hypocrites and our sin will be exposed; we will be judged.

Regarding this woman's crime, Jesus did not waste time arguing what the Law said. He got to the point. The Bible does not tell us what Jesus wrote on the ground (v6). Maybe it was their sin, maybe it was the name of the man with whom she was caught, or maybe it was nothing, maybe by this action He was expressing His disinterest
in this conversation. Regardless, they continued to press Him, so He stood up and said, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." [v7].

When Christ charged the man without sin to cast the first stone, He did not mean the sinless man. He did not mean only sinless men could render civil judgment. If that were the case, we could have no civil law for there could be no punishment for crimes. We know God gave man the responsibility to punish crimes (Gen 9:6; Exo 21; et al) although no man is sinless. But the point Jesus made was the Pharisees were not seeking justice; they had evil motives for making the charge and they were guilty of the same crime.

In Deuteronomy 17:7, the command is for the one who witnessed the sin to cast the first stone. No one should die or be judged by third party evidence or hearsay. So it is only right for the eyewitness to be the first to execute judgment. If they are not willing, it is possible the crime did not happen. So, when Jesus called for the sinless man to cast the first stone, He was addressing their hypocrisy.

This was a setup: they brought the woman for judgment and they did not charge the man who was equally guilty. Christ knew the purpose was to bring evidence for a charge against Him. The Pharisees were quick to cast judgment, but slow to repent. They abused the Scriptures for their own power and glory.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves. [Mat 23:15].

After Christ had scattered the hypocrites, He asked the woman where were her accusers and had any condemned her. She answered no one had convicted her. Jesus' response was, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more." [v11]. His reproof indicates she was probably guilty of this sin. She had been forgiven of a sin which, according to the Law, required the sentence of death. Jesus put only one requirement upon her: sin no more.
Did this woman leave her life of sin? When Jesus healed the man crippled for 38 years, He warned him to, "Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." [5:14]. The healed man did not act penitently. In fact, it appears he snitched on Jesus so he would not be kicked out of the temple; so it is likely he was not saved. The woman caught in adultery was confronted with the same command, "sin no more." [v11]. She seemed repentant and Scripture leans in her favor, because it records she called Him "Lord." She set out to serve Him and it appears she was likely saved.

There is only one way to leave a life of sin, this is to follow Christ. So, too, when we receive Jesus Christ we are told to leave our life of sin (v11; cf 1Pe 2:24). We will not be sinless; the Apostle Paul explains this in Romans chapter seven. Nonetheless, our lifestyle will be focused on pleasing the Lord (Rom 8:13-14).

. . .the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. [Eph 5:6].

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. [Col 1:13-14].

For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. [1Th 4:3].

IN CLOSING

It was for the sake of their own power and glory the Pharisees brought this woman before Jesus to judge. They brought her to Jesus because they wanted to collect evidence for a judgment against Him. However, going up against God, they fell into the trap they had laid.

When we judge with malice, we fall into the same trap, for we are all fallen, sinful creatures (Rom 2:1-4).

When Jesus pardoned the woman caught in adultery, this was not an example of the modern American version of Jesus; a sweet, loving and always forgiving Jesus. Many misuse this Scripture, claiming it is an example of Christ's compassion and unconditional grace. They miss the part where Jesus required of this woman to sin no more.
When Christ calls us to follow Him, He commands us to leave our life of sin. Repent and obey Christ today.

. . .whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. [3:36].
Between these two events, of healing the man crippled for 38 years and liberating the woman caught in adultery, He declared to the crowds He is the Bread of Life and He promised the Holy Spirit, whom would be a River of Life within them. He promised to those who would follow Him food and drink which shepherds one to eternal life.

But the people, using worldly wisdom, could not get past the technical problems and the Pharisees could not get past their pride. The Prophet Isaiah prophesied, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." [Isa 9:2]. This crowd rejected Christ and remained in darkness. "...the Light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. [3:19]."

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." [v12].

At the beginning of this Gospel, the Apostle John wrote,

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. [1:5]

God is light and the world is darkness. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." [1Jo 1:5b]. The Apostle Paul wrote, "at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord." [Eph 5:8]. And he explained those who follow Christ have been delivered from this the world's darkness and are given the hope of eternal life.

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. [Col 1:13].

Here is the Light of the world. If we look to Him, abide in His Word, we have all the light we need and it will carry us to eternal life with Him. But many professing Christians want to syncretize this hope with the world's wisdom of
positive messages. Jesus said if we receive light from the world, it is darkness; deep darkness (Mat 6:23).

The world's wisdom, psychology, positive mental attitudes, a host of man-centered religions and philosophies and such, are designed to take us away from God; they are a substitute for God. They design our thoughts around man, self-help and away from God.

Jesus warned us Satan would deceive the elect, IF THIS WERE POSSIBLE (Mat 24:24). If you are enticed by positive quotes from worldly people, examine yourself to see if you are in the faith (2Co 3:15). Jesus said His sheep hear His voice and they will not listen to the voice of another (10:4-5, 26-27). You cannot mix the wisdom of this world with the wisdom of God and be saved.

. . .If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness. [Mat 6:23].

The true light is holy; God is holy. We often think about holiness to be purity or the absence of sin. This it is, but it is more. Holiness is unique to God; the word means to be set apart. The light signifies holiness. Darkness has covered the world and the world is bound by sin. But the Light is set apart from the darkness; it shines in the darkness and we are given the opportunity to follow this light. Jesus declared it.

The modern American gospel speaks of God as love. It might tip its hat to other attributes but seldom will it acknowledge God's justice, His wrath or His holiness. Of God's holiness, the Scriptures say, "holy, holy, holy." [Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8]. Of no other attribute does Scripture say it three times over. Never does Scripture say God is "love, love, love." No one is holy but God and His holiness is three times over. Holiness is unique to Him and all of God's attributes are wrapped up in His holiness.

Set yourself apart to be holy unto God. As God is holy, we are commanded to be holy (1Pe 1:15-16).

This Light Jesus declared is our eternal hope:

And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. [Rev 22:5].

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But who has this hope? Jesus did not say to get saved, go about your life and you will have this hope. He said, "Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness." [v12].

To not walk in darkness, we must follow Christ. Following Christ is not saying the sinner's prayer, marking the date in our Bible and going back to the life we lived. Following Christ is rejecting the world's darkness, even its "positive" darkness and becoming obedient to Christ. Jesus told us to seek the light and stay out of darkness.

This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. [1Jo 1:5-7].

Jesus described John the Baptist as, "He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light." [5:35]. John the Baptist was not the Light; he was a reflection of God's light (1:7-8). If we are following Christ, the Apostle Paul said we are light in the Lord; we, too, will be reflections of God's light.

for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. [Eph 5:8].

**PHARISEES CHALLENGE THE LIGHT**

So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are bearing witness about Yourself; Your testimony is not true." [v13].

The Jews had a law, which held that a charge or an accusation could not be considered to be true without a corroborating witness. This is a principle from Deuteronomy 17:6, ". . .a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness." From this principle, Jewish law considered, for the sake of evidence, any statement which could not be backed up by a second or third witness to be false.
In chapter five, Jesus said, "If I alone bear witness about Myself, My testimony is not true. There is another who bears witness about Me, and I know that the testimony that He bears about Me is true." [5:31-32]. During this conversation Christ acknowledged the legal premise and brought in His Father as a second witness.

This time, rather than acknowledge the Law and bring in more witnesses, Christ began with a different strategy.

**Even if I do bear witness about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. [v14].**

He began with the claim He is exempt from the law of evidence because He is God. This also refutes their earlier claim, which was they knew where He came from and, therefore, He could not be the Messiah (7:27). Now, Jesus warned them they did not know where He came from.

Christ is the Messiah and God does not need a witness to validate Himself. Nonetheless, God can meet the technicalities of the law; He is one in three persons and thus, there are at least two more witnesses for any person of the Godhead.

**MY JUDGMENT IS TRUE**

*You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.* [v15].

Their judgment was based upon their prejudices; it was self-serving and malicious. This is what Jesus was talking about when He said, "Judge not, that you be not judged." [Mat 7:1]. When He said, "I judge no one," [v15] He was talking about this malicious, self-serving judgment. But He wanted them to know He will judge them and told them so (v16,26).

Many professing Christians like to claim Jesus did not judge. But here, though He appeared to say so, this is not the context. And He warned the people they are standing before and accusing their judge. So, don't take verse 15 as stand-alone evidence Jesus said He does not judge. For this would be taking this single clause out of context.
Yet even if I do judge, My judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent Me. [v16].

In 5:19, Jesus said He only does what He sees the Father doing and in 12:49, Jesus said He only speaks what the Father tells Him to say. So, when He made verbal judgments, these were not His own, as a man in the flesh; they were the judgments of God.

The Word of God brings judgment:

> For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. [Heb 4:12-13].

The Word of God never returns empty (Isa 55:11). As Christ, in the flesh, revealed God's judgments to man, the Bible, as the Word of God, reveals God's judgments to man. God uses the Word to conform the obedient to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29) and the disobedient to eternal damnation.

These men studied the Scriptures but when the Word, their judge, stood before them, they could not recognize Him. Christ was the fulfillment of the Prophet foretold by Moses, in Deu 18:15-19. They ignored the warning and set their own judgment.

Christ will return to judge the world. The Bible tells us God commands all people to repent because He "has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man [Jesus Christ] whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead." [Act 17:31]. Christ will judge the world with the Father and, in verse 26, He warned the people He has much to judge.

> In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. I am the one who bears witness about Myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about Me. [v17-18].
Having said He will judge the world with the Father, He now affirmed again their law of evidence, which He had previously side-stepped. He assured them there are two witnesses regarding this matter; God the Father and God the Son (v17-18). He was not there on His own authority because He was sent by the Father.

**THE PHARISEES CHALLENGE HIS LINEAGE**

They said to Him therefore, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you knew Me, you would know My Father also." [v19].

It was likely Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus was already passed away. The people around Galilee knew Jesus and His family and word had likely reached the Pharisees, Jesus had no living father. So when Jesus said if you knew Me you would know My Father, the Pharisees called for Christ to produce His witness, His Father. Their tone may have been sarcastic.

The Pharisees studied the Scriptures, but they were blind to what the Scriptures revealed. The last time Christ was in Jerusalem, when challenged for healing a man on the Sabbath, He rebuked the Pharisees, saying, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me." [5:39]. Proud of their own wisdom and knowledge, they were unable to grasp the wisdom and knowledge of God. They could not see God had come down to man, as foretold by the Prophet Isaiah (Isa 9:6).

These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; but no one arrested Him, because His hour had not yet come. [v20].

This was no obscure conversation. Christ spoke this in the temple in Jerusalem (in the treasury), before the crowd of people and the religious leaders (v20). They heard the message and though they opposed Him, "no one arrested Him, because His hour had not yet come." [v20]. God is always in control and He has set a time for everything and everything occurs at the prescribed time (Ecc 3:1-8).
I am going away, and you will seek Me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come. [v21].

Jesus warned the unbelieving crowd, they were on their way to Hell. They heard the message as He spoke in the temple; they had the opportunity to follow the light. They would be accountable for their refusal; they would be without excuse. If they died in their sin, they could NOT go where Jesus was going. He was going to Heaven, they were on their way to Hell.

This is the Gospel message: to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and live with Him forever. Jesus told the unbelievers, they had NO hope. He did not water down the message or try to appeal to man by declaring the false hope that God loved them and had a wonderful plan for their life.

>You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am He you will die in your sins. [v23-24].

"You are from below." The world looks upon God with worldly wisdom. Jesus said He is above. In the first three chapters of 1Corinthians, Paul wrote the wisdom of God is foolishness to man and the wisdom of man is foolishness to God. You cannot know God, who is above, using the wisdom from below. The Apostle Paul said the wisdom of God is spiritually discerned (1Co 2:14).

"Unless you believe that I AM" (the "he" is not in the Greek). I AM is the name for God. It represents One who is all knowing, all power, all present. So when Jesus said unless you believe He is I AM you will die in your sins, He was not talking about tipping your hat to Him or merely believing His Deity as fact. He was talking about a belief which leads to obedience; He was talking about a righteous fear of God.

But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. [Psa 130:4].

let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that He
may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. [Isa 55:7].

This is quite different from the modern American gospel. Professing Christians who desire to please the world, want people to believe Jesus was always kind and tolerant. But Jesus was NOT tolerant and He said harsh things. He calls man to repentance.

These people who proclaim Jesus' love and acceptance to sinners, when God is calling them to repentance, are the tares (Mat 13:24-30). God has allowed them to infiltrate His church, but, though they be the nicest people, they will meet their judgment at the end.

What is believing which prevents one from dying in sin? This has to be more than a mere knowing or certainty Christ was sent by the Father. This believing must obedience to the Gospel; it must be leaving a life of sin to follow Christ.

Rather than repent when Jesus addressed them, the Jews obscured the message by raising frivolous, mocking questions. "Will He kill Himself?" [v22]. In the previous chapter, Christ made the same claim about going away and they could not come (7:33-34). They mocked Him then also (7:35-36).

Jesus did not answer the mocking questions. He pressed them to repent; to believe He is God or die in their sins (v23-24).

In their disbelief, they asked Him, "Who are you?" [v25]. The Jews asked this question of John the Baptist (1:19), but he responded, "I am not the Christ" or Messiah. He knew the point of the question. Jesus, too, knew this, but He was not going to give them what they wanted; He was not going to play into their hand. They did not seek to know the Messiah; their purpose was to accuse Him and He had already told them clearly who He was.

I have much to say about you and much to judge, but He who sent Me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from Him. [v26].

The leaders and the mockers set themselves up for judgment and the judge was standing in front of them. This was a clear warning, but the religious leaders were not seeking answers to discover the truth, they were looking for Christ to say something offensive, so they
could bring charges against Him. If they sought the truth, they would have understood and repented.

Christ assured them again, He was who He claimed to be from the beginning (v25) and because they did not believe, He had much to judge against them (v26). In another passage, Jesus said if anyone does not believe He is the Messiah sent from the Father, he is condemned already (3:18).

He affirmed again He was sent by God the Father. This was His authority to make claim to be the Messiah; and this was also His warning to the Jews. What Christ said was plain, but those who refused to believe could not understand, because they were from below.

This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. [3:19].

THE GOSPEL AND THE AUTHORITY

So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing on My own authority, but speak just as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." As he was saying these things, many believed in Him. [v28-30].

"When you have lifted up the Son of Man." This was Christ's declaration how He would die and who would kill Him. He would die on a cross (lifted up) and the Pharisees, along with this crowd of people, would put Him there (you have lifted up).

"Then you will know I am He." When He died, the veil in the temple was torn in two (Mat 27:50-51). From top to bottom. This was something no man could do because of the thickness of the curtain. The Jewish leaders all saw it, but they had a financial interest in maintaining the lie. When given proof He was the Messiah, they refused to repent.
He told them they would kill Him, but we all participated in this. It was our sin which put Him on the cross. The Jews rejected Him; every man in his natural flesh rejects Him. We are all in opposition to the Messiah and have killed Him. We all know He is the Son of God, whether we acknowledge Him or not. The demons acknowledged Him (Mat 8:29; Mar 1:24; Luk 4:34) and every knee will bow and every mouth will confess (Php 2:9-11). We all know.

The Gospel was preached and many believed (v30). He is the light of the world and He brings man out of darkness.

IN CLOSING

The things Christ said to the crowd and the Jews, about Himself and about themselves:

1. I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. [v12].

2. Even if I do bear witness about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going. [v14].

3. I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, My judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent Me. [v15-16].

4. You know neither Me nor My Father. If you knew Me, you would know My Father also. [v19].

5. I am going away, and you will seek Me, and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come. [v21].

6. You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. [v23].

7. I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am He you will die in your sins. [v24].

8. I have much to say about you and much to judge, but He who sent Me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from Him. [v26].

9. When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He. [v28a].
10. I do nothing on My own authority, but speak just as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him. [v28b-29].

"As He was saying these things, many believed in Him." [v30].

Christ began with the promise to lead those who will follow Him out of darkness. Though the majority defied Him, in the end, the Bible says many believed in Him.

We will die in our sins if we do not believe in Him. We may be proud of our knowledge and understanding but we are from below and are limited in wisdom. He is from above and knows all things. He has much to judge against us, but there is hope for the believer.

- Do you believe?
- Have you repented of your sin?
- Have you taken upon yourself the righteousness of Christ?
- Are you walking in the light?
John 8:31-36 Abiding In Truth Will Set You Free

In the previous passage, Jesus said He is the Light of the world (v12). It is hard to see the truth without light. You cannot walk in truth if you walk in darkness.

Jesus said He speaks the truth which the Father taught Him (v26-28) and the passage ended with "many believed in Him." [v30]. This passage begins with Jesus admonishing those who believe to abide in His Word.

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My Word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." [v31-32].

Jesus never preached, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." He preached repentance and to professing believers, He often told them what true faith looks like and why they were not saved.

Jesus challenged the believers: If you abide in My word,

a) you are truly My disciples, and

b) you will know the truth, and

c) the truth will set you free. [v31-32].

"The truth will set you free." The world loves this portion of Jesus' quote. They leave out the part about knowing the truth can only come from abiding in Christ's Word. They don't want God's truth; they want their bias to be truth. So, they comfort themselves their truth will prevail and they cannot see they are embracing lies.

In our culture, the truth is considered to be relative to our personal beliefs. Everyone can have their own truth. Mankind wants the truth without God. But Jesus told the people plainly the truth is centered in Him; and it still is today. God does not change (Num 23:19; Heb 13:8).

Jesus warned if you look for truth within your own wisdom or within the world's wisdom, the light in you is darkness; deep
darkness (Mat 6:23). You cannot know the truth without Jesus Christ and He said you must abide in His Word to know the truth; only then will you be free.

If the truth makes us free, what is this freedom?

and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. . . now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God." [Rom 6:18,22].

For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. [Rom 8:2].

The Apostle James called God's law "the perfect law, the law of liberty." [Jam 1:25]. The Apostle Peter wrote, "Live as people who are free. . . living as servants of God." [1Pe 2:16]. Freedom is the right and the ability to serve God and follow Christ. Seeking freedom from God is finding bondage to sin, while seeking to abide in Christ is to be truly free, indeed (v36).

Most people have no problem with the claims of Christ, until He requires some commitment on their part. If Jesus had told them to go to church every week or maybe join a Bible study group, where they must answer a half dozen shallow questions before cookies and coffee, the people who believed might have been good with that.

They answered Him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that You say, 'You will become free'?'" [v33].

Sure enough, just as we have seen in previous chapters, their belief did not run deep. They believed He was the Messiah but they were not interested in a committed life. Many profess to believe in Christ but there is no fruit because they have no desire to be in the Word; they have no desire to leave their lives of sin. The Apostle James said, "faith without works is dead." [Jam 2:26]. After all, the demons "believe and tremble." [Jam 2:19]. Many profess to believe but they do not tremble.
These people felt confident in their heritage to save them. In another passage, Jesus warned against trusting in heredity for salvation, specifically to be born of Abraham.

And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. [Mat 3:9-10].

When challenged by Christ to abide in Him to know the truth and to have freedom, the people were offended. Take note: these were professing believers and they were offended by the words of Christ. Many professing Christians today are offended by the words of Christ; the words of Scripture.

The believers tried to set Christ straight. They claimed to be offspring of Abraham and had never been enslaved to anyone and, therefore, were already free (v33). How blind their pride and their religious practices made them.

They were not free in any respect:

1) they were currently enslaved to:
   a) the rigid law as taught by the Pharisees and
   b) the Roman government.

2) Abraham's people had a history of slavery:
   a) in Egypt for four hundred years and
   b) many other conquerors and oppressors, as described in the Book of Judges and then, to Assyria and Babylon, who took them from their land.

Oblivious to the facts, they saw themselves as free people. They could not see the truth and they could not see they were not free. Jesus told them to abide in Him and they will know the truth and the truth will set them free. Their response was to come back with a lie.

Jesus gave the same promise to us: If we abide in Him, we will know the truth and the truth will set us free. If we want to live Godly
lives and see the fruit of God produced in our lives, we must abide in Christ.

I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. . . Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. [15:1-6].

Most professing Christians do not want this conditional freedom. They want an easy grace where they can remain in their sinful lives, believing God understands their hearts. They falsely believe they can escape the fires of Hell by clinging to an event where they made a decision for Christ. They make time for church, but they do not have time to abide in Christ and they are not saved.

**SLAVES TO SIN**

To those who claimed salvation through their heritage in Abraham, Jesus wasted no time arguing on this subject. He got down to the root problem: Without a believing faith, which results in abiding in Christ, you are still a slave to sin and are not saved.

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. [v34].

It matters not what a man looks like to others. A man might be the nicest guy, but all it takes is one sin to be a sinner and, the Apostle Paul argued in Romans chapter seven, this sin is in our nature. The Bible says, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." [Rom 3:23]. Therefore, every man is a slave to sin, unless and until he is set free by Christ.

Christ came to give freedom to those who believe (3:16; Rom 8:1-2). If you are truly saved, you will turn from your life of sin. There is no bouncing back and forth, there is no recovery group to pat you
on the back and "rescue" you. If you are not a new creation, you are not saved (2Co 5:17).

Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? . . . For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Rom 6:16; 23].

To the Jew, Christ warned against trusting in their line of birth for salvation. To the professing Christian, He warned against trusting in a profession of salvation or anything other than Christ Himself. Unless there is an abiding in Christ, you cannot be saved. This is not something you manufacture, this is the fruit of being saved.

Those who cling to their heritage in Abraham are like those who cling to the date they were saved. Both avenues to salvation are futile, for their faith is not in Jesus Christ. You may believe He is the Savior, but a true believing faith leads to a hunger for and an abiding in Christ. This is reflected by being in the Word; spending time with God and learning about Him. Most people do not have time for this, but they mistakenly think they will have time for God in eternity. If you think you are saved but you have little time for Christ and His Word, you are mistaken.

THE SON SETS YOU FREE

The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. [v35-36].

Up until the passing of Sarah, Abraham had two sons; these are the only two sons of Abraham the Bible spends any significant time discussing. One was Ishmael, the son of Sarah's slave, Hagar. The other was Isaac, the son of the promise.

Ishmael and his mother were sent away. They were cast out of the house because the slave's son was not the heir (Gen 21:8-12). This is an example of what Jesus was talking about, when He said the slave
does not remain in the house forever. The house belongs to the heir; there is no certainty for the slave.

Not all who were born into the lineage of Abraham were saved. Both Ishmael, the son of the slave, and Isaac, the son of the promise, were physical sons of Abraham. The son of the slave was given no inheritance. So, it was a false hope to depend upon inheritance for eternal life. Jesus was warning them, they were slaves and they needed to trust the Son to become sons.

Isaac was a type of Christ. He was the son of promise; he owned the entire household because he was the heir. Promise speaks to election. Jesus said only those who are given Him by the Father will come to Him (6:37,44,65). Christ is the first begotten of God and we who believe in Him are adopted into His family as sons of promise (Rom 8:15,23).

The Apostle Paul described this election:

> And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of Him who calls, she was told, "The older will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." [Rom 9:10-13; quoting Mal 1:2-3].

The people Jesus was talking to, believed they were saved because they were offspring of Abraham. So Jesus pointed out Abraham had two sons. There are offspring of slaves and there are sons of promise. The son of the slave was cast out and could not fulfill the promise. Like Isaac, Jesus is the true Son and salvation comes through the line of the promise. Salvation, therefore, does not follow human lineage. Salvation follows promise or election. Salvation is by faith in God, which is given to us by God (Eph 2:8-9).

Following the son of unbelief, leads to slavery to sin (Rom 6:16). If you follow Christ, the Son of the promise sets you free and you will be free indeed (v36).
IN CLOSING

Jesus was talking to believers and He told them they were not saved. He said if they were truly His disciples, they would abide in His Word.

IF we abide in His Word, THEN we will know the truth and the truth will set us free.

Rather than seek the truth, they wanted their worldview to be the truth. They were angry at Jesus when He did not confirm their bias. He told them, they must abide in Him.

Most professing Christians have a worldview that God is love and God loves them no matter what they do. Jesus said if they do not abide in Him, they cannot know the truth.

Are you in the Word?
John 8:37-47 Standing Firm In The Faith Of Lies

Jesus said if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. We can trust nothing else for salvation. Just as the Jew mistakenly trusted his heritage and his works of the Law, many professing Christians trust in an event, a decision, a profession of faith, but none of this can save. The only way to salvation is Jesus Christ and what He did. If you are following Christ, you will be in the Word; you will be desiring to know Him.

I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill Me because My word finds no place in you. I speak of what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have heard from your father." They answered Him, "Abraham is our father." [v37-39a].

Jesus acknowledged they were the physical offspring of Abraham. But they were not acting according to their lineage. Abraham looked for God's promise but these people wanted to kill the fulfillment of the promise.

In the last chapter, Christ spoke of Moses and asked if they obeyed Moses, why did they seek to kill Him (7:19). These people claimed to follow Abraham and Moses, yet they betrayed their claim because they were not seeking the Messiah, they were trying to kill Him.

Jesus contrasted their claim to what Abraham did. The Bible says Abraham believed and it was accounted to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6). His faith brought about obedience; even when God told him to sacrifice his son Isaac, he obeyed (Gen 22). On the other hand, these people did not obey. They mocked Jesus and argued with Him, therefore, Abraham was not their father.

Children tend to follow their fathers: Christ told them He had shown them what He had seen His Father doing and they, in turn, spoke what they heard from their father (v38). The implication was Abraham was not their father. But, they insisted Abraham was their father.
"My words find no place in you." In another passage, Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice." [10:27]. They could not hear, because they were not following Christ. In essence, Christ told them they were not saved.

Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did." They said to Him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father; even God." [v39b-41].

Did Christ's words lead them to repentance? No. Rather than understand the truth from the Messiah, in their pride they were committed to justifying themselves. Pride is a great sin; when we indulge in it, when we think highly of ourselves, we cannot see the truth. For the truth is we are all wretches and in need of a savior.

They were indignant and argued they were not bastards or children of fornication. Now, they upped the ante, claiming not only to be children of Abraham, but now to be children of God the Father (v41). Nonetheless, a profession of faith does not make one saved.

If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God. [v42-47].
Jesus explained to them how God was not their father because their father was Satan himself (v42-47). In other words, they may claim to be Abraham's children and claim to follow God, but, in fact, they are not children of the promise and they serve their father, the devil. Jesus clearly is warning them, they are not saved.

Get it out of your head the false understanding that Jesus was always sweet and kind and never said harsh things. The Gospel of John is full of examples of Jesus telling people they were not saved. But this is true kindness: for the gospel which declares God is loving and has only good plans for people, pats sinners on the back on their way to Hell; while the Gospel which warns the person on the way to destruction to repent has true compassion for that soul.

Twice Jesus told them they could not hear His Words because they were not of God. Their father was Satan because this was whom they obeyed. If you live a sinful life, you are a child of Satan. Your profession of faith cannot save you.

...you are slaves of the one whom you obey...

[Rom 6:16].

They were bound in their sin. "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. . ." [v44]. This is why they could not hear Christ; this is why they could not obey Him. This is why they could not follow Him of their own freewill. Unless the Father draws him, the natural man is captive to sin and has no desire to choose to follow Christ. No man can come to Christ of his own freewill.

Professions of faith do not represent true faith unless it produces the works of faith (Jam 2:18). If they truly were sons of Abraham, they would honor the promise he was looking for. If they were children of the Father, they would honor the Son of God. By their actions and their arguments, they did not serve God.

Jesus made it clear: there are two camps. Those who belong to God and those who belong to Satan. There is no in-between. You will serve God or Satan. Just as these believers scorned the words of the Son of God, so do many who profess faith in Christ. Many who profess faith in Christ are not saved because they are still slaves to sin.
behold, the word of the Lord is to them an object of scorn; they take no pleasure in it. [Jer 6:10b].

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. [1Co 2:14].

The reason these believers could not hear the truth was because they were slaves to sin. Those who serve sin, serve their father, the devil.

but you do not believe because you are not among My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. [10:26-27].

YOU WILL NOT STAND AT ALL

Here are the points Jesus made against their claim to be children of the Father (v42-47).

1) If God were your Father, you would love Me for He sent me and I am here, not as a man who glorifies himself, but as one sent by God (v42).

2) You cannot understand what I am telling you because you are children of the devil and your will is to do what he desires (v43-44).

3) Satan was a murderer from the beginning and does not speak the truth because there is no truth in him at all. When he lies, he fulfills his character, because he is the father of lies (v44).

4) I tell you the truth, but you do not believe. Whoever is of God hears His words (v45-46).

5) The reason they could not hear the truth was because they were not of God. There was no one who could bring evidence to convict Christ of sin, but they still refused to believe (v46-47).

Chapters six through eight can be characterized as a never-ending argument between Jesus and the professing believers. These people were arguing with Jesus, mocking Him and attacking His character.
We call this *ad hominem* attacks, but when assailed against God, this is blasphemy.

The people stood firm in their faith built on lies.

- They believed they were free people, though they were enslaved to sin and were nationally subservient to Rome.
- They believed they followed the Law and Moses, but they followed mans' rules and they were seeking to kill the Prophet whom Moses declared.
- They believed they were children of Abraham, yet they were seeking to kill the Son of Promise whom Abraham looked forward to.

This was a false faith. Believing you are saved, does not make it so. Their faith was built on lies. This is why Jesus warned them, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." [v31-32]. But they did not want to be free because their father was the devil (v44).

Isaiah wrote:

If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all. [Isa 7:9b].

If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all. [Isa 7:9b NIV].

If you will not believe, you surely shall not last. [Isa 7:9b NASB].

If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established. [Isa 7:9b KJV].

The JFB commentary says, regarding Isaiah 7:9, "There is a. . .play on the words, in the Hebrew: 'if ye will not *confide*, ye shall not *abide.***' The idea is we must cling to God; we cannot trust in ourselves or in help from man.

Throughout the Old Testament, we read of the nations of Israel and Judah fornicating their religion with the practices of the nations around them. In this passage of Isaiah, God rebuked Ahaz, king of
Judah, for trusting man rather than God. He warned Ahaz to stand firm in the faith and promised the nations which threatened Judah would be destroyed. The sign of the promise was this familiar prophecy through Isaiah:

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. . . For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. [Isa 7:14,16].

The two kings or two nations were Israel and Syria. Indeed, by the time the Son of God walked the earth, the nation of Israel, as Isaiah prophesied, was dispersed across the European and Western Asian countryside. The few Israelites which remained intermarried with the people around them and did not follow the Law of Moses. These were the Samaritans, a nation of half breeds, whom the Jews despised. As for Syria, they were dispersed and did not return and become recognized as a nation until 1945.

But the significance of the verse, "If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all," was understood when Judah went into captivity in Babylon many years later. They understood it was because of their tolerance and syncretism with other religious views, which caused them to "not last" or "not be established." So, they gave up idolatry completely. Thus the rise of sects which would hold tightly to the Law.

Of these sects, the Pharisees became preeminent. They became the leaders of the people, along with the Sadducees, the priests. But in the Pharisees' efforts to keep the Jewish religion from philandering with the religions of the nations around them, they contaminated the faith with a "religious humanism." They had good intentions but they had bad means; they sought to keep God's favor by their own efforts and the Law of God became twisted into a law built on lies.

Therefore, just as God warned the nation before the captivity, if they did not stand firm in the faith, they would become undone, Jesus reiterated this warning and told this crowd He was going away and they would die in their sin (v21). Amidst the scorn, the arguing and
the mocking of the leaders and the professing believers, Jesus offered them a faith to stand firm upon.

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My Word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." [v31-32].

If we are not in the Word, if we do not stand firm upon the Word of God, stand in our faith of Christ alone, we cannot stand at all. Those who do not stand, are not saved.

The Pharisees began with good intent. But little-by-little, they allowed mans' rules to overcome God's rules. But God is holy, holy, holy. And to turn His Laws on their face is an evil which will meet with His full wrath.

The modern American gospel appears to be the opposite of the Pharisees' legalistic religion. But it, too, is a salvation of what you do: say the sinner's prayer, make a decision for Christ, accept Jesus as your Savior, come forward in a meeting and such as these. It appears to be salvation by grace, but it does not rescue man from sin. The message changes the Gospel into the good news of God's love and kindness, while neglecting His holiness, His righteousness and the coming Judgment. They may have good intention, but it is not God's intention and they will meet with His full wrath.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is truly good news. The news is Christ died for our sins while we were unable to help ourselves (Rom 5:6). If we receive Christ, this is the work of God and we are saved; we do not receive Christ of our own will or our own power (1:12-13).

As for works: Those who are truly saved will abide in Christ, be in the Word, and He will produce His works in our lives (15:1-6). Even our good works is of God (3:21). He does not need our cooperation; He regenerates us so we will receive and we will abide in Christ. Salvation is fully of God alone, by His grace, through faith which He has given us, not of our own efforts, lest any man should boast (Eph 2:8-9).

. . .This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent. [6:29].

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For You have done for us all our works. [Isa 26:12].

Jesus is sufficient. If we think we need to make a decision or in any way "do our part" to receive salvation, we are robbing God of His glory and we are adding to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Do not add to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it. [Deu 12:32].

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. [Rev 22:18-19].

The professing believers of Christ's day had made God in their own image. They added to the Scripture so they could have the confidence they had done their part to be saved. The modern American gospel has made God into an acceptable image, so the professing believer can feel confident they have done their part to be saved or even their part to "turn their life around."

If your goal is to make the Gospel look acceptable to the world, beware Christ's warning: If you care more for the glory of man than the glory of God, how can you be saved? (5:44).

IN CLOSING

Rather than believe the truth, these professing believers argued with the Messiah; the Son of promise. Eventually, they called Him a Samaritan and a demon; the most vile insults they could muster.

Many professing Christians have a hard time accepting the words of Scripture. They want the words of Scripture to conform to a god of their designs; to confirm their worldview. They serve their father, the devil.
These people knew the Scriptures but they were bound by sin; they were slaves to sin. No man can come to Christ of his own freewill unless God regenerates him. The natural man, even the natural man who goes to church, is a slave to sin.

The Bible called these people believers, but to declare a profession of faith is not salvation. You cannot be truly saved from judgment unless you receive the words of Christ and live by them.

Jesus said we must abide in Him to know the truth and to be free.
Professing believers were arguing with Christ. When He overcame their arguments, they resorted to *ad hominem* attacks. They could not disprove His teaching, so they attacked His character. This is the old standard: when you run out of arguments, start calling names.

Jesus warned them and the believers answered in anger. This line of conversation continued into this passage:

*The Jews answered Him, "Are we not right in saying that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"* [v48].

The Jews accused Him of being a Samaritan, which was the most degrading character attack, aside from having a demon. The Samaritans were half-breeds and considered to be a bastard people. They were a despised social class, because they had a spoiled lineage.

Jesus had previously made it clear: you either serve God or Satan. This crowd refused to honor Him, so, just previous to this, Christ told them their father was Satan (v44). They threw this back at Him, accusing Him of having a demon (v48). The writer of the Book of Hebrews wrote Christ endured the scorn of sinners (Heb 12:3).

Christ bore the reproach of those who hated God. With their mouths, they professed to follow God, they professed to believe in Jesus, but they followed a god made in their own image. Rather than conform their lives to the Word; they manufactured a god who fulfilled their expectations. They looked so religious, but they refused to repent.

Many professing Christians have created God into an image which is comfortable for them. Their god is one who approves of them, who understands their heart, who loves them unconditionally regardless their sinful lifestyle. They think they follow Christ but they do not know the Scriptures and are offended when reproved by the Word. They may look religious, but they refuse to repent.

This is always true: you either serve God or Satan. If you are not right with God, you are serving Satan and need to repent.
Earlier in the conversation, in the last chapter, the crowd accused Jesus of having a demon for claiming they were trying to kill him (7:20). Now this crowd of believers were repeating the accusation, because Christ again claimed they were trying to kill him (v40).

Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. Yet I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks it, and He is the judge." [v49-50].

This is one of the few times when Jesus seemed to defend Himself; one of the few times He directly confronted their false accusation. But there is a purpose here: He had been speaking to the people what the Father had given Him to say. When they dishonored Him, they dishonored what the Father said. He did not defend Himself to seek His glory.

The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory: but the One who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him is true, and in Him there is no falsehood. [7:18].

He answered with truth: He honors the Father (therefore, He has no demon). He was always obedient to the Father. The Apostle Peter wrote:

He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly. [1Pe 2:22-23].

They dishonored Him, but He did not seek His own glory (v49-50). Even though Christ did not seek His own glory, He assured the people there is One who did and He is the judge (v50). The Apostle Paul wrote:

God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue
confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. [Php 2:9-11].

It is the Father's interest the Son is exalted and glorified. The man, Jesus, did not seek this glory and He did not exalt Himself among men. But the Father will assure it is so, for when the Son is glorified, the Father is glorified. God's glory is what God seeks. This should give us pause to think and tremble in reverence.

Can we not remember the cost to man when he failed to honor God? We can read of dreadful catastrophes in the Old Testament:

- the Flood, which destroyed all life;
- the changing of mans' language at Babel and the parting of the continents after man spread out;
- the ten plagues upon Egypt;
- God opening the Red Sea so Israel could walk across on dry ground and God drowning the armies of Egypt when He folded the sea over them;
- the Sun standing still;
- destruction reigning down from heaven upon armies and cities.

The Book of Revelation tells us of catastrophes to come. They will be many and they will be dreadful. The Prophet Habakkuk wrote:

O Lord, I have heard the report of You and Your work, O Lord, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy. [Hab 3:2].

Daniel said God raises kings and casts them down (Dan 2:20-21). History tells us stories of strong nations God cast aside in a day. Can we think in our own day how God makes Himself known to a people who once honored Him and are now casting Him aside?

- Earthquakes, storms, hurricanes, tsunamis, tornados, disease and such. In these, God declares His power and makes Himself known.
Sure, one can argue, we have always had these, however, the fact is, the intensity and the location of the destruction is determined by God. Many times, He brings disaster, giving people opportunity to repent and honor Him. As the Prophet Amos wrote,

Does disaster come to a city, unless the Lord has done it? [Amo 3:6].

Where is our fear of God? A Godly fear leads man to repent and give God His due honor. He will judge all men and fear will reign on that day.

**Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word, he will never see death.** [v51]

Keep the Word. If you profess faith in Christ, are you in the Word? Do you profess and defend the Word to a dying people? Do you defend the Word against false doctrine? Mark this well! For Jesus said this with "truly, truly" or "verily, verily." To be saved from eternal destruction, keep the Word.

Here the reproach got heated. To tell these people to keep His Word, implied He had the truth and they did not. They accused the Son of God again of having a demon and asked Him, "Who do You think You are?"

The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste death.' Are You greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do You make Yourself out to be?" [v52-53].

They were insulted Jesus would claim to be greater than the prophets and even Abraham, himself. They were insulted this man, whose family they knew, would claim to be the Son of God and claim to be sent from the Father.

Christ, who is deity in the flesh, was pointing the people to the Father. But they could not see their sin and they refused to repent; and they scorned Him.
For it is for Your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonor has covered My face. . .and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on Me. [Psa 69:7-9].

Christ was sent by the Father to reveal truth (v32,40) and bring salvation (3:16). Those who refuse to believe, risk the judgment of the Father (v50; cf 3:18). Those who keep His Word, that is, acting upon this belief with faithful obedient lives, will not face this judgment. This is the death Jesus said they will not see (v51).

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. [5:24].

I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. [11:25-26a].

Christ assured them again He did not seek His own glory. If He did, His glory would be nothing.

Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing. It is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God.'" [v54].

Look at the difference between the man Jesus and all other men: the natural man seeks His own glory or kingdom, be it ever so small. Christ did not come to seek His own glory, but to do the will of the Father (v50, cf 5:41; 7:18).

Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. And being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. [Heb 5:8-9].

Jesus told them, it is the Father who glorifies Him (v54; cf 17:1; Heb 5:5). This is the same Father whom they claimed to serve. So, He reproved them for claiming to serve the Father while not knowing Him (v54-55). Many profess to love God, but they do not serve the God of Scripture. They have an appearance of faith or
religion but they do not obey. They cannot glorify God because they
do not abide in Christ's Word.

The Jews had made God in their own image. They took His Law and
made it "more righteous," if you will, by adding rule upon rule.
They falsely believed they kept God's Law. They falsely believed
God was pleased with them. They believed they were righteous in
themselves. They were so full of pride, so that when God came
down to man, they could not recognize Him. They could not see
righteousness was standing before them, in the flesh.

    He came to His own, and His own people did not
receive Him. [1:11].

Then He told them flat out, they do not know God, but, speaking of
the Father, "I know Him."

    But you have not known Him. I know Him. If I
were to say that I do not know Him, I would be a
liar like you . . . [v55].

Jesus called the professing believers liars. This is so opposite of the
modern view of Christ. The kind, gentle and compassionate Christ;
the Christ who would not offend. Christ confronted them with the
truth; He revealed their deceitful souls to give them opportunity to
repent, but they refused to repent.

    Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see
My day. He saw it and was glad. [v56].

Obviously, Abraham's day was a long time prior; approximately
2000 years prior. And the implication of Christ's description was
that He was present at Abraham's rejoicing. Finally, the critics have
an "honest misunderstanding" and they challenged Him: How could
Christ be present to know about Abraham's rejoicing when He was
not even fifty years old (v57)?

    Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you,
before Abraham was, I AM." [v58].

"I AM" is God's name. It is a powerful statement of God and speaks
to His holiness. All life is in Him; all things exists from His creation
and are sustained by His word. He is before all time; He is in the
past, the present and the future; He is eternal and time is subject to
Him. There is no one greater than Him. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord
God Almighty.

God said to Moses, "I AM who I AM." [Exo 3:14].

Jesus said, "Abraham was" and "I AM."

The words rendered 'was' and 'am' are quite different. The one clause
means, 'Abraham was brought into being'; the other, 'I exist.' The statement therefore is
not that Christ came into existence before Abraham did, but that He never came into
being at all, but existed before Abraham had a being; in other words,
 existed before creation, or eternally. [JFB].

Once again, Christ made Himself equal with God (cf 5:18). So the
people picked up rocks to stone Him, but He hid Himself and
escaped (v59). Because, as the Scriptures say in several places, "His
time had not yet come."

To hide Himself, while speaking to a crowd in the temple, would be
humanly impossible. The fact is, the people were blind: not only
could they not see the truth, but when they moved to kill Christ
before His time, God made them unable to follow His movements.
Therefore, the fact Christ escaped their grasp, should have convicted
them they were blind and needed to repent.

The Son came to give them understanding. Earlier in this Gospel,
the Apostle John said He came to make the Father known (1:18). He
came to honor the Father. Christ gave a clear message, but rather
than seek the truth, they defamed the Son of God.

Next: how a man born blind was able to see.

IN CLOSING

Christ brought truth and promised freedom for those who abide in it.
But even the professing believers reproached Him and refused to
obey. They claimed to be believers but refused to believe. Even
when he declared Himself to be the I AM, they refused to believe.
Christ promised eternal life to those who obey. Unless you abide in the Word, you cannot obey; you cannot be free. Have you repented and are you in the Word?
John 9:1-17 The Man Born Blind Saw Clear Truth

The last time Christ was in Jerusalem, He healed a crippled man on the Sabbath (5:1-15). Although Christ worked a miracle in this man's life, we do not know if he was saved. The evidence indicates he was not, as the passage seems to demonstrate the healed man was more concerned with pleasing the temple leaders than giving glory to God.

PURPOSE DRIVEN LIVES

In chapter five, the man was crippled for 38 years and he was healed for God's purposes; for His glory. But the man saw the miracle as an advantage for himself and he was not willing to lose his seat in the temple for the purpose of glorifying a man he had just met. Even after Christ warned him to sin no more (5:14), he sought his own glory rather than God's. Though Christ performed a miracle in his life, there was no evidence he was born again.

When God works in peoples' lives, some give glory to God alone; they see the miracle or they see their salvation as God-centered and God-glorifying. Others see God's work in their lives as God giving glory to them. They see salvation as man-centered even though Paul said we are saved by grace lest any man should boast (Eph 2:8-9).

Here in chapter nine, Christ healed a man born blind. Like the cripple, his lifetime of disability had a purpose. Christ told the disciples, it was not because of this man's sin nor his parent's sin for which he was born blind, but it was for God's glory (v2).

The formerly blind man understood this and was willing to lose his seat in the temple, if need be, for God to receive the glory for what He had done. We can be certain this man was saved; not because Christ worked a miracle in his life, but because of the evidence of a changed heart. His was committed to giving glory to God.

In the previous chapter, Christ had been speaking to those who professed to believe, but they were blind. He promised them if they would abide in His Word, they would know the truth and the truth would set them free. But they did not want the truth. In this chapter,
Christ healed a man born blind and this man spoke truth to those who were blind of heart.

**JESUS WAS DOING GOD'S WORK**

As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." [v1-5].

The disciples assumed sin was the cause of this man's blindness but Jesus told them this man was born blind for God's glory. To this day, man still has this misunderstanding that if you are good, God will bless you and bad things result only from bad living. The truth is, every life is designed to bring glory to God (Pro 16:4; Isa 43:7).

Jesus said, "We must work . . ." The disciples were part of this work. He told His disciples soon this work will come to an end. The night was the time He would endure the wrath of the Father while He hung on the cross and the Bible tells us the sky was black from about noon til three o'clock (Mat 27:45; Luk 23:44; Mar 15:33). Time was short and there was much work to be done.

By saying "We must work," He confirmed healing this man born blind was not a random act of mercy but was a predetermined work for the glory of the Father.

Four things we learn from verses 4 and 5:

1. "We must work the works of Him who sent Me. . ." Though the disciples were limited in understanding, they were partners with Christ in this work He was doing. The benefit the disciples had was Christ's presence instructing them. We also must work for God's kingdom and we have the Scriptures to instruct us.
2. Christ's mission was doing the works of the Father who sent Him. He was sent by the Father and He did the works of the Father. We are sent by Christ (Mat 28:18-20). Our mission is to do His works. We are to disciple or teach others to follow all Christ has commanded; to do what He has said in His Word.

3. "...while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work." While Christ was in the world, it was day. The disciples had no problem following Christ while He was present, in the flesh. It was harder when night came. In fact, the disciples fled when the Light began to dim and Peter denied Him (chapter 18).

4. "As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." Christ has gone up to heaven, where He is seated at the right hand of the Father (Act 2:33). Nonetheless, we are His reflection if we abide His Word. Christ's light is reflected in the world by those who spread His Word to others.

Light helps man see. Without light we cannot walk about without stumbling and falling. Jesus told His disciples He was the Light of the world (v5). He demonstrated this, in a practical way, by giving sight to the man born blind.

. . .He spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then He anointed the man's eyes with the mud. [v6].

Christ could have touched the man or spoken the word and given sight to him. Instead, He spat on the ground and made mud and dabbed the mud on the man's eyes and told him to go wash in the Pool of Siloam. The Bible does not tell us why He worked the miracle this way.

Just why Jesus chose this particular method we do not know. The answers usually given fail to satisfy: for example, that He did this in order to impress upon the man that the healing power came from Jesus (but would not the word of Jesus take care of this?); or in order to make use of the healing qualities of saliva or of mud; or to make this blind man more thoroughly
blind (!) so that he might appreciate the cure more deeply; or to symbolize the fact that man was made from the dust of the earth; etc., etc. If an answer must be given, it may be said that the Lord probably used this method in order to induce the proper attitude of heart and mind; i.e., to bring about perfect obedience, that type of submission which carries out a seemingly arbitrary command. Cf. Gen 2:16,17. According to this answer, the mud had nothing whatever to do with the physical cure; it had no medicinal qualities, not any more than did the waters of the Jordan into which Elisha bade Naaman to plunge himself seven times (2Ki 5:10) in order to be healed of his leprosy. In both cases the command was a test of obedience. [WH vol 2, pg 75].

The Apostle John made note the meaning of Siloam, which is "sent." Here, the man was sent to the pool to wash. The man obeyed. "He went and washed and came back seeing." [v7].

THE MIRACLE IN DISPUTE

The neighbors and some who had seen the man begging, thought this man who could see was the same man who was formerly blind. Some said it just looked like him. He assured every one, it was he. Even when some continued to deny, he kept saying he was the man (v9).

Here he was walking around like anyone else; and seeing. Never had a man born blind been healed. So they wanted to know how he was healed (v8-10). The man told them how Jesus had made the mud, anointed his eyes and told him to wash in the Pool of Siloam.

He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight." [v11].

He attested it was Jesus who healed him and he was not ashamed to say he believed and obeyed. He gave all the glory to the man, Jesus.
But the people did not give glory; they wanted answers.

The people asked where to find Jesus, he told them he did not know. Keep in mind, he had never seen Jesus and would not know what he looked like. For though Jesus had given him sight, he encountered Jesus before he washed in the pool and received his sight.

So the people brought him to the Pharisees (v13). It may have been they wanted to turn him in for testifying about Jesus or it may have been some of the people were hoping this miracle would prove to the Pharisees this healer was the Messiah and, thus, end the controversy.

DIVISION AMONG THE PHARISEES

Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for He does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. [v16].

After the formerly blind man explained how he received his sight, the Pharisees quarreled whether the healer was from God. Some argued He could not be from God because He did not keep their man-made rules for the Sabbath. Others argued it was impossible for a sinner to do such miracles.

The enormity of the miracle testified the healer was sent from God. Rather than question whether the Healer was from God, this should have caused them to question their rules for the Sabbath. Pride is the greatest barrier to the truth. The Pharisees took pride in keeping the Law and all the laws they had added. They were revered by the people for their strict adherence. They were not about to change just because someone came along doing miracles.

So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about Him, since He has opened your eyes?"

He said, "He is a prophet." [v17].

As if to settle the matter, the Pharisees asked the man who was healed what he thought about the man who healed him. The
formerly blind man did not know who Jesus was (v35-38), but he knew He must be from God, so he said, "He is a prophet." [v17].

**IN CLOSING**

The man was born blind for the sole purpose of God's glory.

Christ framed the conversation in the context of light and darkness. He brought light to a man who could only see darkness. This man proclaimed the light to those who falsely thought they had light but were in the darkness.

The man was thankful, but the people wanted answers.

The Pharisees were divided whether the healer was acting for God. No one had ever healed a man born blind. But most just could not get past the fact the healer had broken a man-made rule, as if God would never do this.

Which is why it is important to understand and study sound doctrine. What we believe of the Word, is how we will see God. The Pharisees were so convinced of their man-made rules, they could only see God within those parameters.

The Pharisees could not admit Christ came from God because He failed to meet their expectations. The man healed, though he did not know Christ as the Messiah, he was convinced his healer came from God and he called him a prophet.

What about you? Do you care more for the opinion of man or the truth of God's Word?

Next, we will look at the second half of this story and discuss the blindness of those who refuse to see and the formerly blind man who stood firm for the truth.
The Blindness Of Those Who Refuse Truth

In the previous portion of Scripture, Christ had performed a miracle never done by any man before: He healed the eyes of a man born blind. He did this to demonstrate He is the Light of the world.

The Pharisees refused to believe this could be from God because the healing took place on the Sabbath and, in their view, God would never do that.

They tried to pressure the formerly blind man to betray his healer, like they did with the man crippled for 38 years, in chapter five. But the formerly blind man was resolute: he did not know his healer was the Messiah, but he was firmly convinced his healer was from God. And he reasoned well, for how could this miracle happen if God was not in it?

When the blind man declared his healer to be a prophet, this did not settle the matter and the naysayers began to doubt there was a miracle at all; they doubted the man had been born blind (v18). They considered his testimony worthless because the man would not retract nor compromise his belief that his healer had come from God.

Hoping to destroy his testimony, they called for his parents to give an account. The parents affirmed he had been born blind but they refused to comment on his healing because they did not want to be thrown out of the temple.

for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. [v22].

The stakes were high: The temple was not only the perceived link between man and God, but it was at the core of the Jewish social life. To be thrown out of the temple meant to be rejected by God and to be shunned by one's friends.

The Pharisees were relentless in their unbelief. No matter how many times they went over this miracle and no matter how overwhelming the evidence, they continued in their unbelief.
So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "Whether He is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." [v24-25].

The term "give glory to God" in the first clause could have meant "confess your sin" as used in Joshua 7:19 or Jeremiah 13:16. To satisfy their willful unbelief the Pharisees accused the man of lying.

Some commentators say the term "give glory to God" could have meant "give glory to God and not some sinner for your healing." But this cannot be the meaning, as many of the Pharisees refused to believe he was healed at all and the man healed attributed this miracle to God by declaring his healer a prophet (v18).

The second clause, "we know this man is a sinner," indicates the meaning of "give glory to God" is "confess your sin or your lie" or "confess this man is a sinner." They were pressing him to deny his healer had come from God or deny he had been healed at all. In any event, they refused to believe and they demanded this man confess the lie.

They said to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?" [v26-27].

The man healed was not interested in arguing theology and he stood by the truth he had been blind, but now he could see (v25). So the Pharisees asked him again, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes." They were desperate to disprove the healing. They hoped if he repeated his story, they could catch him in a lie.

The man could see they wanted to cling to the lie, so he hit back with the truth. It was clear to him, the Pharisees wanted to dictate the story; they didn't want the truth. So, seeing they had been trying to twist this story, the man tried a little twist of his own: he asked them if they wanted to become His disciples.
This comment made the Pharisees angry and defensive. They accused the man of being Christ's disciple, which did not seem to bother him at all. The Pharisees claimed they were disciples of Moses (v28).

They must have been at their wits ends. The Pharisees were the authorities of the temple; they held the keys for all religious worship. They were the ones who held the inquest and asked the questions but now they were defending themselves against this man off the street.

"We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He comes from." The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where He comes from, and yet He opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out. [v29-34].

Watching the Pharisees, the leaders of the faith, twist the truth made the healed man angry and, sensing their frustration, probably emboldened him. He blasted them for missing the obvious: They didn't know if Jesus came from God, yet He opened the eyes of a man born blind (v30). Then he applied a little logic:

A) We know God does not listen to those who oppose Him, but only to those who do His will; and

B) Never since the creation of the world has anyone healed a man born blind; therefore,

C) If Jesus were not from God, then He could do nothing (v31-33).

When they assaulted Christ with their words, this man hit back with the truth. Unlike the cripple healed in chapter five. The formerly
blind man cared more to honor God than he cared about keeping a seat in the temple. It was a terrible punishment to be cast out of the temple, but this man obviously feared God more than he feared man. When he saw God was being dishonored, he refused to compromise God's glory.

Many professing Christian are flippant with their praise to God. They are willing to give praise to God and quote praise Scriptures when it does not seem to offend man. They like to be viewed as a good Christian; they enjoy the praise of man. However, when the Word of God is attacked, they are silent; they do not defend the Bible against those who attack or proclaim a false gospel. They are willing to compromise the Gospel to retain the praise of man, like the man crippled for 38 years.

Outraged, the Pharisees condemned this man, they rebuked him for having the gall to try to teach them, the high and mighty. Then they cast him out of the temple (v34). This meant he could never go back. This formerly blind man is the first to be recorded in Scripture who was kicked out of the temple for following Christ.

Many modern American Christians would have rebuked the man, as well. They would have directed him to Romans 13:1, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities." But this man rightly stood up to the governing authorities to defend God's Word. When truth is being defamed, we have a duty to God to defend it.

SIDENOTE: The formerly blind man put forward this argument, "We know God does not listen to those who oppose Him, but only to those who do His will." There are many Scriptures which proclaim this. He had been blind but he understood the Scripture.

The idea that God hears the prayers of the righteous, but rejects the prayers of the wicked is found throughout the Bible: 1Sa 8:18; Job 27:9; 35:12; Psa 18:41; 66:18; Pro 1:28; 15:29; Isa 1:15; 59:2; Jer 11:11; 14:12; Eze 8:18; Mic 3:4; Zec 7:13; Joh 8:21; Act 10:35. [WH vol 2, pg 91].
IN CLOSING

While the Pharisees were relentlessly unrepentant, this man, who was healed from his blindness, countered their blasphemies by relentlessly defending God. Fear of man will cause us to compromise the Gospel. Like this man, we must keep our eyes on Christ, the one who has given us sight.

Do we defend Christ when the world assails Him? John Calvin said, "A dog barks when his master is attacked. I would be a coward if I saw that God's truth is attacked and yet would remain silent."

Many professing Christians remain silent while God is under attack because they do not want to offend man. Jesus warned if we seek to please man rather than God, we cannot be saved (5:44).

Christ, the light of the world, healed a man born blind. Christ brought him out of darkness and he proclaimed light to all who would listen.

The Jewish leaders studied the Scriptures and believed themselves to have the light, but Scriptures were not enough for them. They added rule upon rule and they clung to their own wisdom. Jesus said if the light within us is darkness, how great is this darkness (Mat 6:23). The Pharisees could not see because they clung to darkness.

Many professing Christians think they need more than Scripture and they add rules for living or they mix Scripture with the wisdom of the world or positive messages. This is darkness.

Are you in darkness? Or, have you repented and do you cling to the light in the Word of God?
**John 9:35-41 Fear Of Man Versus Fear Of God**

This is the third part of the story of the man born blind. In the first part of the story, Christ declared He is the light of the world and He proved or demonstrated this by healing a man born blind; He brought light to a man who could only see darkness. But we see there was a controversy because Christ healed the man on the Sabbath. While others debated whether this could be of God, the man healed believed his healer was a prophet; that is, the man believed his healer came from God.

In the second part of the story, the debate became more fierce and those who claimed to have the light proved they were blind and in darkness, because they would not give God glory for His work and they would not acknowledge the Light of the world had come.

In the third part of the story, Christ confronted the man He healed, just as He confronted the man whom He healed who was crippled for 38 years, in chapter five. But there are two differences: First, the man in chapter five was confronted by Christ while in the temple; while the man born blind had been cast out of the temple. The second difference was their reaction to what Christ told them.

In chapter five, after Christ healed the man who was crippled for 38 years, the man did not defend Christ to the church leaders who were seeking to find evidence against Jesus. He appeased them, because he did not want them to kick him out of the temple. Jesus found him in the temple and reminded him of his miraculous healing and warned him not to continue in sin. But the man rejected Christ's warning and reported Him to the Pharisees (5:14-15). From this we learn, God working a miracle in a person's life is not evidence they are saved.

What happened when Christ confronted the man born blind, after he had been thrown out of the temple?

> Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is He, sir, that I may believe in Him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen Him, and it is He who is speaking
to you." He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped Him. [v35-38].

When confronted, there was an entirely different reaction from the man born blind. Jesus heard the man had been cast out of the temple for defending Him. Christ found the man and asked him if he believed in the Son of Man. Some manuscripts say "Son of God" the implication here is "the Messiah" or "sent from God." Having never seen Jesus before but probably recognizing the voice, he asked, "Who is He that I may believe?" Jesus told him, "You have seen Him." Then the man worshiped Him.

It was a profound statement, when Jesus said, "You have seen Him," for this is the first time he had seen Jesus to know Him.

The man trusted Jesus, who had healed him. He knew Christ came from God and he wanted to believe in whomever Jesus would point him to (v36). When Jesus revealed to the man He was the Messiah, whom had healed him and was talking to him now, the only response the man could produce was to declare his belief and worship Him.

Think of the intensity of the moment: this man had risked being kicked out of the temple and all this represented; access to God and community social life. He risked it defending God to those who were considered to speak for God, even though he knew little of the man who healed him. Though his life had improved, in that, he could now see, his life had changed forever, in that, he had no official access to God and had lost all social connections.

But God reached down to him, so he could know Him and he could only respond by declaring his belief and worship. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is evidence of a regenerated life.

The man's instant response was to call Christ "Lord," declare his belief and worship Him (v38). The worship described in this passage is not frivolous. "In the Gospel of John the verb ["worship"] always indicates divine worship (cf 4:20-24; 12:20)." [WH vol 2, pg 93].

It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. [Psa 118:8-9].
These two healed men we have been comparing, demonstrate the difference between fearing God and fearing man. The crippled man healed after 38 years, was no doubt thankful for his new health. However, he would turn Christ in, to keep a seat in the temple. The man born blind took refuge in the Lord and was willing to defend Him at great personal cost.

If you ask the average professing Christian whether they fear man or God, they will answer they fear God, but they are fearful to stand up for God when confronted by unbelieving peers. They fear losing the praise of man. They may even justify their actions, saying they don't want to turn people off and they want to keep the lines of communication open so they can witness later, or some other false defense. Jesus asked the question, "If you seek the praise of others and are unwilling to defend God, how can you be saved?"

How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? [5:44].

CHRIST CAME TO JUDGE

Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to Him, "Are we also blind?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains. [v39-41].

Upon this man's profession of faith, Christ declared He came into this world for judgment. He divides the blind, those who refuse to believe, from the seeing, those who do believe. He gives sight to those who are His and He blinds those who are condemned.

He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them. [12:40; cf Isa 6:9-10].
The man born blind could now see with both his physical eyes and his spiritual eyes. He was regenerated in Christ and given understanding. The Pharisees, on the other hand, believed themselves to be wise and full of understanding, but they were blind. Their blindness was exposed by a man formerly blind who had no formal training in the Scriptures (v34).

Again, the Pharisees were on the defensive; they were indignant and they challenged Christ, "are we also blind?" [v40]. Christ's response was not to reason with them according to their feelings nor to win their good graces. As always, He pointed them to the truth.

Christ assured them if they were blind, they would have no guilt. But they were unrepentant. They refused to acknowledge they were blind and in need of light. Therefore, their guilt remained upon them; they were responsible for their own rebellious hearts (v41).

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. [15:22].

The Pharisees were formally trained in the Old Testament Scriptures, yet they refused to believe the truth. They rejected the Messiah as revealed by Moses and the prophets, because they wanted a Messiah who conformed to their bias. They could not acknowledge they were blind because believed themselves to be wise.

if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth; you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? [Rom 2:19-21].

They believed their much study of the Scriptures gave them wisdom and favor with God. But they had twisted to Scriptures to make God in their own image and they added rule upon rule upon rule. They were depending upon their own wisdom, but they were blind and could not see the light they depended upon was darkness.
The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness. [Mat 6:23].

Once again, the contrast between the man born blind and the Jews: The man born blind had no light until the Light of the world gave him sight. The Pharisees depended upon their own wisdom for light, but the light within them was darkness and how great it was.

How this applies to us: If we depend upon God's Word for light, we will see clearly. If we depend upon our own wisdom for light, we will be full of darkness; and, like the Pharisees, we won't even recognize the light within us is darkness.

Many depend upon psychology and positive motivation for their light and they think themselves successful due to this light. Many professing Christians believe psychology and positive motivation are similar to or compatible with Scriptural teaching. But this is darkness and how great is the darkness.

Does it bother you that I should say psychology and positive motivation are not compatible with Scripture? The whole purpose of applied metaphysics is to replace God in our lives. A Godly man will seek the Word so God can produce fruit in his life (15:1-6). A positively motivated man seeks to produce positive character within himself and through his own efforts.

The Word will lead man to God, while applied metaphysics or positive motivation (PMA) will lead a man to himself. This is the sin of applying worldly wisdom to our lives. Paul warned the wisdom of God is foolishness to man (1Co 2:14) and Jesus warned we cannot serve two masters (Mat 6:24). Nonetheless, many find it inviting to apply worldly wisdom to their lives, especially positive messages. Jesus said this is darkness and if the light within us is darkness, how great is the darkness (Mat 6:23).

There is no wisdom of this world that can help us walk with Christ and if we are walking with Christ, there is no wisdom of this world that will be attractive to us, not even positive messages. Think about this.
SIDENOTE: WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Let's examine some verses about light in the Gospel of John:

1. 1:4-5 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

2. 1:9-10 The true Light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him.

3. 3:19-21 And this is the judgment: the Light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the Light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the Light and does not come to the Light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the Light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.

4. 8:12 I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life.

5. 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.

6. 11:9-10 Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the Light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the Light is not in him.

7. 12:35-36 The Light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the Light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the Light, believe in the Light, that you may become sons of Light.

8. 12:46 I have come into the world as Light, so that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness.

Remember the words of the Apostle Paul, "For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light..." [Eph 5:8]. Christ is not physically present on earth, but we, as sons of light, reflect the light of Christ. If there is no
reflection, then heed the apostle's admonition to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith (2Co 13:5).

**IN CLOSING**

Confronted by Christ, this man worshipped Him. He had a limited understanding of his healer but he knew his healer was from God. He defended Him relentlessly and when his healer was revealed, he worshipped Him with the same vigor as he had defended Him.

Christ has come for judgment. He gives light to those who believe and He brings darkness to those who claim to have light.

Seek the pure light. Seek fellowship with God. The world has nothing positive to offer.

If we are following Christ, we are walking in the light. Our light is His Word and His Word alone (8:31-32). If we walk in the light, we have fellowship with God. This is our hope and there is no wisdom this world has to offer which can add to it.

> God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. [1Jo 1:5-7].

In the study of this chapter, we compared the reaction of the man who was born blind to the reaction of the man who was crippled for 38 years, chapter five. The man who was crippled tried to please man and did not want to lose his place in the temple. The man who was born blind defended Christ from the attacks of the religious leaders. Both were physically healed by Christ but only one showed signs of regeneration in his soul.

Do we seek the glory of man? or the glory of Christ? What is the evidence of regeneration in our life? If there is no evidence of regeneration in our life, we cannot be saved.
At the end of the last chapter, the Pharisees asked Jesus if He thought they were blind. The Pharisees were guilty because they claimed to have the light but they rejected the Light sent from God. They took some of God's light but darkened it by their own wisdom and called it light. Many professing Christians syncretize Scripture with psychology, positive motivation and other worldly wisdom. Jesus said if the light within us is darkness, how great is the darkness (Mat 6:23).

In their time, the Pharisees were the false shepherds described in Ezekiel chapter 34. They demonstrated this by casting out a true follower of Christ from the temple; namely the man born blind whom Jesus healed. Jesus, the true shepherd had come as the fulfillment of His judgment against the false leaders of His sheep

I will rescue My flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will set up over them one shepherd. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God. [Eze 34:22-24].

There are yet many false shepherds. Many people are seduced by false teachers because they don't get into the Word and learn what God says about Himself. They listen to false teachers and cannot tell the truth from the lie because they do not know the Bible. They believe they have the light, but the light within them is darkness and how great is this darkness.

Jesus said Satan would deceive the elect, if that were possible (Mat 24:24). If you find yourself blown around by every wind of doctrine (Eph 4:14); that is, you are attracted to every Christian fad, you are deceived and you might not be saved.

It is hard to enter through the narrow gate (Mat 7:13-14). Most professing Christians prefer the ease of being spoon-fed their religion or going through the wide gate. Jesus warned the believers in chapter six, if they did not eat His flesh and drink His blood, they could not be saved at all. To be true followers of Christ, we must eat and drink the Word of God.
The first twenty-one verses of chapter ten is a continuation of the conversation with the Pharisees, which began in chapter nine. Christ said He came for judgment; to give sight to the blind and blindness to those who claimed to have sight. When the Pharisees defended themselves, Jesus changed the analogy to shepherds. He is the true shepherd, they are the false shepherds or thieves and robbers.

**THE SHEPHERD, THE GATEKEEPER and THE DOOR**

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber." [v1].

Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees. He said "truly" twice, because what He was about to say is unequivocal, absolute and not mere speculation. He wanted their attention because He was speaking against them. The Pharisees, though respected religious leaders, were thieves and robbers. They took for themselves rather than work for God's glory.

"But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." [v2-5].

Jesus described Himself as the Shepherd of the sheep (v2,11). The gatekeeper opens the door for the Shepherd of the sheep (v2-3). God the Father is the gatekeeper: He draws the sheep to the Shepherd (6:44); He chose His sheep, in Christ Jesus, before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4) and He will lose none of those who are His (v28-29; 6:39; 17:11-12).

In verse seven, Jesus described Himself as the door. Christ is the door to protect the sheep and none can be snatched from His hand (v28).
Christ is the Good Shepherd. He brings out His sheep to good pasture. This is a description how He opens the Word to us and gives us understanding. This passage says, He goes before us and we follow Him. We will know His voice and follow Him when we are in the Word.

And we know the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. [1Jo 5:20].

Jesus said Satan would lead the elect astray, IF THIS WERE POSSIBLE (Mat 24:24). The reason it is NOT possible for the devil to deceive the elect is Christ's sheep hear His voice and do not listen to the voice of a stranger (v4-5). This suggests they are in the Word and recognize what is of God and what is not. If anyone is following a false teacher, they are following their itching ears (2Ti 4:3) and they are not saved.

While the Gospel has many shepherds or under-shepherds, there is only one Good Shepherd and He alone is the foundation of the faithful shepherds. When a shepherd opens the Word and speaks the Word, he speaks for Jesus and this is the voice we hear (v4).

This passage may also describe other shepherds; under-shepherds who preach the true Gospel. While Christ is not physically present, they lead the sheep in god's Word. For these the gatekeeper will open the door because they represent the Good Shepherd. The sheep will hear the voice of the Shepherd through them, because they speak the Word of Christ.

Some under-shepherds speak the Word but they add things or subtract things. They are false teachers. Charles Spurgeon warned us discernment is not understanding right from wrong; but understanding right from almost right. We can discern between the truth and partial truth, which is a lie, only if we are in the Word. Those who seek the Shepherd will run from any preaching which is not the full truth, because the voice will sound wrong.
If you abide in My Word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. [8:31-32].

Many professing Christians claim to follow this preacher or that one. The Apostle Paul rebuked this attitude in the first chapter of 1 Corinthians. He said some claimed to follow Paul, others Apollos and others Peter. Paul asked the question, "Is Christ divided?" [1Co 1:13].

Don't be deceived to follow the man. Any shepherd who works for a following of man is seeking his own glory and is not speaking for the Good Shepherd. He is a thief and a robber (v1) and Christ's sheep will not follow him (v5) nor will they listen to him (v8).

Jesus said His sheep will not follow a thief or robber; in fact, they will run away (v5). We see the never ending parade of fads and false teachers in Christendom and it seems with each one, a multitude of professing Christians appear to follow. They embrace each and every fad rather than clinging to the Word of God. Examine yourselves: the Word of God is the only voice of Christ. If you feel the tendency to go along with every wind of doctrine, you may not be a sheep of Christ; you may not be truly saved.

Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. [v7-9].

In verse seven, the Door is the Shepherd. In verse nine, the door is for the sheep. "If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture." [v9].

Christ said He is the way the truth and the life; the only way to the Father (14:6). The Apostle Paul explained it is through Christ we have access to the Father. Christ is the door; the access; the only way to the Father.

For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. [Eph 2:18].

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Two benefits of following Christ are found in verse nine:

1) you will be saved; and
2) you will find pasture.

This is a benefit and a mark; those who are saved spend time with the Shepherd. Psalm 23:2 says, "He makes me lie down in green pastures." No matter what turmoil is going, spending time in the Word and prayer is like the green pastures. The mark of a true follower of Christ is one who spends time with Christ and is content in Him. This is what Scripture describes as finding pasture.

In verse eight, Jesus said His sheep did not listen to the thieves and robbers. The very recent example was the man born blind. When the Pharisees tried to discredit the work of God, the man refused to listen to them, even though they were the established religious authorities. He rebuked them for claiming to speak for God while refusing to acknowledge Christ's miraculous work.

**THIEVES AND ROBBERS**

_The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy._
_I came that they may have life and have it abundantly._ [v10].

Jesus compared Himself against the thief, saying the thief came to steal, kill and destroy for their own gain, but Christ, the Good Shepherd, came to give life abundantly. The thieves and robbers use the sheep for their own gain, but Christ is the shepherd for the benefit of the sheep.

Speaking of false teachers or thieves, the Apostle Peter wrote:

_They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption._ [2Pe 2:19].

The test of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not a powerfully positive message; not a promise of a prosperous life. This is the message of thieves and robbers and many professing Christians are deceived by this. The Gospel is the life changing power of the truth of God's word; it is the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1:16).
The abundant life Jesus was talking about is the promise of fellowship with God. The thief presents a man-centric gospel of material blessings while Christ keeps His sheep focused on Himself and God's eternal glory.

There are those who seek access to the sheep: 1) the shepherd or 2) thieves and robbers. The shepherd enters by the door (v2); the thief enters by another way (v1). The Pharisees were not teaching the truth and they refused to acknowledge the Gospel who had come in the flesh. They were climbing into the sheepfold some other way.

> The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others. [Mat 23:2-5].

Jeremiah 23 and Ezekiel 34 describe these shepherds looking for their own gain; and the prophets give woe. Like the Pharisees of Jesus' time, many preachers today masquerade as shepherds, but they work for their own advancement. Many evangelical pastors seek the praise of man and preach a gospel of positive motivation and psychology. They may throw a Scripture verse or two into the mix to validate their points, but they do not preach the Gospel.

> Those who buy them slaughter them and go unpunished, and those who sell them say, 'Blessed be the Lord, I have become rich,' and their own shepherds have no pity on them. [Zec 11:5].

Jesus said He is the door (v7); those who came before were thieves and robbers (v8). When He condemned "those who came before," Christ was not speaking against His prophets nor against any true preacher of the Word; He was speaking of those who had the position of shepherd, but were leading people astray for their own power or financial benefit; like the Pharisees then and the false teachers today.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd (v11) and He is the foundation for all true shepherds. If a preacher is not teaching the Word faithfully, he
is not one of Christ's shepherds. Jesus described them as hirelings in verse twelve.

Christ's sheep must be in the Word to know the Word; to hear His voice (v4,5,8,27). Then they will know if their shepherd is of God or is of himself.

IN CLOSING

"Truly, truly. . ." [v1]. Listen well for this is firmly established.

Jesus told the Pharisees they were thieves and robbers. They were leaders in the temple but used their positions for their own gain.

This tradition continues today; many are the false teachers who claim to preach the Word but use their position for money, power and fame. We see this on national television, but we fail to recognize this on the local level. Most evangelical pastors preach psychology and throw in a few Bible verses to back them up. They want to be loved more than they desire to preach the Word.

When the world attacks the truth of the Word of God, many pastors and evangelists compromise the Word to please man. These are not true shepherds. They do not represent the Good Shepherd. They are hirelings and they will run from the wolves.

Many are those who follow these false teachers. But Jesus said His sheep hear His voice and they will not follow the thief nor robber (v4,5,8]. This means, those who follow false teachers are not of Christ's sheep, because it is not possible to deceive the elect (Mat 24:24; Mar 13:22).

While the thief steals for his own gain, Christ came to give abundant life (v10). The false teacher claims this abundance is wealth and health on earth, while the Bible teaches the abundant life is fellowship with God.

Is your desire for prosperity and comfort? or is it for time with God? Examine your heart.
John 10:11-21 The Good Shepherd Lays Down His Life

In our last study, Jesus told the disciples He is the good shepherd and His sheep hear His voice. He warned against false teachers, calling them thieves and robbers. He said His sheep will not listen to their voice, but they will run away. So, we see there is an intimate relationship between Christ and His sheep.

We cannot have an intimate relationship with Christ if we do not know His Word. For it is by His Word we hear His voice. Those who do not know His Word are easily lead away from sound doctrine and will cling to false doctrines, which please man. Let us examine our hearts and let us be zealous for His Word.

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. [v11].

David was a type of Christ. He put his life on the line for his sheep. He chased off the bear and the lion and rescued the sheep from their grasp (1Sa 17:34-36). Christ is the Good Shepherd, rescuing His sheep from those who would devour them.

The Old Testament talks about the Good Shepherd. Jesus is the fulfillment of these Scriptures. When Christ claimed to be the Good Shepherd, it should have been clear to the hearer, these Scripture passages were speaking of Him. Here are some Scriptures which give us a few more details about the Good Shepherd:

1) Psa 23:1-3 He provides pasture and water for the sheep.
2) Psa 23:4-5 He leads the sheep and guards them in perilous situations.
3) Isa 40:11 He tends His flock... gathers the lambs in His arms... carries them... gently leads.
4) Eze 34:12 He seeks out His flock... from where they have been scattered.
5) Eze 34:23 He shall feed them.
6) Eze 37:25 He will cause the sheep to dwell in the land.
7) Zec 13:7 He protects the sheep from being scattered. The Good Shepherd gave His life for His sheep. He laid it down voluntarily.

Though this may be said of literal shepherds, who, even for their brute flock, have, like David, encountered "the lion and the bear" at the risk of their own lives, and still more of faithful pastors who, like the early bishops of Rome, have been the foremost to brave the fury of their enemies against the flock committed to their care; yet here, beyond doubt, it points to the struggle which was to issue in the willing surrender of the Redeemer's own life, to save His sheep from destruction. [JFB].

The hired hand (v12) does not own the sheep. He sees the danger and flees; he leaves the sheep unprotected because he does not care about the sheep (v13). The wolf comes and devours some while scattering others. According to this passage, Christ taught three things about Himself:

1. He owns His sheep; they were His and He bought them with His life. The Apostle Paul wrote you are not your own, for you were bought with a price (1Co 6:19-20).
2. Christ is with His sheep through all dangers. In verse 28 He promised, "no one will snatch them out of my hand."
3. Christ is not a hired hand. The hireling will not die for the sheep.

Many are the preachers who are merely hired hands. They were not called to shepherd the flock; their desire was for a good job, a respectable career or a perceived authority. These type of church leaders quickly fall away. They may not quit their position, but when the world attacks, they compromise rather than stand for God's truth. The sheep who follow them are lead astray, devoured or scattered.

I am the good shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me, just as the Father knows Me and I
know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. [v14-15].

Once again, Christ said He is the Good Shepherd and, once again, He said He lays down His life for His sheep. Whenever the Bible says something twice it is because it is firmly set; there is no "maybe" and there is no speculation. He is our Good Shepherd and He did give His life to save His sheep from a destruction more terrible than a bear or a lion.

Once again, Christ explained whom He died for. He said He gave His life for His sheep. He did not die for the whole world, as goes the common misinterpretation for John 3:16. He came to die for those who belong to Him; not for those who remain in rebellion to Him, for they remain under God's wrath (3:36).

Here we are given another Scriptural view of what it means to truly believe. Christ said, "I know My own and My own know Me." [v14]. His sheep know Him because they recognize His voice (v4) because they spend time with Him (v9). Believing is not a head knowledge; it is an intimacy. We get this intimacy from being in the Word and spending time with Him.

Jesus knows the Father and He did what the Father told Him. His intimacy led to obedience. If we know Jesus, we will be obedient. This is the mark of those who have been truly regenerated in Christ: the fruit within them reflects the Word because they obey the Word (15:4-5).

If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. [1Jo 1:6-7].

OTHER SHEEP NOT OF THIS FOLD

I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to My voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. [v16].
Although Israel was God's chosen nation, Christ would die for and include sheep from among the Gentiles. Paul called this the great mystery in the Book of Ephesians. The God of Israel broke down "the dividing wall of hostility" and now includes the Gentile in His kingdom (Eph 2:13-18). Isaiah, the prophet, wrote of this more than 800 years before.

The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, "I will gather yet others to Him besides those already gathered." [Isa 56:8].

The Jews were keenly possessive of God's choice of Israel, but Jesus warned them their heritage would not save them (8:33-59; cf Mat 3:9). Nicodemus, like most Jews, believed the Messiah would redeem Israel, but Jesus told him He had come for the world (3:16). In another conversation, Jesus said many Gentiles will take their place and dine with the King (Mat 8:11; cf Act 28:28). Believing Gentiles will take the place of unbelieving Jews (Luk 14:16-24).

In another passage Christ said, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself." [12:32]. The reference to all people does not mean every person of the world and we can be certain of this because it has not happened, nor will it. The reference to all people means people from all the world; those who are His, both the Jew (from the chosen nation) and Gentile (from the rest of the world).

The key ingredient of those who are Christ's sheep, those who truly believe, is "they will listen to my voice." [v16]. After making two things clear: 1) Gentiles will be admitted into the fold which the Jews thought was reserved for them alone; and 2) His sheep listen to His voice. Christ said there will be one flock and one shepherd. Many claim there are several ways to God, that is, multiple paths or multiple religions. Christ said He is the only way (14:6) and here, He said there is only one flock and only one shepherd. God is not reaching out to everyone. He calls those who are His to enter by the narrow gate (Mat 7:13-14).

This calling is not a frivolous plea on God's behalf. This is an effectual work of the Spirit according to Jesus.
The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. [3:8].

The Psalmist David said,

Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of Your power. [Psa 110:3]

Jesus said all the Father has given Him WILL come to Him and He will lose none of those given to Him but will raise them up on the last day or Judgment Day (6:37-39). The Apostle Peter wrote God is unwilling any of the elect should perish; meaning they won't.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. [2Pe 3:9].

Most professing Christians take the words of Peter out of context. They claim God is not willing any person should perish. But in the previous chapter, Peter gave a list of those God IS willing should perish. In this verse, Peter is speaking to the elect, as he reminded the reader throughout the first and second epistles. He said, "He is patient toward you," the elect; not willing any of you, the elect, should perish. This is the same meaning as verse sixteen, "they will listen to My voice." God is unwilling any of the elect will perish and they will listen to His voice. God's calling is sure and is not left to chance (Rom 11:29).

FOR THIS REASON THE FATHER LOVES ME

For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from My Father. [v17-18].

The second part of verse seventeen is explained in verse eighteen (lay down My life... take it up again). Christ is not subject to the
whims of man. He died at the hands of man but only according to His own authority. He scheduled the time, the place and the means.

The first part of the verse comes without explanation and may be a little more difficult to understand: "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life." [v17a]. Christ laying down His life is the "blood of the eternal covenant" spoken in Hebrews 13:20. Isaiah wrote, "it was the will of the Lord to crush Him." [Isa 53:10]. Christ laid down His life, not only to redeem those chosen in Him before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4), but as an act of love toward the Father.

but I do as the Father has commanded Me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. [14:31].

What then? Was the love of the Father toward the Son conditional upon Him dying for mankind? ("For this reason the Father loves Me").

As the highest act of the Son's love to the Father was the laying down of His life for the sheep at His "commandment," so the Father's love to Him as His incarnate Son reaches its consummation and finds its highest justification in that sublimest and most affecting of all acts. [JFB].

The writer of the Hebrews wrote, "Although He was a son, He learned obedience through what He suffered." [Heb 5:8]. We know God (the Son) did not need to "learn" obedience in the same way fallen, rebellious man does. However the writer was speaking within the context of human understanding about the incarnate nature or humanness of the Son. He was fully human and fully God, but the human part of the Son was untested before He lived the incarnate life. Thus, every act of obedience was "learned."

This may be the context Jesus was speaking to when He said, "For this reason the Father loves Me." He was speaking within the context of human understanding about the untested incarnate nature of the Christ; though it was known and directed by God in advance.

In the second part of the verse: "I lay down my life that I may take it up again," Christ made clear His life is not taken by man, except as
allowed by God and He said He would raise it up again. No one had ever been raised from the dead never to die again.

Jesus told the people He would rise from the dead. Furthermore, it would be by His own choosing and He and the Father are in on this together. His life, His death and His resurrection were voluntary; man had no power over Him. His authority to do this came from His Father.

Even if we were to volunteer to die for someone, we are not in control of our life. We were not born voluntarily nor is the day of our death voluntary. So, too, the days in between are held captive to God's design. Man makes his plans, but God directs his steps (Pro 16:9).

The people could not understand Christ's claim He would raise Himself up to life after He had voluntarily died. So, the people were seriously divided: "many" versus "others." Many claimed He had a demon or was insane, but others recalled the great miracle He did; healing the eyes of a man born blind. They pointed out no one had ever healed the eyes of a man born blind and not even demons could do this. In essence those who believed argued, if this man said He would rise from the dead, there was no reason to doubt His words (v19-21).

IN CLOSING

Many are the preachers who have a good career, but care little for the sheep. They do not seek out the lost sheep; they do not keep the sheep focused on the Good Shepherd. When trials come, they compromise the Gospel to please the world, scattering and devouring the sheep.

Though the God of Israel came to earth in human form and ministered and died in Israel, He brought about salvation to those sheep in the nations of the Gentiles. He will bring them into the fold. There will be one fold and one shepherd. There are not multiple ways to God. There is only one shepherd and He is the only way to God.
Finally, Christ told the people who wanted to kill Him, the Father loves Him because He will lay down His life for the sheep. He said it was up to Him the when, the where and the how He would die. He also told them, He would rise again because the Father had given Him the power to do it.

Once again, truth brought division and the people are divided on whether He is truly the Messiah.

Jesus said He knows His own and His own know Him (v14).

- Are you following Christ?
- Are you intimately following His Word?
- Do you desire the approval of the world or do you stand firm in the Word?
John 10:22-42 Jesus Said His Sheep Hear His Voice

Though the subject matter is similar to the previous passage (shepherd and sheep), a few months have lapsed between verse 21 and 22. The Apostle John set up a new scene: Christ was walking through the Temple, specifically the Colonnade of Solomon, during the Feast of Dedication, which was in the Winter (v22-23).

THE SON AND THE FATHER ARE ONE

So the Jews gathered around Him and said to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name bear witness about Me, but you do not believe because you are not among My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one. [v24-30].

The Jewish leaders surrounded Him and demanded a direct answer whether He was the Messiah or not. "How long will you keep us in suspense?" Ha! They were not anxious or uncertain about who Christ was; they had already made up their minds. Their purpose in the questioning was to gain evidence to convict Him. Christ knew this and answered them with precision:

1. I told you but you do not believe.
2. You do not believe because you are not of My sheep.
3. I and the Father are one.

This is an effectual un-calling, if you will. Just as Christ's calling to the sheep is effectual and all will come to Him, those who are not
His sheep cannot hear, cannot understand and cannot come (Rom 9:6-28).

So, to restate what Jesus said in verses 25-30: Christ is one with the Father; meaning He is God and He is the Messiah. He was whom He said and the works He performed declared this, but the Jews refused to believe. If He told them directly, yes or no, they still would not and could not believe because they were not His sheep. Those who are His sheep, hear His voice and follow Him; He gives them eternal life and no one can take them from Him.

Although these people fully intended to take His life, Jesus said He gives eternal life to those who are His and no one can take this life from them; no one can take them from His hand. They wanted to take life, but Christ came to give life.

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. [v27-28].

How do you know you have this eternal security? How do you know no one will snatch you out of Christ's hand? Jesus said His sheep hear His voice and they follow Him. This means the true believer hears the Word and obeys.

Though the word "chosen" or "elect" is not used in this passage, it does fit the context because Christ said His sheep have been given to Him by the Father (v29). If the Father has given them to the Son, they already belonged to the Father and, therefore, must have been chosen in advance.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:4, we were chosen in Christ before the creation of the world. John 6:37 supports this doctrine: "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me."

Many claim those who receive Christ, the Father then gives them to the Son. But Jesus said the giving of the sheep has taken place before the coming. The Father gave the sheep to the Son and all the chosen will come. So, we see, this is just as the Apostle John has explained, we do not choose God, but He chose us.
[those who receive Christ] were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. [1:13].

No one can snatch the elect from hand of the Son or from the Father. God the Father is the gatekeeper and none can be snatched from His hand (v29). In verse seven, Jesus described Himself as the door. Christ is the door to protect the sheep and He will lose none of those who are His (v28).

Those who follow Christ are secure in Him; they cannot be taken from His hand. The Father gives the sheep to Christ and no can snatch them out of the Father's hand. Those who are saved, cannot lose their salvation, they would have to be wrestled from Christ's hand AND the Father's hand. It cannot happen.

And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but raise it up on the last day. [6:39].

Christ's claim to give His sheep eternal life is present tense not future tense. "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish." [v28a]. If we follow Christ, we have eternal life and this is manifest in the fact no one can snatch us from His hand. If we are His sheep, then we are assured to have eternal life because it is given by Christ and cannot be taken away.

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Rom 8:38-39].

THE JEWS STILL SEEK TO KILL HIM

His claim to be equal to the Father was what the Jewish leaders wanted to hear. They wanted to charge Him with blasphemy, so they could convict Him to die. As the Apostle John wrote a few chapters earlier: "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but He was
even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God." [5:18]. So, the Jews picked up stones to stone Him (v31).

I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone Me? [v32].

Christ challenged them with the evidence of His works; works from the Father. He did not recant His testimony of being equal with the Father, but, rather, doubled-down with more truth.

The evidence was clear, these works were from the Father because no one had ever done the works Jesus had done; and this the Jews did not deny. This is incredible and demonstrates their blindness: for it was obvious the works of Christ came from God, yet they still wanted to kill Him.

They were not His sheep and could not hear His voice. They charged Christ with blasphemy, ignoring the fact His works had to come from God and God would not have blessed His works if He was a liar (v33). They predetermined what God should look like, because they made Him in their own image.

Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came, and Scripture cannot be broken, do you say of Him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I am not doing the works of My Father, then do not believe Me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me and I am in the Father. [v34-38].

Jesus did not try to please His accusers, He now tripled-down with Scriptural example and more truth.

The phrase "I said, you are gods" [v34] is a reference to Psalm 82:6. Jesus reasoned with them, the men of old who came as official representatives of God, as prophets, kings and judges of His law were called gods in the Scriptures (1Sa 28:13; Psa 82:1; Zep 2:11).
If mere men are put up on this pedestal, why cannot the Son of God, the One sent by the Father, be called equal with God?

He challenged them with truth, pointing out the irony of charging God with blasphemy of Himself. "you say of Him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming.'" [v36].

He stepped up the challenge to examine the evidence: If His works were not the works of the Father, then don't believe. But if they were the works of the Father, at least believe the works.

The works gave evidence the Father was in Him; no one had ever done these things. This bookends with verse 25, where Jesus started the conversation stating, "the works I do in My Father's name bear witness about Me."

Then He quadrupled-down, "The Father is in Me and I am in the Father." [v38].

**THE ESCAPE**

They refused to be convinced. They sought to arrest Him, but Jesus escaped them (v39). How He escaped, we are not told, but, as the Apostle John wrote elsewhere, it was because His time had not yet come.

He was surrounded by the Pharisees (v24), but He escaped them. They had picked up stones to stone Him (v31), but nobody threw one. None of this gave them pause to consider, He was the Son of God. It was obvious God had thwarted their immediate effort to kill Him.

There was another time Jesus was in the temple and the people took up stones to stone Him (8:59). Then, too, He escaped. He escaped while He was surrounded by people and in the temple. They never stopped to consider they were blind.

So, Jesus traveled to the other side of the Jordan, where John the Baptist had previously ministered. Many came to Him there and remembered the Baptist's words about the Christ and believed in Him (v40-42).

He stayed there and ministered to these people (v40).
Just like the event recorded in John chapter seven: The Jewish leaders refused to believe, while some of the common people saw the obvious. They saw the works and knew He had come from God.

Yet many of the people believed in Him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will He do more signs than this man has done." [7:31].

**IN CLOSING**

Jesus said His sheep hear His voice and they follow Him.

Those who are not his sheep cannot hear His voice.

Jesus' conversation with the Jews began with, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name bear witness about Me." [v25]. It ended with, "even though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me and I am in the Father." [v38].

God has made Himself obvious and known but the natural inclination of man is to deny Him. Mans' rebellion toward his Creator is open and notorious; and man is without excuse. The Jews judged Him and even modern man charges Christ with falsehood and evil but every man will stand before the Judge of all mankind and it will be a fearful thing.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. . . Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give
approval to those who practice them. [Rom 1:18-21,32].

How about you?

• Do you resist the message of the Gospel?

• Or are you in the Word, listening to God's voice?
John 11:1-16 The Death Of Lazarus While Jesus Delayed

In the Gospel of Luke, we meet Mary and Martha. Mary sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching, while Martha was distracted with all the duties of being a good host. Martha complained Mary was not helping and Jesus replied to her, "you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." [Luk 10:41-42].

Many people claim to follow Christ by serving; they see doing things as akin to salvation. Serving is necessary, but it cannot be a substitute for spending time with God and taking time to learn from His Word. In Christ's warning in Matthew 7:21-23, many people had mistaken serving for salvation and Jesus said He never knew them. In the story of Martha and Mary, Jesus affirmed the most important thing is to spend time with Him. Abiding in Him (8:31-32; 15:1-6).

The Gospel of John accounts for us, another episode of Mary, Martha and their brother, Lazarus. He was sick and about to die. So Mary and Martha sent for Jesus.

LAZARUS WAS ILL

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, he whom You love is ill." [v1-3].

In this current passage, the Apostle John wrote, "It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair." [v2]. However, it will not be until the next chapter, chapter 12, where he will write about this incident. He could write this before telling the story of Mary wiping Christ's feet because it was already a commonly known story, just as Jesus said it would be (Mat 26:13).
Lazarus was ill and his sisters petitioned the Lord to come heal him (v3). They were confident Jesus would come because He loved them.

**This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, SO THAT the Son of God may be glorified through it.** [v4, emphasis added]

When the news arrived, Jesus assured those with Him: 1) this illness will not lead to death; 2a) this is for God's glory; and 2b) the Son of God will be glorified through this. Christ's glory and the glory of the Father are intertwined because they both seek glory for each other (cf 8:50; 14:13).

Lazarus' illness was for God's glory. Everything happens for God's glory; even illness. Jesus' explanation meant a great miracle was about to happen.

When we face illness and trials and we look for remedies. Do we seek God's glory? Nothing happens in our lives, but God is seeking His glory. This is hard to remember as we face our daily struggles.

The passage says Christ loved Lazarus, Martha and Mary; yet He delayed two days before traveling to see His sick friend (v5-6). One might question how this delay would show love; the man was dying.

If Christ would have arrived before Lazarus' death, there would be no glory in raising him from the dead. As we have seen, God does everything at a specific or appointed time and for a particular reason and the reason is always His glory. Had He arrived two days earlier than He did, the sisters may have felt better, but God's glory would not have been displayed to the full.

TAKE NOTE OF THIS: God is not interested in our feelings. God does not seek our comfort; He seeks His glory.

*Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?"* [v7-8].

The disciples objected to taking the trip because the last time they were in Jerusalem, they feared for their lives. Bethany is adjacent to
Jerusalem and news of His visit would likely reach the Jews. The disciples were concerned about self-preservation, but Christ was concerned for His mission.

It is human nature to become intimidated by adverse circumstances. However, nothing happens which is not ordained by God, down to the very moment and means. Christ demonstrated His confidence in the Father's design and control by waiting until the right time.

Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." [v9-10].

This was the eleventh hour, for Christ's crucifixion was at hand. Hostility from the Jewish leaders was increasing. Yet, it was not His time. Christ did what He saw the Father doing and He had a mission at hand. Therefore, He could walk into the midst of a hostile situation without fear, because He walked in the day.

God, as a man, kept His eyes on God. To be in the light, we must keep our eyes on God. As Jesus depended upon and looked to the Father, we must depend upon and look to Him. God is our light and He has left us His Word, so we may walk in the light. If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble (v9). To walk in the day is to be in the Word, walking in the Scriptures.

We have discussed the difference between walking in the light and depending upon our own wisdom. If we depend upon our own wisdom, the light within us is darkness and how great is this darkness (Mat 6:23). If we syncretize the Word with the world; if we mix in a little worldly wisdom and positive ideals, we are trying to serve two masters (Mat 6:24) and will be walking in the night. Jesus said if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles (v10).

LAZARUS HAD DIED

The disciples did not understand the mission, so Jesus told them Lazarus had fallen asleep and He must go and waken him (v11).
The disciples figured if they let Lazarus sleep, he would get well; and, if they didn't have to go, they would not risk death at the hand of the Jews. So Jesus had to tell them plainly Lazarus had died (v14).

and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him. [v15].

The Apostle John stated early in the Gospel, "In Him was life." [1:4]. No one ever died in Christ's presence and, when you think about it, it would not seem right or fitting for the Author of Life to let someone die while He is present. He healed many and gave life to those who were dying.

If Christ had rushed to Lazarus' side, he would not have died and this great miracle could not have happened. This is why Jesus said He was glad He was not there. God's great glory was about to be revealed, in resurrecting Lazarus from the dead, so the disciples would believe.

None of the disciples suspected something great was about to happen. In fact Thomas, speaking for the group, resigned himself to go "that we may die with Him." [v16]. This was a stressful moment for the disciples; they remembered well the hostility of the Jewish leaders and they felt their lives were in a very great danger.

Since Lazarus was dead, there seemed to be no reason to risk life and limb. But if Christ was determined to go, they were resigned to accompany Him though it may cost them their lives.

IN CLOSING

In verse four, Christ said this illness will not lead to death. Yet, ten verses later, Christ told them Lazarus had died. Surely, Christ had told them a lie or His hunch had proven false; or maybe something far greater was about to happen. Christ would bring a man from death and raise Him to life, proving He is the author of life.

In their fear, the disciples were unable to see or anticipate God was in control and about to do something great.
How often we fall into this same trap. Like Peter, while walking on the water, he became distracted by the storm and the waves around him. The disciples were blinded to God's power, because of their fear. God is always in control. Let us keep our eyes on Him, not upon the circumstances around us.

Lazarus, Mary and Martha were loved by Christ but God allowed adversity in their lives for God's glory to be revealed. God allows difficulty and trials in our lives so His glory can be displayed and so He can conform us to be like His Son (Rom 8:28-29). How often we become blinded by fear and do not see God's glory at hand.

In this case, God's glory was revealed by raising Lazarus from the dead. So Christ was true when He said this illness will not lead to death.

We read of this great miracle but it is not a template, as some false teachers would lead you to believe. Sometimes God delivers us from adversity but sometimes God is glorified in our hardship; sometimes even in the death of His servants.

When Jesus received word Lazarus was ill, He delayed two days. God is not at our beck and call. He is not seeking our comfort. He does everything at the right time, place, method and means; for His own glory.

Are we keeping our eyes on God?
Are we looking for His glory in our adversity?
John 11:17-44 Christ Is The Resurrection And The Life

When Jesus came, He found Lazarus had been in the grave four days (v17). To use the term, "He found," these circumstances when He arrived, is a physical perception or a description from a human standpoint. Christ knew He was dead and buried long before He arrived, but here He physically came upon the evidence (v11,14).

It was possible, Lazarus had died by the time Jesus got the news he was sick.

If he died on the day the tidings came of his illness and was, according to the Jewish custom, buried the same day... and if Jesus, after two days further stay in Perea, set out on the day following for Bethany, some ten hours journey, that would make out the four days; the first and last being incomplete. [JFB commentary].

This passage tells us Bethany was close to Jerusalem and many had come from Jerusalem to console Mary and Martha (v18-19). This was going to be a glorious miracle and God brought many eyewitnesses to confirm it and take the news back to Jerusalem.

So when Martha heard Jesus was coming, she went and met Him, but Mary remained seated in the house. [v20].

This is true to the character of these two women: Martha was the doer, the take-charge sister and Mary was more easy-going and not to be rushed. It is also possible the reason Mary stayed behind was because she was greatly disappointed, maybe even bitter. She had invested much of herself in His teaching, yet He failed to save her brother.

DOUBTS AND IF ONLYS

Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. [v21].
When she saw Jesus, the first thing Martha did was to speak her mind. She was upset with Him for not being there to save her brother. If He had come timely, her brother would not have died, but now everything was out of control and her brother was gone.

Mary said the same "if only" (v32). The two women had probably repeated this phrase many times to each other in the days previous.

When we go through times of testing, it is not uncommon to have doubts and to lose sight of God's love. It is natural to consider the "if onlys" rather than remember everything is in God's control. This is not said to justify our natural bent; it is natural but it is still sin.

But even now I know that whatever You ask from God, God will give You. [v22].

Nonetheless, Martha, the doer, expressed her faith in Christ. She knew God would not deny any request from the man, Jesus. At this point, we do not know if she believed firmly Jesus was God. Surely, He came from God and she believed Christ could bring her brother back to life again and this appears to be her indirect, but hopeful request. Jesus will move her to a full confession.

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."
Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." [v23-24].

Many sympathizers had assured her Lazarus would rise again, to eternal life with God. Was Jesus giving her this same assurance? When Jesus did not directly say He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, Martha may have thought her request was too wonderful for God to answer; so she back pedaled and affirmed a theological position.

However, Jesus was telling her He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead. Martha appears to have missed this. So Jesus had to remind her, He was God in the flesh and not merely a man.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"
said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world." [v25-27].

This is the fifth of seven "I am" statements in the Gospel of John. When He said, "I am the resurrection," He declared He had come to die and He also declared He had conquered death.

John began this Gospel saying, "In Him was life." [1:4]. He also said Jesus Christ is the eternal life (1Jo 1:2). God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son (1Jo 5:11).

For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will. [5:21].

Martha knew Christ was the Messiah but her believing was not free of doubts. Here, Christ told her of His character: He is Life and He gives life to those who believe. If we believe in Christ, though we die in this life, we have life everlasting with Him.

and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this? [v26].

Though she had doubts and fears regarding death and her brother's life, she confessed her faith in Christ. He is the Son of God who has come into the world. She said He could do all things because He is the Son of God.

She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world." [v27].

We look on this conversation in hindsight. By faith we know Jesus Christ is the Son of God and we proofs for our faith in the Word of God. Martha, however, was talking to another human being, before He died and rose again and this conversation was while she was grieving the death of her brother. Yet in this trial, she declared Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God (v27). This is a great and incredible faith. We are not humanly capable of this. The Apostle Paul told us our faith is a gift from God, lest any man should boast (Eph 2:8-9).

In chapter six, when all the other disciples left Christ, Jesus asked the twelve if they wanted to leave like the others.
Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that You are the Holy One of God." [6:68-69].

Martha believed Jesus was God; the Son of God; the giver of eternal life. In chapter six, the disciples expressed their belief Jesus was God; the Son of God; the one who gives eternal life. The Apostle John wrote this Gospel so we may believe Jesus is God; the Son of God; by whom we have eternal life.

but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. [20:31].

Martha's confession is the Gospel: "I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world." [v27]. This confession is our hope of eternal life; it is the mark of those who have been born again.

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him. [1Jo 5:1].

We have looked at the verses which tell us Jesus is life in the Gospel of John. Here, talking to Martha, Jesus declared He is the resurrection. He is life; He has defeated death.

1. 2Ti 1:10 "and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

2. Isa 25:8 "He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears. . ."

3. 1Co 15:24-26 "Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death."
4. Heb 2:14 "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil."

5. Rev 1:17-18 "...Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades."

**Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.** [v25-26].

Man is fallen and full of sin. Therefore, these bodies must perish. Though the believer's earthly life will pass away, he shall live again; his soul shall never die. Those who live again, will never die again. They will live forever and will never see eternal death.

This is the Gospel: Jesus is life and all who believe in Him will never see eternal death. More important than the miracle which was at hand, was Martha's understanding of who Jesus Christ was. "Do you believe this?" [v26].

Christ's death and resurrection were the reason He had come to earth. He came to do what the Father sent Him to do (10:17). He had previously testified He would die and rise again (2:18-22; 10:17-18, cf Mat 12:39-40; 16:21; 27:62-64). The disciples and those lamenting Lazarus' death did not understand, but this day He was going to give them a taste of His power over death; a reason to hope in His death.

Martha's conversation was finished; so she went to Mary and told her Jesus would like to see her (v28). Mary went to meet Jesus, who had not yet entered the village. When she found Him, she fell at His feet and said the same 'if only' thing Martha had said.

**Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.** [v32].

She demonstrated her worship of Christ and her belief in His authority by falling at His feet. This is what we are doing when we kneel in prayer. Kneeling to God in prayer is a physical expression of submitting to His rule. It is a worship of His authority.
She was crying and the people with her were crying and Jesus tried to hold back the tears, but finally, He wept (v35). In the context of this verse, we see Christ was not grieving the death of Lazarus, for He was going to raise him. His emotion demonstrated He is truly sensitive to the griefs of those He loves. The Bible tells us Christ is acquainted with grief (Isa 53:3) and He sympathizes with our weakness (Heb 4:15).

The ESV Bible says He was deeply moved (v33,38), but noted this may mean He was indignant. It was Jewish custom to hold wakes with loud crying over the dead. John MacArthur commented this was nothing less than pagan. For it demonstrated a hopelessness rather than a belief in a future resurrection.

It may have been Christ, though sympathetic, was indignant or even angered by the demonstrated hopelessness of the mourners, including Martha and Mary. Martha expressed belief Lazarus would rise again on the last day and Mary bowed in worship. Yet, these women allowed this hopeless wailing and grieving to dominate their time of mourning.

They both expressed their faith, but they lived by their doubts.

When the people saw His tears, some were convinced Jesus loved Lazarus (v36). Some were more cynical and criticized Him for not preventing Lazarus' death (v37).

When Christ arrived at the tomb, He again struggled with His emotions. He was a man like us (v38). However, He was not emotional over the death of Lazarus. We know this because He was going to raise Him from the dead. He was emotional experiencing the hurt, pain and doubt in His friends and in the people and the hopelessness they displayed.

He ordered the stone covering the tomb to be moved (v39). Martha, the one who asked Christ to bring her brother back, protested because the odor would be terrible as her brother had been dead four days.

Though Her protest was not without foundation: Not only would the people be subject to impurity, but "According to the Talmudists, it
was forbidden to open a grave after the stone was placed upon it." [JFB].

Christ told her "I am the resurrection and the life." [v25]. He told her if anyone believed in Him, they would never die. She, herself, had confessed He was the Christ, the Son of God (v27). Yet, as Christ approached the grave, Martha was still filled with hopelessness and she was afraid there would be a bad smell. She had professed her faith, yet she was still acting according to her doubts.

    Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God." [v40].

They removed the stone and Jesus prayed.

    Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I knew that You always hear Me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that You sent Me." [v41-42].

Jesus did not present any request to the Father; rather His prayer was an affirmation or declaration He was in accord with the Father. These words were for a witness to the people. It was God's will Christ should raise Lazarus from the dead. Christ would do this. Rather than pray this would happen, He prayed for God's glory to be revealed so the people would believe.

Then Jesus called out the man who was formerly dead and told the people to free him from his grave clothes. This was a rather extraordinary event in the lives of Lazarus and the eyewitnesses. This was a demonstration Jesus Christ is God and He is the resurrection. Speaking of Himself in the third person, Jesus said one day He will call out every person to come from their tombs to enter everlasting life or to face judgment.

    an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. [5:28-29].

Christ had claimed to be one with the Father. No one can raise a man from the dead, except God. If Jesus had been a liar or imposter, then certainly God would NOT have raised Lazarus from the dead.
About the raising of Lazarus from the dead, Jonathan Edwards wrote:

Now can it be imagined that God would hear an imposter or so order or suffer it that so extraordinary a thing should be done immediately in consequence of the word and act of an imposter upon his asking it of him who was so impudent, when he asked it as to call him Father and tell him that he always heard him and tell him that he spoke thus for this end that others might see that he did indeed give a testimony to his mission and authority by doing of it at his request in such a manner? [Miscellany 444].

Raising Lazarus from the dead firmly demonstrated Christ was God and He had the authority to claim His relationship as Son to the Father. Furthermore, death was put on notice that it could not contain the Messiah.

IN CLOSING

By the time Jesus arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been in the tomb four days.

Martha met Christ, expressing her doubts and fears. "If only. . ." But she also confessed her faith, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Then Mary met with Christ and expressed the same "if only. . ." as she fell at His feet.

Jesus felt compassion and indignation over the effects of sin on human life and He wept. As God, He knew these effects; as man, He felt it as only God could feel it.

When Christ was about to raise Lazarus, He prayed. He did not pray the Father would grant His request; He claimed to be one with the Father and prayed for God's glory.

The fact that Lazarus walked out from the tomb when called is evidence the Father heard the Son. If Christ was not God, how could this miracle have ever taken place? For only God can raise the dead
and certainly He would not have done this for an imposter who claimed to be one with Him.

Mary and Martha professed their faith but walked in their doubts. This is human nature, but it is sin. Do we profess faith in Christ, yet walk in our doubts?
John 11:45-57 Prophecy And Plans To Kill The Messiah

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Four days dead. Nothing like this had happened in the history of man. Some people see the works of God and are in awe; some people despise Him and are offended.

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what He did, believed in Him, but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. [v45-46].

Many of the eyewitnesses believed, but some went and snitched to the Pharisees. They reported Jesus; hoping to do Him harm. They saw the miracle, but refused to believe; similar to the crippled man Jesus healed in chapter five. They preferred the praise of man and wanted access to and status in the temple.

This is the first passage where there is any indication more believed than did not. In most recorded encounters, "many" scoffed, but "some" believed. In this narrative, many believed, but some went to snitch. The power of this miracle was undeniable.

PRAGMATIC PLANS TO KILL JESUS

So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." [v47-48].

Well, the informants sure raised the ire of the Jewish leaders. Mass testimony to the power and greatness of God to raise the dead, did not convince the Jews the Messiah was at hand.

The Pharisees were anxious because Christ's miracles were becoming more powerful and they could see the people abandoning their authority and starting a revolution to set up their Messiah. Two things they feared: 1) losing power and authority among the people; and 2) losing their position and authority within the Roman Empire.
"What are we to do?" [v47]. They could not repent. What was at stake, was their wealth and control of the people. They would rather fight the eternal God than lose their wealth on this temporal earth.

This would be the final Passover Feast during the life of Christ. Mark 14:1 and Luke 22:1 tell the scribes and Pharisees were desperate to kill Jesus. In Matthew 26:2, Jesus told the disciples the Passover would be in two days and He would be handed over for crucifixion.

But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish." He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. [v49-52].

Traditionally, the high priest would prophecy every year. This year, he prophesied one man would die for the nation (v50), namely Jesus. He had not prophesied this on his own, but God had given it to him. Sometimes, God speaks through rebellious and evil men. Read the story of Saul in 1Samuel 19:20-24; and the story of Balaam in Numbers 22 through 24. Though the high priest abused his position, God still spoke through him.

God had used the mouth of this evil man to prophecy Christ's death and to declare God would bring into one, Jew and Gentile (scattered abroad), as children of God. This is what 3:16 means by declaring "God so loved the world."

Who are children of God? The world says we are all children of God. The Jews believed all those born of Abraham were children of God. But the Gospel of John says those who receive Christ, those who were born of the will of God, are given the right to become children of God (1:12,13).

This was a great prophecy. It was a message of God bringing salvation to the world; to the the Jew and the Gentile. Had they
understood the words in Isaiah 52 and 53, they would have known the Messiah came to die to redeem His people. He would be crushed by God for the sins of man, so that many would be accounted as righteous and He would rise from the dead to make intercession for sinners. But they did not have ears to hear.

So from that day on they made plans to put Him to death. [v53].

The Pharisees were encouraged by the prophecy of the high priest. They did not understand the meaning, but they liked the death of Jesus part. So they set about planning to kill the Messiah, believing they were serving God.

Here Caiaphas took God's wonderful prophecy of a Redeemer who would die and twisted this for evil. The solution was pragmatic: Kill one man rather than have the whole nation perish. Which they feared would happen if the people tried to set up the Messiah as king.

If the Messiah were to come today, man would still try to put Him to death; many of the modern evangelical leadership would do this. Jesus Christ does not conform to the modern American gospel. Man does not want to repent; they want a god who loves them the way they are. Most professing Christians prefer the form of religion, of going to church, rather than taking up their cross and following Him. So, much the same as Jesus' day, if the Messiah came today, there would be divisions and plots among the religious leaders.

Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there He stayed with the disciples. [v54].

To prevent provoking the Jews before the time was right, Jesus and His disciples stayed away from the big city. The Passover was at hand and people were beginning to collect in Jerusalem. Soon, Christ would return. Soon, He would die for the sins of man.
PURIFICATION BY BLOOD

Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. [v55].

The people had to arrive early enough so they could be purified. This was important so they would not miss any of the feast. If an Israelite were unclean, they would not be able to eat of the feast. When Jesus was taken to Pilate, in chapter eighteen, the Jews would not go into the Praetorium, a Gentile building, because they did not want to become unclean and miss the feast.

When Hezekiah restored the temple worship, the decision to honor the feast of the Passover was made. The Passover had been neglected for decades. The decision to restore it was made in haste and they had to move the date over one month because there were not enough priests who were purified to administer the feast. Many came in haste to worship at the feast and were not purified and many who helped tear down the altars of the foreign gods were not purified. So, the priest threw out blood upon the people as a hasty cleansing and Hezekiah prayed for the people so God would see them as cleansed or righteous. God honored Hezekiah's prayer and the people were able to celebrate the feast as if they were purified (2Ch 30:16-20).

Only blood purifies man from sin. Such was the story when Hezekiah hastily put together the feast of the Passover, which had long been forgotten in his time. Such was the story of the original Passover. The blood of lambs, which had been slaughtered, was spread on the lintels and jambs of the doors so the angel of death would pass over and do them no harm.

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. [Heb 9:22].

Christ offered His blood for mans' sin. Hebrews 13:20 calls this the blood of the eternal covenant.

For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all
things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross. [Col 1:19-20].

Purification is an expression of God's holiness. Habakkuk 1:13 says God is pure and cannot look upon evil men with favor. Man must be purified before coming before a holy God. This is why Jesus took our sin upon Himself and gave us His righteousness. His blood satisfied the Father's wrath and this is why God the Father sees us as righteous through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. . For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. [2Co 5:17,21].

Jesus said unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (3:3). To be born again is to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit (3:8) to walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4). Jesus Christ satisfied our purification by His blood.

knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. [1Pe 1:18-19].

**PASSOVER PATROL**

They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? That He will not come to the feast at all?"

Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest Him. [v56-57].

Many were looking to see if Jesus would come. In chapter seven, there was a similar anticipation among the people, wondering if He would come to the Feast of Booths in Jerusalem. He was a man of
controversy and the drama between Him and the leaders was probably entertaining to some.

The Jews were looking for Him at the feast, and saying, "Where is He?" And there was much muttering about Him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man," others said, "No, He is leading the people astray." Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of Him. [7:11-13].

This time there was much interest because they heard the news of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. No one had ever healed a man born blind, as Jesus had done; which was the controversy last time He was in town. Now, more recently, Jesus had raised a man from the dead. Surely, He was the Messiah, the people surmised. Would they see the Pharisees and priests convinced?

When Jesus came to Jerusalem, He always went to the temple and taught. This time, there was even more interest in what He had to say. The Jewish leaders used the opportunity of the feast to use the people as lookouts to turn Christ in, if He showed up. Tyranny always relies upon double-crossers and snitches to keep the people under control.

**IN CLOSING**

The eyewitnesses saw the miracle of Christ raising a man from the dead. Some believed and glorified God; others were repulsed and sought His destruction, so they snitched on Him.

Man has always sought to make God in his own image. This is why there are so many religions. Man has created gods acceptable to himself, his way of life. The Jewish leaders had a god who established their power and authority and the people looked for a god who would save them from Rome and make their nation great.

The modern American gospel has created a god of love; one who accepts people as they are and gives them a grace which requires nothing of them; a grace to continue in this sins they have come to enjoy. There is no need for repentance and a turning away from sin in the modern American gospel.
Nothing has changed from the time of Christ until now. Those in power, cling to their power and they were willing to kill Christ for it. In our day, there is no physical Christ to kill, but the modern American gospel has killed the message of Christ. The gospel in most churches is not longer about a holy God coming to earth to shed His blood for fallen man. There is no repentance; there is no taking up our cross to follow Him. The Gospel is no longer God-centered; it has become man-centered.

To come to God, we must be purified. Man can only be purified from sin by blood and it is only the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, which satisfied the wrath of God and reconciled man to Him. Jesus said unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (3:3). To be born again is to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit (3:8) to walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4).

What will you choose?

1. To receive Christ's purification, repent and walk in newness of life; or

2. To win the favor of man and walk in the ways of the world, killing the Gospel of Christ.
John 12:1-11 Bethany Friends Hold A Feast For Jesus

See the parallel stories in Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9. This is the account of Mary washing Jesus' feet with expensive ointment, at the home of Simon the Leper.

What about Luke's account? The Gospel of Luke tells the story of a woman who wiped Jesus' feet with ointment at the home of Simon the Pharisee in Luke 7:36-50. The story in Luke appears to be at a different time and place than the Matthew, Mark and John accounts. If this is the same story, there is much to reconcile.

One of the biggest problems, in trying to match the Luke account with the other three gospels, is the timetable: Luke's account is the early to middle of Christ's career, while the accounts of the other three gospels are at the end.

Another problem: In the Matthew and Mark accounts, Jesus said wherever the Gospel is preached, the woman would be remembered because she prepared Him for burial. In the John account, this woman is named. In the Luke account, the woman was not preparing Christ for burial, but was grieving and repentant for her sin and Jesus sent her away with her sins forgiven.

The last problem is the host: Though they were both named Simon, their attitudes were quite different.

SOCially RESPONSIBLE DINNER CONVERSATION

Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So they gave a dinner for Him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. [v1-2].

The dinner for Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, whom Jesus had healed. From the last chapter, we found Bethany to be where Lazarus lived and it was close to Jerusalem. When Jesus came to Bethany, on His way to Jerusalem, "they gave Him a dinner" (v2). The wording seems to imply Lazarus and his sisters
hosted the dinner. However, the Matthew and Mark accounts confirm the dinner was hosted at Simon's home (Mat 26:6; Mar 14:3). It is reasonable to say the dinner was at Simon's house, hosted by Lazarus and his sisters.

Lazarus appeared to have a position of honor; Martha served tables and Mary waited upon Jesus by anointing Him with oil. The description of both women's activities are consistent with other passages of Scripture describing them. Martha served while Mary gave her attention to Jesus.

Jesus was at the feast with His disciples. In attendance were one man whom He healed and another whom He raised from the dead.

Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. [v3-6].

In the accounts of Matthew and Mark, the woman who anointed the Lord's feet is unnamed. These two Gospels attribute the criticism of this act of kindness to the disciples.

Because the Gospel of John was written so many years after the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), what John believed to be common knowledge was not repeated unless he wrote to clarify something. In this story he clarified two things: 1) he identified the unnamed woman to be Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha; and 2) he clarified the instigator of the criticism of her act of kindness to be the betrayer, Judas.

By disclosing Judas to be the one behind the criticism of Mary, John brought out his character. John called him a thief (v6). Looking at this account along with the other two renditions of the story, we see, though Judas was looked upon with distain after the betrayal of
Christ, prior to he was respected and could motivate the other disciples with his opinions. John's rendition says Judas criticized Mary, while the other two accounts say the disciples criticized her. In all likelihood, both are correct: After being chided by Judas, the other disciples, who had great respect for him, jumped on the bandwagon.

This gives us a picture of the disciples' fraternity or kinship before the betrayal. This should help us understand why no one, except Christ, had any idea Judas would be the one to deliver the Messiah to His enemies.

The oil Mary used was an expensive ointment made of pure nard or spikenard. Commentators say it was produced in the Himalayan Mountains. Thus, the long and dangerous travel to Jerusalem would make this product expensive indeed.

When she was rebuked, Christ came to her defense. According to all three versions of this story, Christ attributed her act to preparing His body for burial; it seems everyone at the feast missed this point. His claim to His imminent death fell on deaf ears.

Lazarus, Martha and Mary were well off; probably quite wealthy. Mary could afford this expensive ointment. Many people think Christ was against the wealthy and they cite the story where He rebuked the rich man to give his wealth to the poor (Mat 19:21). However, Jesus claimed to be their friend (11:11) and it does not appear He ever gave this same advice to them. Why was this? The Bible does not condemn wealth, it condemns idolizing wealth; it condemns the love of money.

> For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. [1Ti 6:10].

In this act of anointing Jesus, Mary demonstrated a generous nature; she demonstrated her love for the Lord is worth more than a working man's yearly wage. In the other two Gospel accounts of this story, Jesus said, "Wherever the Gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her." [Mat 26:13; Mar 14:9]. John made sure you remembered her name.
Judas, on the other hand, demonstrated a selfish nature, in that he had already calculated the value of the ointment, nearly a year's wage. It would have been obviously self-seeking if he were to demand she donate this to Christ's fund, the purse he held. So he demanded the money be given to the poor, a generic request, which if honored would end up in his purse. Little did he know, his betrayal was imminent and there would be no time to sell the bottle.

Had Judas understood the value of the man Jesus Christ, the Messiah, he would have known no ointment could cost enough to satisfy the value of the events which were imminent.

Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have Me." [v7-8].

Once again, this story gives us a look at what the Bible says about wealth versus poverty. Many professing Christians are blind sided toward helping the poor and demanding government programs. But is this a Biblical view? Jesus said, "the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have Me." [v8]. The other two accounts say the same thing and Mark adds, "and whenever you want, you can do good for them." [Mar 14:7]. Three things to understand from this:

1) Our best efforts will not end poverty;
2) The Gospel is more important than financial health; and
3) Whenever we want, we can help. This means taking personal responsibility rather than using government programs, which rob from others and create government dependents rather than further people's trust in Christ.

The Bible commands us to help the poor, but it also says we will always have the poor with us (v8; cf Deu 15:11). In this respect, establishing government programs with the intent to end poverty is wrong-headed and goes against God's teaching.

For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, You shall open wide your
hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land. [Deu 15:11].

The Bible tells us the person who gives to the poor lends to the Lord (Pro 19:17). This is a personal action between a man and God; not a corporate action of a group nor a government. If God wanted poverty wiped out, Christ would have accomplished this while He was on this earth. If the Gospel of Jesus Christ was about helping the poor or if the two were equivalent, Jesus would have used this opportunity to say so; but He said the opposite. Furthermore, Christ healed the sick and raised the dead, but never once was it recorded He made a poor man wealthy.

"...but you do not always have Me." [v8]. Once again, Jesus announced His death is imminent, but no one seemed to notice.

With this statement, the story in the three Gospel accounts comes to an end. After this, Matthew and Mark reveal Judas cut a deal with the chief priests to hand Christ over to them. So, it seems receiving Jesus' public rebuke after criticizing Mary for wasting money, may have embittered Judas and turned his heart to betray Him.

THE AUTHORITY TO DO EVIL

In verse nine, the Apostle John mentioned a large crowd had gathered around the feast to see Jesus and they wanted to see Lazarus, the man raised from the dead. More evidence Christ's fame was spreading and this was the concern of the Pharisees.

the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus. [v10-11].

It seems almost humorous that men who claim to represent God would plan the death of a man whom God recently raised from the dead. But their lives evidenced they did not believe in God; their lives as priests was merely a career. Their hatred of God blinded them to the irony of their plans.

Jesus said, "If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead." [Luk
These men knew the Scriptures and had committed huge blocks of it to memory. Moses and the Prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah. However, when the Messiah appeared, those who were in positions of authority, as God's representatives, refused to believe.

Having a high position or being a pastor or priest in any church is no guarantee of being saved. Jesus warned His disciples, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses 'seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do." [Mat 23:2-3].

God allows evil men to reign and many people are led astray because of this. It is natural to confuse authority with truth and many get caught in the trap of following personalities. However, Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. . . and no one will snatch them out of My hand." [10:27-28]. Jesus also said, "For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, IF POSSIBLE, even the elect." [Mat 24:24, emphasis added]. Though evil men lead, the truly saved will only follow Christ.

Jesus was clear: His sheep will not be led astray; they cannot be deceived. You will not see a true Christian following the latest Christian fad. God allows falsehood because His glory is revealed when His followers are not swayed.

for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. [1Co 11:19].

from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. [Act 20:30].

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared. [1Ti 4:1-2].

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will
secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. [2Pe 2:1-3].

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. [1Jo 2:19].

IN CLOSING

A dinner was given for Jesus at the home of Simon the leper, in Bethany. Lazarus, Martha and Mary were there. Martha served and Mary washed Jesus' feet with ointment (v2-3).

Judas, jealous of the money spent on the ointment, criticized the waste and said the money should be given to the poor. In pursuit of his own lust, he tried to guilt others with social responsibility (v4-6).

Jesus said you will always have the poor but you will not always have Me (v8). More important than social responsibility is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

When Christ said we will always have the poor, He quoted Scripture from the Old Testament. If the Bible says we will always have the poor, then we are wasting taxpayer money trying to eradicate poverty. Nonetheless, there are ample Scriptures telling us to help the poor. This is personal responsibility; God will hold people accountable to this, not governments.

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it," when you have it with you. [Pro 3:27-28].

Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his deed. [Pro 19:17].
John 12:12-19 The Triumphal Entry Of Christ Into Jerusalem

No one had ever raised a dead man to life. Therefore, Jesus had to be the Messiah. The people believed the Messiah would reign in Jerusalem and destroy Israel's enemies. Christ told the people He had come to die and at the feast, Mary washed His feet in preparation for burial. Yet, the people were determined to have their king.

The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" [v12-13].

The night of the dinner, a large crowd had gathered to see Jesus and Lazarus (v9). The day after the dinner, when they heard Christ was coming to Jerusalem, this same crowd grabbed palm branches, went out to meet Him and gave praise.

"Hosanna" is used as an exclamation of praise and worship, but the original context, as used here and in the Old Testament Scripture these people were quoting, was "please save" or "save now."

Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! [Psa 118:25-26].

THE KING OF ISRAEL

It is evident from their praise, the people believed Christ was the Messiah. They were excited and anxious for Him to overthrow the Romans and reign in Jerusalem as king. This misconception was due to their lack of discernment of the Scriptures and clinging to narratives which satisfied their desire for a comfortable life.

When reading the prophets, often first coming and second coming events are described in the same accounts; sometimes the same chapter or verse. One example of this is Isaiah 9:2-7: the second
verse told of the first coming (the people walking in darkness have seen a great light), while the third verse told of the second coming (You have multiplied the nation and increased its joy). Verse 7 prophesied the Messiah will reign on David's throne and there will be no end of this kingdom. This is descriptive of the second coming, but the people desired it to be the first and they desired Christ to reign now.

We live between the first and second comings of Christ, so we see prophecy which has been fulfilled and prophecy which is yet to be fulfilled. Before Christ came, the people saw all prophecies of the first and second comings as future events. It was more desirable to receive the prophecies of a rescuing king, such as in Isaiah 9, than to understand He would first die for our sins to redeem us for God, as described in Isaiah 53.

Once again, this misconception was due to their lack of discernment in Scripture and clinging to preferred narratives. This is man's natural inclination. When we read the Scripture, do we filter it through our bias and preferences? or are we careful to rightly divide the Scripture to get the true meaning?

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth [2Ti 2:15].

In several instances in the Gospel of John, especially noted in chapters six and eight, Jesus explained to the people who believed, why they were not saved. The Apostle John seems to bring this out. Here, the people believed once again, but in the next day or two their affections will be changed, when Jesus failed to live up to their expectations. To become emotional about Christ, even to declare loud praises to Him, is not an assurance of salvation.

**THE DONKEY'S COLT**

Jesus rode through the gates of Jerusalem on a young donkey (v14). This day, as Jesus rode through the gates, a prophecy was fulfilled (v15). Did anyone notice? John wrote the disciples did not understand until after the Lord was glorified (v16).
Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. [Zec 9:9].

Citing the prophet, Zechariah, the Apostle John wrote Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey's colt (v14-15). John did not go into the account how Christ acquired the animal, for the Synoptic Gospels had already told the story. He affirmed this was a fulfillment of prophecy.

We know Christ will come on a white horse; He will come again as the conquering King (Rev 19:11-21). However, in the Old Testament, the only prophecy of the Messiah riding into Jerusalem, is the prophecy of Zechariah. The Messiah riding on the colt of a donkey. The fulfillment of this prophecy should have led those who studied the Scriptures to look closer at the prophecies of the Messiah and realize the Messiah would first come as the suffering servant as described in Isaiah 53.

Had the disciples and the people understood, they would have known the Messiah had NOT come as a conquering hero, but as an agent of peace; peace with God. Traditionally, the donkey was a symbol of peaceful times; whereas the horse was the symbol of war and conquest. The Prophet Zechariah said the Messiah would come with righteousness and salvation, in humility mounted not on a donkey, but on the donkey's colt. By using the colt, the illustration is exponentially more peace. There would be no conquest of Rome for the Messiah, Jesus Christ came to give of Himself to die for His people; making peace with and reconciling them to God. The Prince of Peace came to bring peace between God and man.

For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above
reproach before Him, if indeed you continue in the faith. [Col 1:19-23a].

In a later epistle, the Apostle John wrote, "In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." [1Jo 4:10]. Propitiation means to appease or satisfy the wrath of God. Jesus Christ, died for our sins to appease God's wrath. Had he not satisfied God's wrath with His own blood, no man would have been spared God's vengeance.

God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day. [Psa 7:11].

But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. [Rom 2:5].

This goes against the modern American gospel, which says God loves everyone. The Bible is clear, He shows love to those who are His; to those who believe in the Son, but His wrath remains on those who do not follow Christ.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God REMAINS on him. [3:36, emphasis added].

The Prophet Isaiah wrote we have all gone astray and we have all turned each other against God, but God laid our sin upon His Son, Jesus Christ (Isa 53:5-6). He was pleased to crush Him for our sake (Isa 53:10). "He bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors." [Isa 53:12]. Christ nailed our sin to the cross (Col 2:14) and now God sees us as righteous through His Son (2Co 5:21). The Prince of Peace has reconciled us to God.

**THE PALM BRANCHES**

The palm branch was used in Jewish celebrations as a symbol of victory. They saw Christ as the conquering hero; they believed now was the time He was coming to Jerusalem to set up His kingdom.
This is why the people were laying palm branches on the road into Jerusalem for Christ's donkey to walk on.

Nonetheless, the Prince of Peace, the King of Israel, entered into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey. The donkey was a symbol of peace. Christ satisfied prophecy with this act and He declared His mission. He came to give us peace with God.

After Christ's entry into Jerusalem, the people who had witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus, continued to testify about what Christ had done (v17). Because of this witness, more and more people were coming to see Him; crowds were coming to see Him (v18).

THE PHARISEES' COMPLAINT

the world has gone after Him. [v19].

The life of Christ was getting closer to the cross. As John related each event, he brought out the Jewish leaders' increased desire to kill Him. With the people now hailing Him as the conquering hero, their Hosanna, the Pharisees knew they were losing this battle. The time was at hand. If they did not kill Him now, He would draw everyone away from them and they would lose everything.

When the Pharisees described this crowd as "the world," of course they did not mean everyone in the whole world. They meant a large population of people around Jerusalem; this is where the crowds were. We have to understand the meaning of words in context. The next time you hear someone say the meaning of John 3:16 is Christ died for everyone in the world, consider the word "world" in context with the surrounding passage.

IN CLOSING

The people and the disciples had a mistaken view of Christ's mission. They filtered Scripture through their preference or bias. They believed He was the Messiah and they chose to believe this meant He would save them from Rome. Hosanna means to "save us now." In saying this, they saw Him as their Hosanna, their Savior.
Truly Christ was their salvation, but He would not save them from Rome. He came to save His people from God's wrath.

Christ rode into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey; the child of the symbol of peace. He came as the Hosanna who would bring peace between God and man. As the Prophet Isaiah wrote, "He bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors." [Isa 53:12].

The disciples were experiencing prophecy being fulfilled but did not understand until after Christ had been glorified.

As the story of Christ got closer to the cross, the crowds were getting larger and the Jewish leaders were getting more determined to kill Him.

The Pharisees wanted to kill Him to remain in control. The people wanted a Messiah to overthrow Rome so they could be in control. The disciples wanted to rule in Christ's kingdom so they could be in control. We want to be rescued from trials so we are in control. We all want control and we forget all things are under God's control.

"The world has gone after Him." Are you going after Christ? Or are you still searching for the comfortable life?
**John 12:20-27 To Follow After Christ, Lose Your Life**

The Prince of Peace, the King of Israel, entered into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey. He came to bring peace with God. We want control of our lives; we want a comfortable life, but the Prince of Peace came to reconcile us to God. To be reconciled to God, we must humble ourselves and repent; we must submit our lives to His control. The Word of God is not a tool to give us a comfortable life.

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. [v20-22].

Some Greeks, who had come to the feast, wanted to see Jesus. The JFB commentary suggests they asked Philip because he lived in the same region and they were looking for a favorable introduction. Philip brought them to Andrew. Andrew, also, was from the same locality (1:44). The two disciples told Jesus.

The JFB commentary said these men were likely Greek proselytes rather than Greek Jews. If they were proselytes, they were Gentile and it was likely Jesus was in a part of the temple where they had no access. This, too, would be a reason they sought Philip.

The JFB commentary also pointed out how, at Jesus' birth, wise men came from the East; whereas these men, near to the time of the cross, came from the West. People came from the East and the West to see the Messiah, while those among Him were critical of Him or sought to kill Him.

When the Greek men came to Philip, he had a dilemma: Philip was a disciple of Christ but he was also a faithful Jew, who followed the strict rules of his religion. Although the Jewish faith allowed for proselytes (Exo 12:48; Deu 29:10-13), would Jesus allow the same among His followers? Furthermore, if he brought the men to Jesus, would He and the disciples incur the wrath of the Jews for speaking with Gentiles in the temple court? Not sure what to do, is probably
the reason Philip consulted with Andrew before taking the men to Jesus.

**THE HOUR HAS COME**

The Bible does not give us the reason these men sought an audience with Christ. It is possible the men wanted to meet this famous Man. It is possible they believed He would be king and wanted special access to Him at the coronation. It is possible they respected the teachings of Christ and had some questions regarding salvation. John MacArthur pointed out in his study Bible, "At the very moment when the Jewish authorities plotted virulently to kill Him, Gentiles began to desire His attention."

In any case, Jesus' response was to announce His death (v23-24).

> And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him. Now is My soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour." [v23-27].

Christ did not speak negative of His death; He did not speak with dread. He related His death to a seed, which falls in the ground to die and brings new life. The new life which sprouted from this death will produce much fruit (v24). Christ looked forward to this, saying He would be glorified.

He was troubled but He looked forward to His death and the produce it would bring. He did not lament nor seek to escape this hour but said, "For this purpose I have come." [v27].

> Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush Him; He has put Him to grief; when His soul makes an offering..."
for guilt, He shall see his offspring; He shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. Out of the anguish of His soul He shall see and be satisfied; by His knowledge shall the righteous one, My servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and He shall bear their iniquities. [Isa 53:10-11].

Whether these men had come to see the King or had a question of salvation, Jesus' answer was lose your life and follow Him. He would set the example with His death, which will bear much fruit.

Christ used this event to illuminate the glory which was about to transpire. These Greek men were shut out of the temple, except for the Gentile court, but Christ's death was about to tear down the wall of partition separating man from God (Mat 27:51; cf Eph 2:14-16; Heb 10:19-22).

In chapter ten, Jesus said, "I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd." [10:16]. Some of these sheep were already coming to the flock.

**WHOEVER LOVES HIS LIFE WILL LOSE IT**

Still speaking to the Gentiles, Christ continued with His salvation message. He just told them He was going to die but His death would be as a seed, which brings new life and much fruit. Then, He warned against setting our affection on the world and desiring anything from it. Christ was about to voluntarily give His life to redeem many. He did not love His life so as to shrink from death. He calls on all who follow Him to have the same attitude toward this life; to be willing to surrender it for God's purposes.

*Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there will My servant be also. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him. [v25-26].*
In 5:44, Jesus said if you love the praise of man, you cannot be saved. The Apostle James said if we love the world, we are enemies of God. He likened those who profess to believe in Christ but were following the world to be as adulterers. Those who practice adultery against Christ cannot be saved.

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. [Jam 4:4].

Jesus warned, you cannot serve two masters (Mat 6:24).

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life, is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. [1Jo 2:15-17].

Jesus told His disciples those who follow Him will be hated by the world; and do not be surprised by this (15:18-27). Many are the professing Christians who desire to satisfy the world; they want to make Christianity relevant to the world because they want the praise of man; they love comfort and the best of what life has to offer. Jesus said, they cannot be saved (5:44).

If we follow Christ, the world will hate us; which includes many professing Christians will hate us. If you are not experiencing friction with the world, you are not following Christ.

If the Greek men had come to celebrate a coronation and wanted access to the king, they were loving this life. Maybe this rebuke was for them. The king they were seeking was about to die and He said if they serve Him, they must follow Him. To follow Christ is to leave the world behind, to walk in newness of life.

We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the
dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. [Rom 6:4].

The Apostle Peter said we suffer for Him because Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example for us to follow in His steps (1Pe 2:21). If we cling to this life and its passing pleasures, we cannot serve Christ. To serve Christ is to seek His glory, even if it means suffering and death, rather than seeking our own comfort and pleasure.

JESUS WAS TROUBLED

Now is My soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. [v27].

Many had come to Jerusalem celebrate the Passover feast. Of these, many had come to see Christ and to celebrate Him for what He did in raising Lazarus from the dead. Many hoped to see Him crowned King. There was much excitement in the air, but Jesus was troubled because the hour had come and the people did not understand. He was about to endure much more than physical death; He was about to endure the wrath of the Father, who was going to crush Him.

All through the Gospel of John, it was noted His hour or time had not yet come. In this message, Christ declared the time had come (v23, 27, 31). There was no going back because this was the reason He came. The psalmist described the distress of Christ.

I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted within My breast; My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue sticks to My jaws; You lay Me in the dust of death. For dogs encompass Me; a company of evildoers encircles Me; they have pierced My hands and feet - I can count all My bones - they stare and gloat over Me; they divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots. But You, O LORD, do not be far off! O You My help, come quickly to My aid! [Psa 22:14-19].

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Christ said, it was for this purpose He had come into the world; to suffer and die for the sins of man. But this question: "And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'?

[v27]. Was He thinking out loud? or was He asking for their opinion? or was it merely rhetorical?

His physical death would be the result of being crushed and rejected by the Father; something which had not happened in all eternity. However, the alternative, to vacate this plan, would be to disobey the Father; an impossible feat. Obedience to the Father would come at a high price to the Son and this was the point: the proof, if you will, of the eternal covenant; the proof of the fellowship between the Father and the Son. Hebrews 5:8 said He learned obedience; not that He was ever disobedient nor that His learning was like ours. He was God in the flesh and this flesh had to prove obedience, to be the perfect man for the perfect sacrifice. He was troubled, but nothing was going to deter Him from His mission.

IN CLOSING

Some Greeks asked Philip to bring them to Jesus. At Jesus' birth, wise men came from the East; whereas near to the time of the cross, these men came men from the West. While those among Him sought to kill Him.

Christ described His death to be like a seed, which dies and brings forth more life.

Coming to this hour of death, Christ was troubled. But He would not fail, for He was destined to fulfill His mission as the perfect sacrifice to satisfy the wrath of God.

If we follow Christ, we must not love this life. We must lose our life for the One who gave His life for our salvation. Lose your life for Christ.
John 12:28-36 Christ's Final Message To The Unbelieving Crowd

Christ's time had come. When He came to this distressing hour, His chief concern was the glory of the Father.

Father, glorify your name. [v28].

Christ came to glorify the Father (1:18). Through His death and resurrection, the Father would be glorified. Though He was troubled, He would fulfill His purpose (v27). Becoming a man, fully man, while remaining fully God; living an obedient life, fulfilling all the Law; remaining obedient and faithful to death; satisfying the wrath of God against man; and seeking the Father's glory in all things. By this He glorified the Father.

Then a voice came out of Heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." [v28].

Many people and theologians have theories as to what gives God the most glory. But Scripture is clear, God's ultimate glory is found in Himself and nothing gives God more glory than the glory He gives Himself (17:1); He chose us for His glory (Eph 1:4-14); He chose Israel and preserved them for His glory ( Isa 43:6-7; 48:9-11). He chose to have His Son suffer His wrath for His glory.

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen. [Rom 11:36].

. . . all things were created through Him and for Him. . . [Col 1:16].

. . . for whom and by whom all things exist. . . [Heb 2:10].

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory! [Isa 6:3].

I am the Lord; that is My name; My glory I give to no other. . . (Isa 42:8).
There is no glory so great as the fellowship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The unity of their work and the praise, majesty and love heaped upon each other can never be surpassed. It will not be surpassed by the millions upon millions of choirs singing His praise through all eternity.

Many people and theologians have theories as to how we can give God more glory; as if we hold the power to control the volume, if you will, to His majesty. We can do nothing to add to His glory but to glorify Him is our duty.

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil. [Ecc 12:13-14].

Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead. [Act 17:29-31].

To glorify God, whether in praise or repentance, is the duty of man. It is the command of God. The judgment of God is the reason for our repentance and obedience. We are to think of God with fear. Without fear, there is no repentance. Praise to God without repentance is vanity.

For those who refuse to repent and glorify God, God will display His glory in their judgment and eternal torment. Nonetheless, though all the earth praise His name, and, in fact this will happen (Php 2:9-11), mans' praise adds infinitely nothing to the praise, the majesty and the love between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

When the Father said, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again" [v28], this was the third recorded time the Father had spoken in an audible voice during Christ's life. The first was at His baptism (Mat
3:13-17; Mar 1:9-11; Luk 3:21-23), the second was at the transfiguration (Mat 17:5). When the people heard the voice, they exclaimed it was (or must have been) an angel of God. It was a fearful sound; the crowd said the voice thundered (v29).

Before the giving of the Ten Commandments, God spoke to the people audibly and it caused great fear. The voice of God thundered. It probably sounded like the earth was breaking apart. Moses told the people the fear of God is to lead us away from sin.

> Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die." Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of Him may be before you, that you may not sin." [Exo 20:18-20].

In the modern American gospel, we are told we need not fear God because He loves us. But the Bible tells us those who do not fear, who do not obey, remain under His wrath (3:36). The reason we see so many professing Christians chasing after and living like the world, is because there is no fear of God. God commands every man to repent (Act 17:30) but we see so many professing Christians living unrepentant lives.

The modern American gospel has made God in its own image; they have made God to be kind and loving toward sinners. Acts 17:29-31 (read it again) says it is futile to make God in our own image. We are to fear Him and He commands us to repent because judgment is upon us. Furthermore, He has proven this by raising His Son, whom we crucified, from the dead. This should be a vivid image: a wrathful God seeking vengeance upon sinful man and there is but one avenue of escape (14:6). He crushed His Son for His glory (Isa 53:10) and we must give glory to His Son through repentance and obedience (1:12).
In sacrifice and offering You have not delighted. . . I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your law is within my heart. [Psa 40:8].

NOW IS THE JUDGMENT OF THIS WORLD

Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not Mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself." [v30-32].

Jesus did not need the Father's voice to affirm His words. He was in perfect unity with the Father. It was for the same reason He prayed to the Father, in the previous chapter, before He brought Lazarus forth from the dead; so the people may believe the Father sent Him (11:41-42). The voice of God was to declare His glory and Christ added the warning, judgment is at hand.

As surely as we are commanded to give God glory, it is our duty to fear Him, to obey Him and to repent, it is just as sure judgment is at hand. God will judge all those who do not repent and obey. The day is fixed (Act 17:31).

Jesus' first recorded sermon was, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." [Mat 4:17; Mar 1:15]. The meaning can be easily reached Jesus was warning of judgment; He was warning of God's wrath. He was NOT preaching, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." Now this was His last sermon and He was preaching God commands every man to repent and give Him glory because His wrath is at hand.

In this passage, Jesus said judgment is upon this world and the ruler of this world is cast out (v31). It is a terrifying thing for a nation to have its ruler executed by hostile parties. Most people serve Satan, even those who think they don't like him, but refuse to follow Christ. The devil is their leader and Jesus just declared to this crowd, their leader has been defeated.
In another passage, Jesus said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." [Luk 10:18]. And the Apostle John wrote Christ came to destroy the works of the devil; to destroy the power of sin.

> Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. [1Jo 3:8].

Those who refuse to follow Christ will follow the devil. Nice people, who do good things but reject Christ, are following Satan. Christ's death and resurrection brought judgment upon Satan and all those who follow him.

> And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. [3:19].

Freeing us from the power of sin is the work of God; it is not the result of anything we do, not even the result of our repentance. We are commanded to repent; God does the work.

> And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience; among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ; by grace you have been saved [Eph 2:1-5].

In his epistles, the Apostle John wrote, "We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." [1Jo 5:19]. The Apostle Paul wrote we were once dead "following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience." [Eph 2:2]. Paul also wrote when Christ set our sin aside by "nailing it to the cross, He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in
Him." [Col 2:13-15]. Though we followed the evil one, Christ nailed our sins to the cross, triumphing over all principality who would draw us to death. Satan holds power over the world, but has no hold over those who follow Christ. Therefore, judgment for this world means life for Christ's followers. This is why He said "when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to Myself." [v32].

What did Christ mean by "all" men? We have already discussed the meaning of "world" in 3:16, to mean those who are His throughout the whole world. The angel told Joseph, "He will save His people from their sins" [Mat 1:21]; he did not say Christ would save the whole world. Isaiah said He bore the sins of many (Isa 53:12); he didn't say Christ bore the sins of the whole world. In chapter six, Jesus said no one could come to Him unless the Father draws him (6:44). Finally, in the Book of Acts we are told, "as many as were appointed to eternal life believed." [Act 13:48]. Those who are chosen by God from before the creation of the world, are drawn and they believe. Therefore, we must conclude, as for this act of drawing all men to Himself, He is speaking of His chosen; those whom He predestined to receive Christ. All of them.

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me. [6:37].

There is another perspective of Christ's claim He will draw all men to Himself. That is drawing, as in getting their attention, but not necessarily to salvation. From the moment Christ died, He has drawn the attention of the entire world. The calendars we use are set from the presumed year of His birth (AD: Anno Domini or the year of our Lord; and BC: before Christ); even though there is recent worldwide effort to change this and it is absurd for professing Christians to join this push to eliminate God from the calendar.

Christ is the greatest controversy in the world: despite all the wars, violence and hardships which wage around mankind, the conversation tends to focus on who Christ is and what He did and will we believe or should we reject Him out of hand. Even the fact that atheists are compelled to argue against His existence and His authority is evidence He is and He has drawn the attention of all men.
He said this to show by what kind of death He was going to die. [v33].

The term, "lifted up," must have been a common term for crucifixion. Not only did John write, "He said this to show by what kind of death He was going to die," but the people reacted, demonstrating they knew He meant He was going to die.

Jesus explained to Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up." [3:14]. The serpent on the pole was a foretelling of Christ or type of Christ. When God sent judgment and the people, dying of venomous snake bites, looked at the bronze snake on the pole, they were saved from death (Num 21:4-9). So, too, when we look to Christ on the cross for our salvation, we are saved from permanent death.

So the crowd answered Him, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can You say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" [v34].

Speaking of His death upset the people, because, like Nicodemus (chapter 3), they understood the Messiah would come and reign forever at Jerusalem. Imagine their disappointment when the one they thought to be the Messiah, the victor over Rome, whom they just welcomed and celebrated with palm branches and praise as He entered Jerusalem, announced He was going to die.

They looked to the Scriptures, but had understood them all wrong:

1) "I will establish Your offspring forever, and build Your throne for all generations." [Psa 89:4].

2) "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.'" [Psa 110:4].

3) "Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. . . " [Isa 9:7].
4) "They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David My servant shall be their prince forever." [Eze 37:25].

5) "And to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom one that shall not be destroyed." [Dan 7:14].

These prophecies and others speak to Christ's earthly and eternal reign. But these prophecies were not for this time, for the Son of Man came to die; to redeem His people to God. When reading and studying the Scripture, they only heard what they wanted to hear.

Being in the Word is of no use if you are using the Word to satisfy your bias rather than allowing Scripture to transform your life. These people wanted a comfortable life; they wanted a ruler who would eradicate all their enemies. Many professing Christians are looking for a comfortable life; they believe the Word of God is a handbook to a prosperous life. Jesus' command is to take up our cross and follow Him.

They asked Him, "Who is this Son of Man?" [v34]. They preferred a Messiah who would reign forever. Jesus' answer was the light would be among them a little while longer, meaning His time was at hand. They should walk in the light while it is light, that is, they should follow Him while He is still here, so the darkness of this world would not overtake them and they stumble (v35). This was His final call to follow Him.

Human reasoning without God is darkness (Mat 6:23; 1Co 1:18-25). Misapplying the Word of God is also darkness. Jesus warned, "The one who walks in darkness does not know where he is going." [v35].

**While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light. [v36].**

Christ urged them to believe in Him while He was still with them.

The only way to know the truth is to be in the Word; not shaping it to please ourselves but abiding in it and allowing it to shape our lives and thoughts (8:31-32); to conform us to the image of Christ.
(Rom 8:29). Romans chapter eight talks about our adoption as sons, for those who walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. Christ is no longer on earth in the flesh but He has left us His Word. If we believe in the light, we will be in His Word and it will transform our lives so we may be sons of light.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. [Mat 5:16].

After He said these things, He hid Himself (v36b). But He will return shortly to give one last call to follow Him.

IN CLOSING

Jesus' first and last sermons were warning of God's judgment. He did not preach, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." He constantly warned people of judgment.

As God is glorified in all that He has made, so too, He is glorified in the salvation He has provided through His Son.

God is glorified by all who will receive His Son; so too, He will be glorified in the eternal judgment upon all those who refuse to believe.

With His voice, God made it obvious Jesus Christ was the Son of God. Although the voice was fearsome, the people did not listen or they soon forgot what they heard, because they were looking for a Messiah who would reign forever and give them a comfortable life. People continue to reject God in their search for a comfortable life; even many professing Christians.

Today, God speaks to us through His Word. If we are in His Word, it will lead us to fear Him. Many read His Word but soon forget what they heard. Are you listening?
John 12:37-43 God Hardens Hearts To Accomplish His Will

Christ's last sermon was a warning of judgment and a call to follow the Light of the world. This was the crowd who welcomed Him into Jerusalem as a king, but when He announced He had come to die, He fell short of their expectations, because they were looking for a comfortable life.

If Jesus kept right on feeding the multitudes, healing diseases and disabilities and if He would also reign as king and put away all their enemies, then, in their minds, He would have been the perfect Messiah. Many people become Christian thinking Jesus is going to make their life better. But as time goes by, their lives are still the same old ruts they created and they fall away. They never became sons of Light, because they never truly believed.

Though He had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in Him, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them." Isaiah said these things because he saw His glory and spoke of Him. [v37-41].

The Apostle John explained the reason the people still did not believe in Him after so many miracles was to fulfill what the Prophet Isaiah had written (v38; quoting Isa 53:1).

Here was God, descended from Heaven in human flesh; the Son of Man speaking the words of truth from the Father; the Creator speaking to His creation, and few believed. The people could not believe, just as Isaiah foretold, because God has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts (v40; quoting Isa 6:10).
John made it clear, God had no intention of saving these people. He hardened their hearts so they would not believe. But, just like Pharaoh, He did not harden their hearts against their will; it was their will to hate God. The freewill of a slave to sin, is to love sin.

Many professing Christians have difficulties accepting predestination or election. They have problems with God's claim He has rejected certain people. These professing Christians want to make God in their own image; they want a god who is kind and fair. They do not think it fair what Paul wrote in Romans 9, that God chose some for life and some for destruction. But the Apostle Paul asked, who are we to question God? (Rom 9:20).

The potter has the right to make what He wants from the clay and God has said, He will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy.

So then He has mercy on whomever He wills, and He hardens whomever He wills. [Rom 9:18].

Election is of God. Jesus said no one comes to Him unless the Father draws him (6:44). Paul wrote, "So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy." [Rom 9:16]. This is the same thing John wrote in the opening of the Gospel of John; to those who received Christ, God gave the right to become children of God and, in the very next verse he wrote, this receiving was not due to man's will but God's will (1:12-13).

In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will. [Eph 1:11].

God chose us in Christ before the world was created (Eph 1:4). We are chosen for God's purposes (Eph 1:11). We are NOT chosen for anything in us nor are we chosen because God knows our future decision. We could not make this decision to repent and follow Christ if God had not drawn us and regenerated our hearts. As Jesus said, "you must be born again." [3:3]. It was not our decision to be born the first time; it was all of God. It is only of God, by whom, we can be born again.
The people's hearts were hardened to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy and accomplish God's will. God always has a purpose.

What if God, desiring to show His wrath and to make known His power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of His glory for vessels of mercy, which He has prepared beforehand for glory; even us whom He has called. [Rom 9:22-24].

People's hearts continue to be hardened to fulfill prophecy and accomplish God's will.

Isaiah said these things because he saw His glory and spoke of Him. [v41].

Isaiah saw the Son of God come to earth to die to satisfy God's wrath and make many be accounted righteous. This is what he wrote about in Isaiah chapter 53, specifically:

1. He wrote the Son of Man would be despised, rejected, stricken, smitten and afflicted.
2. He wrote it was the will of God to crush Him as an offering for guilt.
3. He wrote out of the anguish of His soul He will see His offspring and be satisfied.
4. He wrote many will be accounted righteous because He bore their sins and He makes intercession for sinners.

This is God's will: to display His wrath upon those He has rejected, so He can make known His mercy to those who are His. This is an awesome work of God. We may have a hard time understanding this, but God said it and this should cause us to fear, repent and give Him praise. This should cause us to warn others of the coming judgment, just as Jesus did.
IF YOU SEEK TO PLEASE MAN, HOW CAN YOU BE SAVED?

Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in Him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God. [v42-43].

The Apostle John finished his commentary, noting some did believe, but for fear of the Jews, not wanting to be put out of the temple (9:22), they hid their faith. They did not confess their faith because, "they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God." [v43].

This is a believing which is NOT unto salvation. They believed but they did not act upon it. This means they believed intellectually, but were not willing to take up their cross and follow Christ. James wrote the demons believe and tremble (Jam 2:19). If you fear man more than God, you cannot be saved (5:44; cf Mat 6:24). Jesus said, you cannot have a private faith.

For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God. [3:20-21].

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. [Mat 5:14-16].

Speaking about sin and evil thoughts, Jesus said what is in the heart will come out of the mouth (Mat 15:18). This is true, even for our faith. If we are regenerated by God, what comes out of our mouth will be words to His glory. We cannot hide our witness, for as Jeremiah wrote,
If I say, "I will not mention Him, or speak any more in His name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. [Jer 20:9].

And the Psalmist David wrote,

My heart became hot within me. As I mused, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue. [Psa 39:3].

If we truly follow Christ, we cannot keep silent. We are told from Scripture to fear God and not man (Psa 118:8-9; 146:3; Mat 10:28) and Jesus asked the question, how can a man could be saved if he seeks the glory of man, but does not seek the glory of God (5:44).

but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it. [v42].

John made this accusation knowing at the time of his writing some of these, such as Nicodemus and Joseph (19:38-39), had later became vocal in their faith and were influential in the early church. Regardless, he did not mince words, even though they were his Christian brothers.

It indicates the displeasure with which God regarded their conduct at this time, and with which He continues to regard similar conduct [JFB; quoting Webster and Wilkinson].

These men became bold in their faith and there is no doubt they were saved; however, had they remained private in their belief, they would have had no saving faith at all.

IN CLOSING

The Apostle John made the doctrine of election very clear: God hardens the heart of the unbeliever so they cannot come to Christ. We may think this harsh, but God does not force them to unbelief against their will.

Professing to be a Christian but hiding or compromising your faith for the sake of receiving acceptance and glory from your peers or for
fear of receiving their rejection, is no saving faith at all. Jesus asked the question, "How can you believe?" [5:44].
John 12:44-50 Christ Made One Last Call For Salvation

The hearts of the people in this crowd were hardened, so they could not believe. They have expressed their rejection of a Messiah who came to die, rather than come to give them a comfortable life. Nonetheless, Christ makes one last call to repent.

And Jesus cried out and said, "Whoever believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. And whoever sees Me sees Him who sent Me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness." [v44-46].

Jesus came out of hiding (v36) and declared He represented the Father. He called on the people, one last time, to believe. He said He has revealed the Father to us and He said whoever believes in Him, believes in the Father who sent Him. He called man to come out of the darkness.

Jesus said, "If the light within you is darkness, how great is this darkness" (Mat 6:23). Men cling to the darkness of worldly wisdom, which says they are basically good and not deserving of death. They cling to the darkness of a god made in their own image, who will accept them in their sin. The Bible says men love darkness because their deeds are evil (3:19). In this passage, Christ said He came as light to bring those who believe out of darkness.

These are the bookends of Christ's ministry:

1. Christ was the light sent from the Father, to make Him known (1:14-18).

2. He came to show us the Father, so those who believe will not remain in darkness (12:44-46).

He established again the fact He is equal to the Father.

If anyone hears My words and does not keep them, I do not judge Him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one...
who rejects Me and does not receive My words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. [v47-48].

Christ gave the promise of life to those who believe and warned of judgment for those who reject Him. In this call, He said He did not come to judge, but to save. He told Nicodemus those who believe in Him will not be condemned but those who do not believe are condemned already (3:18). In this sermon, He said the word He has spoken will judge the unbeliever (v48). Those who do not believe have no excuse.

Reinforcing the idea He did not come to judge, Jesus said in chapter eight, He judges no one but if He did judge, His judgment is true because He judges with the Father who sent Him.

You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, My judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent Me. [8:15].

In this passage, He said the one who rejects Him has a judge. The word He has spoken will judge him. His word is true because He spoke what the Father commanded Him to speak.

The Word as judge:

1) 5:24 Christ said whoever hears His Word and believes will not come into judgment;
2) 5:45-47 Christ said He would not be the one accusing the Jewish leaders to the Father; Moses would because he wrote of Christ;
3) 8:31 Christ said if we abide in His Word, the truth will set us free;
4) 8:51 Christ said anyone who keeps His Word will never see death;
5) 12:48 Christ said the word He has spoken will judge the unbelievers on the Last Day.
6) 14:24 Christ said anyone who does not love Him will not keep His Word and this Word is from the Father.

Christ did not come to render judgment; He came to suffer on man's behalf. However, He made clear if they reject Him, they will be judged; they will be judged by the very words He gave them. God has given us His Word. If we reject this Word, we have no excuse and we will be judged.

For I have not spoken on My own authority, but the Father who sent Me has Himself given Me a commandment; what to say and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told Me. [v49-50].

Christ said He did not speak as a man seeking His own glory. He came to do the Father's will. In this passage, the words He spoke were those commanded by the Father. Several times through the Gospel of John, Jesus said He did not speak or act on His own accord, but He spoke and acted what He saw the Father speaking and doing (5:19, 30; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10-11; cf 10:18; 15:10).

So it is appropriate Christ would claim:

1. Whoever believes in Me, believes . . . in Him who sent Me. [v44].
2. Whoever sees Me sees Him who sent Me. [v45].
3. For I have not spoken on My own authority, but the Father who sent Me. [v49].
4. Therefore, I say what the Father has told Me. [v50].

This was a fulfillment of prophecy. This is what God told the people through the prophecy of Moses. The Messiah would seek the will of God rather than seek glory for Himself and we are commanded to listen to Him.

And I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And whoever will not listen to My words that He shall speak in My
name, I Myself will require it of him. [Deu 18:18b-19].

Christ will judge the world. The Apostle Paul argued this case when confronting Greek philosophers who rejected the true God. He said God will judge the world through Christ, whom He has appointed. The Father gave assurance He approved the words of Christ by raising Him from the dead.

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead. [Act 17:30-31].

The words Christ spoke will judge those who heard them and rejected Him. However, to those who believe, His words are eternal life because His words came from the Father. Christ could extend this promise of eternal life because the Father sent the Son and gave Him this commandment.

For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself. [5:26].

IN CLOSING

So, to recap this last portion of chapter twelve:

1) The people who hailed Him as the Messiah and welcomed Him to Jerusalem, could not believe in Him once He said He had come to die.

2) The Apostle John said God hardened their hearts so they would not believe. This is hard for us to understand because, in our human wisdom, we think God would want all men to believe. The Apostle Paul wrote, "What if God, desiring to show His wrath and to make known His power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of His glory for vessels of mercy, which He has prepared beforehand for
glory; even us whom He has called. [Rom 9:22-24]. God has a plan and purpose and this will be accomplished.

3) Some believed, but they feared man more than they feared God. So, their belief was not a faith unto eternal life.

4) Christ then professed He spoke on authority of the Father and those who believe in Him believe in the Father and have eternal life. Those who do not believe will be judged; the words He spoke will judge them on the last day.

He made a call for all men to come to Him though not all are drawn to Him. The Apostle Paul said, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed. . . " [Act 17:30-31]. The One who will judge gave opportunity for all to repent.

The first time Christ came, He came to save. The next time He comes, He will judge the world. He spoke the words, He gave the call; those who refuse to believe will be judged by the words He declared. Are you listening?
John 13:1-17 Jesus' Love For Disciples And Feet Washing

Five main things happened in this chapter:

1. Jesus washed the disciples' feet;
2. Jesus declared His upcoming betrayal;
3. Jesus announced His imminent death;
4. Jesus commanded the disciples to love each other; and
5. Jesus foretold Peter's denial.

The next three chapters, 14-16, contain the final teachings or doctrines given by Christ to His disciples and chapter 17 contains more doctrine in His prayer to the Father. Chapters 13 through 17 give us the setting and the teachings at Christ's Last Supper with His disciples.

JESUS' LOVE FOR THE DISCIPLES

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. [v1].

To make the point, God is always in control, the Apostle John mentioned much about time and timing. John said Christ's time or His hour had not yet come in several passages (2:4; 7:6; 7:8; 7:30; 7:33; 8:20; 12:23; 12:27 and 12:31) He also made plenty other mentions such as "the next day." The whole book of the Gospel of John reads like a timetable.

This chapter begins beautifully. Christ is described as knowing His time had come, but He was consumed with love for His disciples. Not only are we reminded everything happens in God's time; we also learn God's complete control is not a rigid, emotionless, schedule-driven agenda. Christ loved His disciples to the end; His trial did not dampen His love.
Because of His love, Jesus gave His disciples a final discourse on doctrine. He gave them instruction rather than leave them with sentimental feelings. He began by washing the disciples' feet; leaving them an example of serving each other.

What better way for man to know God's love than to have an understanding of His doctrines? As the Apostle John wrote in His epistles:

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. [1Jo 5:20].

Sound doctrine is integral to the Gospel of Salvation. Many modern churches announce they avoid doctrine because it brings division. Jesus said He came to bring division (Luk 12:51). Truth always divides false teaching. Beware the preacher who avoids doctrine as he is likely forming God in his own image. He may be preaching a psychological love, but he is not preaching the love of God.

**JESUS WASHED THE DISCIPLES' FEET**

During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him.[v2].

The Apostle John began the story of the feet washing saying the devil had already urged Judas to betray Christ. Earlier on, Judas had made an agreement to betray Jesus and the Jews promised a payment of thirty pieces of silver (Luk 22:3-6).

In John's account, he wrote, "the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas." Whereas, in the Luke account, it is written, "Satan entered into Judas." Judas betrayed the Christ, but he was directed by Satan. The devil was active in trying to put away the Messiah and he found a disciple to help him. Judas' own greed and love of the world made him vulnerable to Satan's attacks. Jesus said you cannot serve two masters (Mat 6:24).
Satan won the battle for Judas but He lost the battle for Christ. God's ways are higher than mans' ways (Isa 55:9) and His ways are higher than the devil's and all the principalities (Col 1:16). Satan, desiring to destroy Christ, played right into God's hand by facilitating the death of His Son on the cross, for the salvation of many.

Christ's sacrifice was foretold in Genesis 3:15: Satan would bruise or strike His heel, but Christ would trample Satan's head. Christ was destined to die before the creation of the world. His "heel was bruised" so to speak, because death could not hold Him. He rose from the dead and this led to greater glory (v3; cf 17:1). Christ conquered death and destroyed the devil who held the power of death and who held people captive to sin.

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. [Heb 2:14-15].

Mankind is at the devil's mercy, of which he has none; he holds the world to a lifelong slavery to sin. The Apostle Paul wrote God "will soon crush Satan under your feet." [Rom 16:20]. The devil was conquered through Christ's death on the cross. Jesus described the devil as the ruler of this world and said he will be cast out (12:31).

. . . for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. . . [Rev 12:10-11].

Christ's blood, which saves the believer, has conquered Satan.

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside His outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the
disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around Him. [v3-5].

So, before teaching doctrine, Christ taught love. He demonstrated this love through humble service, knowing His crucifixion was imminent and knowing He was about to be betrayed. His love for His disciples was greater than His burden. Christ is our example.

And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. [1Co 13:2].

Christ was about to teach them doctrine, but knowing sound doctrine is worthless if we don't love and serve each other.

Christ knew His time had come; soon He would be going back to the Father, who had sent Him. He was God in human form and John made it clear He was conscious of who He was. Facing death, He knew He was going to be crushed by the Father, but He would be glorified in His resurrection. He loved the disciples to the end (v1) and He was willing to die for those who are His.

...though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. [Php 2:6-8].

At the final supper, He demonstrated this servant's attitude. On the one hand, He faced death, on the other hand, He knew He was God. Yet, neither fear nor His high estate could keep Him from serving those He loved. He rose from supper; laid aside his outer garments; tied a towel around his waist; poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and wipe them, just like a servant (v4-5).

When He came to wash Peter's feet, the disciple resisted and he continued to resist a second time, though Jesus explained, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." [v7]. So Jesus told him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." [v8]. Only then did Peter allow Him and he
asked Jesus to wash his hands and head as well (v9). Then Christ explained this additional washing was not necessary because he was already clean. He was already bathed while sitting under Christ's teaching for the last three years.

**The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you. [v10].**

And this is a picture of the Christian life: The Word cleanses us. Are we bathed in the Word? If we are in the Word, we are washed.

Already you are clean because of the Word that I have spoken to you. [15:3].

We are washed, yet we are not without sin; this is the dirt which collects as we walk along life's road. For this, we need washing again and again; the washing of our feet, if you will. Jesus prayed to the Father, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your Word is truth." [17:17]. The more we are in the Word, the more we become sanctified. When we read, study and meditate upon the Word, it cleanses us.

But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. . . . If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [1Jo 1:7,9].

The Apostle John wrote, we cannot walk in darkness and have fellowship with God (1Jo 1:6). Walking in darkness is willful sin, immorality, seeking the world's wisdom, fame and power or anything else rather than seeking fellowship with God. If we are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, we will be seeking to walk in the light, but this does not mean we will be sinless; neither does it mean we are out of the light whenever we sin. This is the beauty of what Christ has done for us:

1. We walk in the light and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from ALL sin.
2. We confess our sins, that is, we continually repent of our sin, and He forgives us and washes us; washes our feet, if you will.

This is the beauty of fellowship with God: The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. The Father draws us into fellowship; the Holy Spirit regenerates our hearts to fellowship; and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us for fellowship. The picture of Christ washing the disciples' feet is a picture of the blood of Jesus Christ cleansing us from all our sin.

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. [Tit 3:5-7].

Nonetheless, the Word cannot wash the soul of the unrepentant. As the Apostle John pointed out: Jesus said one man in the group was not clean. Judas had been in the group, listening to the words of Christ, yet he was not sanctified because he loved the world and was not repentant.

For He knew who was to betray Him; that was why He said, "Not all of you are clean." [v11].

This man, Judas, sat under Christ's teaching for three years, yet he was not clean; he was not saved; he was not walking in the light. Judas was well respected among the disciples and it did not occur to them he would betray.

Many professing Christians go to church all their lives; they talk the talk and even appear to walk the walk, yet they are not clean; they are not saved. Many people read the Word, they find comfort and encouragement but they do not find fellowship with God and they are not saved.

Jesus told the parable of the wheat and the tares (Mat 13:24-30). A man sowed a field of wheat and an enemy sowed weeds among the good crop. His servants wanted to gather the weeds but the master
told the servants to let them both grow together and at harvest they will bind the weeds and throw them in the fire. There have always been false converts in the church. Judas, one of the twelve disciples, sat under Jesus' teaching, but was not saved.

After Jesus finished washing the disciples' feet and put on His outer garments and rejoined them in the feast, He said He had given them an example to live by. And the example is this: those who lead should serve, just as Christ did not come to be served, but to serve (Mat 20:28). Jesus said, "whoever would be great among you must be your servant." [Mat 20:26].

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. [v14-16]

Some Christians engage in feet washing ceremonies. They think they must, because Jesus did. However, there is no record of the apostles repeating this washing. Therefore, we can be sure they have missed the point. The Apostle Paul expounds on this in Romans 15:1-6: Our responsibility is to bear with the failings of the weak; not to please ourselves; to build up our brothers in Christ, just as Christ did; to welcome one another as Christ welcomed us. We do this for the glory of God, so we may glorify Him with one voice. We should serve each other as Christ served us and gave His life for us. Christ gave us a model to live by; if we serve Christ, we will serve our brothers in Christ.

Peter later wrote to the dispersed believers, telling them to shepherd the flock, "not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. . . Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another." [1Pe 5:3,5]. So, whether we are leading or following, we are to serve each other in humility.

If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. [v17].
IN CLOSING

Christ knew He would soon suffer on the cross and He knew one of His disciples would betray Him. He also knew He was God. Yet, He got up from the table and washed the disciples' feet. He loved His disciples to the end.

At another time, He told the disciples whoever would be great among them must be the servant to all (Mat 20:26; Mar 10:43). By this act of feet washing, He vividly set the example to serve.

Many churches today have feet washing sessions but they miss the point. We are called to bear each others' burdens (Gal 6:2). This means we help our brother in need, physically and spiritually. We don't practice staged acts of humility.

The disciples were already clean because they had been listening to Jesus' words (15:3), but their feet were dirty from travel. We are clean if we are in the Word, yet we are not without sin and we become dirty from travel. If we confess our sin, He is faithful to forgive (1Jo 1:9). This is like washing our feet again.

After Christ finished washing the disciples' feet, He explained to them a servant is not greater than his master. Christ served them and He was going to die for them. He said we will be blessed if we follow His example of service to our brothers.
John 13:18-30 Dark Is The Heart Which Betrays Christ

Jesus said the one who is bathed does not need to wash; he needs only his feet cleansed. Then He said His disciples were clean, because they have been cleaned by His teaching, but not every one of them (v10).

I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, "He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against Me." I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am He. [v18-19].

Christ promised to bless those who obey Him (v17), but in the next breath said He was not speaking or extending His promise to all who were listening. Judas was with Jesus for three years but he did not walk with Christ. He was not chosen to life; he was chosen to fulfill Scripture.

Christ told the disciples of the betrayer in their midst for two reasons:

1. He wanted them to know a betrayer in their midst was a fulfillment of Scriptural prophecy. "Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me." [Psa 41:9].

2. He wanted them to remember when this happened, so they would know and believe He was the Messiah.

Was Christ surprised Judas had turned against Him? Not in the least; He tolerated his presence for three years, knowing full well he was not one of His sheep. With God, everything happens as designed. Judas was chosen to fulfill God's purpose; he was chosen for destruction.

Understand, Judas' part was not apart from his own will. Even though God ordained that Judas would be the one of the Twelve who would betray Christ, it was not apart from the desire of Judas. Judas was no
robot. Our Lord did not simply allocate to an unwilling Judas the part of the villain in the crucifixion. Such a thing would be inconsistent with the character of Jesus Christ. It is also inconsistent with the historical record. Throughout the ministry of Jesus, He endeavored to drive Judas to repentance, time and time again, with His love, His pleas, and His rebukes. So although Judas's treachery fit into the plan of God, God did not design him as a treacherous man. He became a traitor to Christ by his own choice. God merely designed his treachery into the divine plan. He took Judas, wretched as he was, and fitted him into His plan. If God was responsible for making Judas what he was, Jesus would have pitied him rather than rebuked him. [John MacArthur (Unmasking the Betrayer)].

In this, there is a warning to us, as further explained by John MacArthur

Judas, through his life of treachery, supplies sinners with a solemn warning. We learn from the example of Judas that a person can be very near to Jesus Christ, and yet be lost and damned forever. Nobody was ever closer to Christ than the Twelve. Judas was one of them, and he's in hell today, because while he may have given intellectual assent to the truth, he never embraced Christ with heartfelt faith. [John MacArthur (Unmasking the Betrayer)].

Jesus said He was telling them these things now, so when they came to pass, the disciples would believe He was the Messiah (v19). Nonetheless, when they needed this confirmation and hope, the disciples were so caught up in their fear and grief they did not discern it at the time.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives the one who sent Me." After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in His spirit, and
testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." [v20-21].

Even with this ominous threat of betrayal looming over Him, Jesus reaffirmed to the disciples He was sending them out. Whoever received them, that is, their message, received the one who sent them, namely Christ Himself. Those who receive Christ's message, receive the one who sent Him, namely God the Father (v20). In other words, hard times are coming, but the disciples have a mission and the kingdom will be advancing.

From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence [coming forcefully], and the violent take it by force. [Mat 11:12].

Up to this moment, the message of His betrayal and trouble to come have fallen on deaf ears. The disciples saw the kingdom as being at hand. They believed their Messiah was going to set up His kingdom in Jerusalem, destroy Rome and make Israel great again.

Recently, these men were jockeying for positions in this kingdom and arguing with each other who was the greatest among them (Mat 20:20-21; Mar 10:35-37; Luk 22:24). So it was with great effort and emotion for Christ to call out the plain message, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." [v21].

After hearing this, the disciples looked at each other with uncertainty (v22). The Apostle Matthew wrote they were sorrowful (Mat 26:22). Luke wrote they questioned among themselves (Luk 22:23). Mark wrote each questioned whether it was themselves (Mar 14:19). It appears each one, except for Judas, was concerned whether they might be the one; abhorring the thought.

John was resting near Jesus and Peter motioned for him to ask the Lord who it was (v23-24). So John asked and Jesus answered.

It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it. [v26].

Then He dipped the bread and gave it to Judas, saying, "What you are going to do, do quickly." [v27]. But no one at the table knew why Jesus said this to Judas (v28). No one seemed to notice the
correlation between what Christ said and the fact He had given the bread to Judas. It was necessary they did not know who the betrayer was, so they would not be distracted during Jesus' teaching this night.

This also reinforces the idea Judas was highly respected among the disciples. In chapter twelve, when Mary was anointing Jesus with perfume, Judas was influential in persuading the disciples to complain about this waste, which could have benefited the poor (12:4; cf Mat 26:8; Mar 14:4). The disciples seemed to agree with him. Because Judas was respected among the disciples; they did not suspect any evil in him. This is why John wrote no one knew why Jesus told Judas to do quickly what he had determined (v27). This is why there were no suspicions upon him even after he left the dinner. John wrote, "Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, 'Buy what we need for the feast,' or that he should give something to the poor." [v29].

John made an interesting observation by saying when Judas went out it was night (v30). Evil deeds are done in darkness, whether this be the darkness of night or the darkness of the soul. Many people posing to be Christians have ranking and respected positions in the church bodies, even elders and pastors, but their hearts are evil, seeking their own gain. Some are determined to betray Christ for their own personal comfort. These people may be wealthy, but they walk in darkness.

Judas came to this meeting with betrayal in his heart. There was nothing he could learn by listening to Jesus' teaching, because his heart was hardened. So he went out.

IN CLOSING

Though He washed all the disciples' feet, one of them would never have fellowship. Though the disciples were cleansed by His teaching, not every disciple was clean. Many people sit in churches and profess faith in Christ but they will never have fellowship with God and they will never be clean from their sin.

From the beginning, the tares have been sown among the wheat. Christ allowed Judas to associate among them as one of them. So
too, God allows false professing Christians to associate among the true brothers.

Judas was respected among the disciples and no one suspected he would betray Christ. There are many professing Christians in the churches; they are even in leadership. They betray Christ in word and deed; these are the tares and they will burn. Association is no assurance of salvation.

The disciples were unsettled by Jesus' announcement of a betrayer. However, God hid the identity from them because tonight Christ had many things to teach them and knowing the betrayer would distract from understanding.

When Judas went out it was night. His soul was dark as he betrayed the Light of Life.
John 13:31-38 Where I Am Going You Cannot Come

Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him at once. [v31-32].

After Judas left, there was no restraint on what the Lord would disclose to the remaining eleven disciples. For the next three chapters, Christ gave them final instructions in doctrine to remember.

He began by expressing God's glory; He spoke in triumph, declaring victory. His time had come and He would be glorified in His death on the cross. The Father would be glorified by His willingness and obedience in death and the Father would glorify the Son by raising Him from the dead.

. . .He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead. [Act 17:31].

Because man sinned, man had to die and this death meant permanent separation from God. There was not one man who could die for the sins of man. There was not one man who could satisfy God's wrath and restore man to fellowship with God. Like the animals sacrificed in the Old Testament, the one who died must be spotless and perfect. There is not one man, for as David said, "In sin did my mother conceive me." [Psa 51:5]

Christ alone was the perfect sacrifice, for while He is fully God, He is also fully man. This is why He came to earth, born among men. As man, He lived the perfect life, fulfilling the Law. He was like us in every way but remained sinless (Heb 4:15). God made Christ, who was sinless, to become sin for us, so that, through Him we are considered as righteous before God.
For our sake [God] made [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. [2Co 5:21].

He was sinless and spotless before God, because He is God. He alone could satisfy the wrath of God. Through Christ, the Father was glorified because Christ was obedient, even to death on the cross, and in Him many are made alive; many are made righteous.

For as by one man's [Adam] disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's [Christ's] obedience the many will be made righteous. [Rom 5:19; cf 1Co 15:21-22].

Having expressed His impending glory, Christ foresaw with pity the difficult time coming for His disciples. He called them "little children"; a term of endearment.

Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek Me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' [v33].

He knew they would be scattered and scared. He said they would seek Him, which means they would long for the days when they were with Him and felt secure. He told them the time remaining was short and where He is going they could not come; they could not follow Him to His death.

On several occasions past, He told the Jews where He was going they could not come (7:34; 8:21), but now He said this to His disciples; the ones who were with Him wherever He went. Jesus told Peter, he could not follow Him "now" (v36). To the Jews who did not believe, Jesus said, "you will seek Me and you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." [8:21]. The unbelieving Jews could not follow Him ever. It is a fearful thing to be rejected by Christ.

Things were going to become intense, confusing and scary. He wanted the disciples to remember to serve each other as He had just demonstrated by washing their feet. So, He gave them a command to love each other.
A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. [v34].

He told them to love each other before He discussed any doctrine or teaching that night. He knew they would soon be scattered and afraid. He wanted them to remember to love each other when their natural reaction would be to despair and blame.

This commandment continues. We all have trials, but amidst our struggle, we must remember to bear each others' burdens (Gal 6:2). Paul said this is how we "fulfill the law of Christ." If we love God, we will love the brothers; if we do not love the brothers, we do not love God. There is no trial or pressure in our life which can justify us losing sight of this command.

Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. [1Jo 2:9].

And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as He has commanded us. [1Jo 3:23].

And this commandment we have from Him: whoever loves God must also love his brother. [1Jo 4:21].

The Apostle John wrote in his epistles of the importance of loving our brothers in Christ. In 1John 2:7 and 2John 5, he said he is not writing a new command, but an old command from the beginning; the beginning being when Christ gave the command to the disciples. In his epistles, John wrote if we do not love our brothers, we do not love God (1Jo 2:7-10; 3:14; 3:23-24; 4:20-21).

Our human nature tends to hate or be critical and we can become upset or cynical over other peoples' shortcomings. If we truly love God, if we have been regenerated by Him, His love will flow from us to our brothers. This is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). To bear with each others' burdens is to bear with each others' shortcomings.

Christ would remind the disciples of this command again, in chapter fifteen, with the admonition there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for his friends and this is what He was about to do (15:12).
By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. [v35].

To show love for each other, we look out for each other's good (1Co 10:24; Php 2:4). We bear with each other's shortcomings and forgive each other (Eph 4:2-3; Col 3:13). We are kind to each other (Eph 4:32; Rom 12:10). We help those who are weak in the faith (Rom 14:1; 15:1-2). Loving the brothers is the mark of being Christ's disciple.

This isn't a squishy love or a feel-good love where we validate our brothers be they right or wrong. This is upholding each other in the faith, even rebuking when necessary. Solomon wrote, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." [Pro 27:6]. David wrote, "Let a righteous man strike me, it is a kindness; let him rebuke me, it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it." [Psa 141:5]. Even Paul had to rebuke Peter, when he got off-track (Gal 2:11-21) and Paul told us, "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness." [Gal 6:1].

Paul's explanation for rebuking Peter was, "when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel." [Gal 2:14]. Love is two-fold: to bear burdens and to keep each other in the faith. The modern, squishy love where we smile and say kind things, even validating sinful lifestyles is not the kind of love Christ was talking about. Love is not a feeling. Love is walking in truth.

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart. [1Pe 1:22].

Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. [1Jo 3:18].

The point is, we love by looking out for each other, physically and spiritually.

**PETER WILL DENY CHRIST**

Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you will follow
Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for You." Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied Me three times. [v36-38].

Peter could not follow Him now. Though the disciples had been with Him daily for three years, He was about to complete His mission; to die for the sins of man. This He must do alone, for in this He would glorify the Father and the Father would glorify the Son.

For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and of the living. [Rom 14:9].

But Peter would follow later (v36). Spoken directly to Peter, but spoken to all the disciples, Christ said He would die alone but the disciples would die later and rejoin Him. At this time, the prospect did not look so glorious, but Christ has risen from the dead and conquered death, so this is a glorious hope indeed.

In chapter twenty-one, Christ spoke to Peter again about how he would die and that it would not be something to look forward to (21:18-19). Church tradition says when Peter faced the prospect of hanging on a cross, he requested it be upside down as he did not feel worthy to die in the very same manor as His Lord.

When Jesus said he could not follow Him now, Peter said he was willing to die for Him. This was pride and self-confidence speaking. Our pride is a vain thing and it elevates our own abilities and our own strength in our minds. Peter saw himself as dedicated to the Lord; He saw himself as strong in the face of death. He did not see himself as he truly was: scared and cowardly.

Christ gave Peter the bad news; he would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed. This happened, just as Christ said (18:27). No amount of positive thinking could prevent the fulfillment of Christ's prophecy. Peter trusted in his own strength only to find he had none.
We, like Peter, have no strength in ourselves. This is one of the doctrines Christ taught His disciples during the Last Supper. We can only bear fruit for God if we abide in Christ.

   Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. [15:4].

Every strength we think we possess is truly a gift from God. For without the strength and character given us by God, we are truly wretched and weak. Solomon wrote, "The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion." [Pro 28:1]. To flee is the true and natural character of sinful man. God gives His people a new nature; a nature where we can be strong in the face of evil.

   Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. [1Co 16:13-14].

Many, in pride, cling to the words of the Apostle Paul, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." [Php 4:13]. This is one of the most abused verses in Scripture. Paul was talking about contentment; accepting whatever situation God has put us in. Most times, people claim this verse for their own purposes; as if it is a promise God will fulfill their hopes and dreams and it affirms their resolve to do great things. Our eyes should be on God's purposes, not our own.

   I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. [Job 42:2].

Peter denied Christ three times that evening. He was focused on himself, he was afraid and he failed.

IN CLOSING

Jesus told them they would seek Him but not find Him. He gave them a new command to love each other. He said all men would know they were His disciples, if they love each other.
The night was going to become very chaotic and distressing. They would be seeking to escape oppression and may become cynical but the command was to love each other.

This is the mark of a Christian, to love the brothers. Life is hard and we have our own problems; it is often difficult to think of others. But Jesus said the servant is not above the master. As Christ served the disciples while facing betrayal and death, we should remember to help each other while facing the hardships of life.

Peter claimed he would give his life for his Lord. Jesus told him he would deny Him three times. Whenever we depend upon our own strength, we will fail.
**John 14:1-6 How To Find Our Place In Heaven**

One disciple left the fellowship to betray Christ, another disciple will soon deny Him and all the rest will fall away and hide. Knowing this, Christ sat down with His disciples to teach them. He taught them doctrine, yet He began with words of comfort and hope. He assured them the dark times to come were leading to glorious everlasting times ahead.

Christ's teachings in these chapters are for us, too. Christ said so. We do well to come to these words often, to read, study and meditate upon them. There is much life in these teachings and they will keep our hearts focused upon Him and less distracted by the world.

> I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. . .I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word. [17:9,20].

**DON'T LET YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED**

> Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. [v1].

This is a command; not a suggestion. If we want to be obedient servants, do not pass this by.

The Apostle Paul told us not to worry about anything but to bring everything to God in prayer with thanksgiving and the peace of God, which passes all understanding will guard our hearts and minds (Php 4:6-7). When we worry, we are not trusting in Christ.

God takes things out of our control so we will trust in Him. Always remember, God is seated on His throne. There is nothing out of His control. He is not waiting for you to do the right thing or ask the right thing for Him to fix things. No. Everything happens as He plans and designs; and He designed it all before the creation of the world. God is sitting on His throne and the seraphim cry, "Holy, holy, holy." [Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8].
The Prophet Isaiah wrote God will keep in perfect peace the one who keeps his mind on Him because he trusts Him (Isa 26:3). The benefit of trusting God is peace. The more we keep our minds on God, the more we understand He is in control. He is the Lord Almighty, who was and is and is to come; and the whole earth is full of His glory (Num 14:21; Psa 72:19; Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8).

When we worry, we are striving to seize control of situations which are out of our control. We set ourselves up as gods as we look and act for our sovereignty. We are not trusting in God's sovereignty, His design nor His might. This is sin.

When we worry, we do not have our minds upon Christ. It may be we have plans and goals; it may be we wish for good health for ourselves, family or friends; it may be we lack resources to meet our needs; or it may be a host of other reasons. But it boils down to one thing: we do not have our minds on Christ. When we worry, our minds are upon ourselves, they are not upon God. This is the sin of worry.

Jesus gave the command not to worry. Believe in Christ and believe He is preparing a place for us. Our minds should not be dwelling upon this world. Our constant desire should be our time with Him, both now and forever. If our minds are upon Christ, our troubles and trials will make us more determined to trust Him. They are proof we are not in control and we don't need to be. There is no trouble on earth which compares with the glory we will experience for all time in Christ.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. [Rom 8:18].

To remedy our inclination to worry, a good Scripture to read and meditate upon is Romans 8:18-39. In this passage, we see a clear picture of the work of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in our lives as God works to accomplish His will for our benefit. He works all things for good, to conform us to the image of His Son and nothing will ever separate us from the love of God.

Jesus' command not to be troubled is based upon who He is; He is God. Do not trust your heart; our hearts are deceitful and wicked
(Jer 17:9); we can easily fool ourselves to think our circumstances are more dire than they are. But be they severe or not, we are to discipline our hearts; we are to keep our hearts from being troubled because the one who holds us in His hand is the Lord God, Himself. It is one thing to intellectually believe He is God; it is another to trust Him. If we truly believe He is God, we know He is in control; there is never a cause for worry.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope withoutwavering, for he who promised is faithful. [Heb 10:23].

The disciples were distressed, fearing their imminent separation from Christ. Christ assured them, this parting is going to work for their glorious reunion (v2-3). Where He is going there are many mansions and He is going to prepare a place for them. He assured them He would come again and gather them so they will always be with Him.

This is also a promise to us. Christ is preparing a place for us who believe and follow Him. How exciting is this? Our faith in Christ is more than a mere hope of eternal life; it is the knowledge He is eager to be with us and is preparing a place for us. The thought of this should cause us to leave the cares of this world behind and keep our minds steadfast on being with Him.

How do we keep this hope alive? How do we reduce the stress and worry in our lives?

1) Be in the Word, abiding in Him and preparing to be with Him (15:1-6);
2) Take up our cross and follow Him, as He instructed (Mat 16:24-26); and
3) Accept the hardships of life with gladness, knowing this world is not our home (Rom 8:18).

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. [Col 3:1-4].

**THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE**

"And you know the way to where I am going."
Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?" [v4-5].

Jesus said He was going to prepare a place for them in His Father's house and they know the way. He had been teaching the disciples for three years. Nonetheless, Thomas, speaking for the group, claimed they did not know where He was going nor did they know the way.

Without the Holy Spirit giving us wisdom, we cannot understand the things of God. He does not open all things to us immediately. Instead, He opens up the Word to us little-by-little as we dig into Scripture. The more time we spend in the Word, the more we study and meditate upon it, the more He opens up truth to us. As Christ said, if we abide in Him, then we will know the truth (8:31-32). So, too, with the disciples, Jesus opened up truth, step-by-step.

Jesus made a claim their limited understanding could not comprehend; He shook them up. He may have said they know where He is going in order to raise the question. In answer, Christ was going to make one of the most profound statements about Himself.

**I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man comes to the Father except through Me. [v6].**

When we get distracted by the cares and problems of this world and we wonder where God is in all this, remember Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. There is only one God the Father and there is only one way to get to Him: repent of our sin and follow Jesus Christ. Our only hope of fellowship with the Father is through His Son, Jesus Christ (1Jo 1:5-9).

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" is one of the seven "I AM" statements by Christ in the Gospel of John. See also 6:48; 8:12; 10:9; 10:11; 11:25; 15:1.
JESUS IS THE WAY: He did not come to show the way; He IS the way. He was not merely a good teacher; He is the Son of God. John wrote He came to make the Father known (1:18) and here Jesus said He is the way to the Father.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [Rom 5:1-2].

For through Him we both [Jew and Gentile] have access in one Spirit to the Father." [Eph 2:18].

He is the only way.

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. [Act 4:12].

The writer of the Book of Hebrews described how we no longer come to God by way of the priests and ceremonies because Christ tore down the wall which divided or separated us from God. When He died on the cross, He tore the curtain of the temple separating the Holy of Holies, from top to bottom (Mat 27:51). Top to bottom, because God tore the curtain. This act signified the way to God was now open to man through Jesus Christ.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. [Heb 10:19-22].

Christ alone is the way to the Father; by Him, we have direct access to the Father. No longer do we need a priest to be our mediator because Christ is in heaven making intercession for us.
He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. [Heb 7:25].

Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father; He is the narrow way He described.

Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. [Mat 7:13-14].

Many look for easy ways to God, they choose a "faith in Christ" based upon a view of God they feel comfortable with, rather than what the Word of God says. They convince themselves they are sincere. They go to church and maybe even go to Bible studies and fellowship meetings. They make associations with believers. They think by their attendance and associations they are following Christ, but they do not follow Christ according to the Word. They profess to be Christian but they are not in the Word and have little idea what the Bible says. This is the wide gate and the way to death.

Christ warned us to "enter by the narrow gate" because He, alone, is the way. Jesus told us to abide in Him (15:1-6), we must desire His Word like we desire food and drink (6:53-58) and we must take up our cross daily and follow Him (Luk 9:23). Jesus warned against entering the wide gate; He is the narrow gate we are to seek.

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death." [Pro 14:12].

Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, "Lord, open to us," then He will answer you, "I do not know where you come from." Then you will begin to say, "We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets." But He will say, "I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!"
In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [Luk 13:24-28].

Remember what Christ said in Matthew chapter seven.

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?" And then will I declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness." [Mat 7:20-21].

Finding the way in Jesus is more than acknowledging He is the Son of God; it is more than claiming He is Lord. The Apostle Paul warned us to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith (2Co 13:5). Many will examine themselves by their feelings; they will not take the time to examine themselves through the Word of God.

To truly find the WAY in Jesus Christ, we must be in the Word. We must abide in Him to know the truth (8:31-32) and to bear fruit (15:1-6). Christ warned us if we do not need Him like food and water, we cannot be saved (6:22-58). He said if we do not take up our cross and follow Him, we cannot be saved (Luk 14:27).

**JESUS IS THE TRUTH:** He is the personification of truth. His name is the Word of God (1:1; Rev 19:13). The Word of God is always true (17:17).

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. [1:14].

Christ was with the Father; He is one with the Father. To be truth is to make the Father known. Christ came to make the Father known; to give understanding of the truth so we may know Him.

grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known. [1:17-18].

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And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. [1Jo 5:20].

The truth Christ gives sets us free.

If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. [8:31-32].

There is no truth but God. Our key to finding truth is to abide in Christ; to be in prayer and in the Word. Many professing Christians believe they can find some truth in the world and they want to add the world's truth to God's truth. They do this because they believe it will make them successful or, at least, acceptable. But Christ said if the light within you is darkness, how great is the darkness and He said you cannot serve two masters (Mat 6:22-24).

The world thinks the wisdom of God is foolishness and God thinks likewise of the world. The Apostle Paul makes clear God's wisdom does not even mix with the world's wisdom. The wisdom of this world leaves God out; even the positive thoughts of this world leave God out. The whole purpose of worldly wisdom is to be a substitute for God.

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. . . Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? . . . For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. . . Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. . . The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. . . Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may
become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. [1Co 1:18,20,25; 2:12,14; 3:18-19].

Therefore, if you want to be wise in this world, you cannot know the truth. If you do not know the truth, you cannot be saved. Jesus asked the question, if you seek your glory among men, how can you be saved? (5:44).

**JESUS IS THE LIFE:** When Jesus was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, He said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die." [11:25-26]. Christ could rightly claim to be the resurrection and the life because He is the Author of life.

. . .the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. . . [Act 3:15].

All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. [1:3].

For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. [Col 1:16].

In the act of creation, Christ brought life to the world. But mans' sin brought darkness and death. Christ died to pay the price for sin. In the act of His death and resurrection, He conquered death and brought life to those who were enslaved to sin.

our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. [2Ti 1:10].

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. [Heb 2:14-15].

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our
trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. [Col 2:13-15].

By dying He vanquished death. By rising from the dead, He brought life to those who were enslaved to sin. The Author of life brought life to those bound by death. Like Job, we can say, "I know my Redeemer lives." [Job 19:25].

To have life, we must turn from sin. We can no longer dwell in sin. Because Christ lives, we are called to leave the way of sin and death and walk in newness of life.

How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. [Rom 6:2-4].

He Himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. [1Pe 2:24].

Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, the life. He came to gives us a place in Heaven; a place with the Father. We cannot get there without Him; we cannot get there if we are following the world. Only through Jesus Christ can we find our place in Heaven.

**IN CLOSING**

Jesus prepared the hearts of the disciples for His departure.

He commanded them not to worry. He told them to keep their eyes on the main thing: to believe in God and believe He is God.

He told them He is preparing a place for them.

He told them they know where He is going and how to get there, almost as if to beg the question, "how can we know the way?".
Jesus' answer was the core of who He is and why He came: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." [v6].

Jesus is the way. He did not come to show the way; He is the way.

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. [Act 4:12].

Jesus is the truth. There is no truth apart from God. Christ came to make the Father known; to give understanding of the truth so we may know Him.

If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. [8:31-32].

Jesus is the life. In the act of creation, He brought life to the world. In the act of His resurrection. He brought life to men who were slaves to sin and death. Those who follow Him will live forever with Him.

I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. [11:25-26].

Christ, alone, is the way to Heaven; the way to the Father. Cling to Him. If we cling to the world or build our life down here, we cannot follow the Way, the Truth, the Life.
John 14:7-15 How To Discern The Works Of God

Jesus began His teachings by explaining to the disciples the way to the Father: 1) Don't let your heart be troubled, that is, keep your eyes on God; and 2) Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, the life. There is no way to the Father, there is no truth, there is no eternal life, except through Him. Now, He will tell them how to know when works are of God.

If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him. [v7].

The image here is not a picture or photograph. Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth as a man, while God the Father is a spirit. Jesus told His disciples He did what He saw the Father doing; He spoke what He heard from the Father (v10; 5:19; 12:49). The Father and the Son are one (10:30). They do the same things; they speak the same things. There is no difference between them; not even a slight variation of opinion. The writer of Hebrews said He is the exact representation or imprint of God's being or nature (Heb 1:3).

Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know Me, Philip? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" [v8-9].

Philip was did not understand: he was looking for the Father's physical presence in the physical realm. This prompted his request. Christ's response was to rebuke Philip for not paying attention. For three years, Christ taught the disciples; He demonstrated His authority and revealed the Father to them in word and deed.

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own authority, but the Father who dwells in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me, or else
believe on account of the works themselves. [v10-11].

The words Christ spoke and the miracles He performed were from the Father. He explained this throughout His ministry. He rebuked Philip for not knowing this.

In His rebuke to Philip, Christ repeated the claim He made to the Jewish leaders after He healed the man crippled for 38 years. He told them He did what He saw the Father doing (5:19). If they could not believe, at least believe because of the miracles. The disciples were there, saw the miracle and heard what Christ said.

When confronted by Jews who were going to stone Him for blasphemy, He told them the same thing: If you cannot believe, at least believe the works were from God (10:22-38). The disciples were there, saw the miracle and heard what Christ said.

The works of Christ were no ordinary works. He performed many miracles of healing, including giving sight to a man born blind and raising Lazarus from the dead. If Christ had not come from God, He could not have done these works. As Nicodemus said, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." [3:2].

Now He said to Philip the past three years of teaching, the words and works, came from the Father. This is what He meant when He said I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. This is what He meant when He said If you have known Me, you have known the Father.

He is the image of the invisible God. . . For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. [Col 1:15-19].

**WHOEVER BELIEVES IN ME WILL DO THE WORKS I DO**

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. [v12].
Once again, He said "Truly, truly" (some translations "Most solemnly," "Verily, verily" and such). According to the New Testament Commentary by Hendriksen, this "expresses a conclusion to what has preceded." [John pg 110-111]. Some commentaries say this expression denotes an important point which needs to be attended to. In any case, we need to pay attention.

In consideration of Christ's promise, "and greater works than these will he do," there are two things we need to take into consideration:

1. What are the works Christ did? and
2. What are these greater works the believer will do?

People read these words and immediately they think Christ is speaking of miracles. In context, this is only partially true, for incorporated in the "works" are the words He spoke and the things He did. Christ spoke the words from the Father and few believed. Peter spoke at Pentecost and 2,000 believed in Christ and were baptized. The words are very much part of these works Christ was talking about.

What is more important? The message of the Gospel or the power of miracles? The manifestation of physical miracles was designed for the early Christian church. The accounts in the Book of Acts, attesting to great miracles demonstrated the power of the Gospel, to give authenticity to the preaching; to show their authority came from God. Christ's miracles were to give evidence He came from God; the purpose was the same for the apostles.

After the time of the apostles, the Word of God in the New Testament was firmly established. We have the Bible to attest to the authority of what we speak. The miracles are no longer necessary; the use of miracles (and prophecies, for this matter) as standard fare are no longer necessary to communicate the Gospel.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.
[1Co 13:9].

Does God use miracles today? Certainly He does. Nonetheless, the purpose and time of "wholesale miracles," if you will, has passed. When we see preachers and televangelists promoting their power to
heal, we know this is not from God. They do not do this for the glory of God. They may say this is for God's glory, but they do this for their own glory, prosperity and airplanes. This is evil and it is not God's work.

So, when Jesus said we will do greater works, what did He mean?

We already mentioned Peter's preaching brought in more converts than Jesus did. The church grew rapidly during the time of the Apostles. Even today, Christianity is a major religion and, although few among the professing are true believers, the truth continues to spread, bringing repentance and faith to millions, even in the face of adversity.

The Hendriksen commentary suggests these are miracles in the spiritual realm. Christ "is in all probability thinking of those in connection with the conversion of the Gentiles." This conclusion is reached because He had referred to this when Philip and Andrew introduced Christ to the Greek men who wanted to meet Him (12:20-32) and later the night of this teaching where He prayed for all who would be saved through the word of the apostles (17:20). Until the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, there was a wall of separation between the Jew and the Gentile so that, with few exceptions, the Gentile could not come to God. This is why Jesus said, "greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father." [v12]. (Hendriksen; John pg273).

In view of the rebellious and hardened heart of man, the salvation of souls through the preaching of the Word must be considered the greatest of miracles. Therefore, people turning to Christ, even of the Gentiles, through the preaching of His Word is the "greater works" Christ was speaking of.

Yet, when Christ said the believer will do greater works, He was not speaking of works to our credit. He was not suggesting we would or could do great works for God. We sow and we reap for God's glory; so that we may rejoice together. This is what Jesus told the disciples after He spoke to the woman at the well. They had done nothing to reap a harvest, but He brought them into sharing in the harvest, as they spoke to the people of the town the next couple days and many believed.
Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor. [4:35-38].

All our works, are the work of God.

. . .For You have done for us all our works. [Isa 26:12].

**WHATEVER YOU ASK IN MY NAME**

Whatever you ask in My name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. [v13-15].

"Whatever you ask in My name. . ." [v13]. "If you ask Me anything in My name. . ." [v14]. When Christ said things twice, it was to emphasize the importance of it. Here, He told the disciples, and this instruction is for us, whatever we ask the Father in Christ's name, He will do it.

Many people use these verses and others like them to claim wealth, careers, fame, power and such. They wrongly believe God is interested in their personal prosperity and comfort. Jesus said the reason He will do what we ask is. "that the Father may be glorified in the Son." To this, some people wrongly believe their self-centered living somehow glorifies God.

Take a look at these two verses in context. They are sandwiched between two thoughts. The first thought is those who believe will do the works of Christ and even greater. The second thought is if we believe, we will keep His commandments. The sandwich is this: one slice of bread is our desire to spread the Gospel of Christ; and the other slice is our desire to obey the Lord, who is master of our life.
Looking at this sandwich, what is it we would ask in Jesus' name and He would give it?

We are reminded our prayers go unanswered because we ask to satisfy our own coveting and lust; asking for selfish interests for our own glory (Jam 4:1-4). Is God glorified by our accumulation of worldly goods, money, power or fame? By no means and the passage in the Book of James tells us if we be friends with the world we are enemies of God.

The work of God is the salvation of souls. Christ said, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." [6:29].

Some professing Christians look for the power to do miracles and other such works because they are attracted to the limelight and they seek their own glory. This was the sin of Simon the magician. When he heard the Gospel and saw the miracles performed by Philip, he believed. But he wanted the power to do greater miracles and it turned out his believing was not a faith unto salvation (Act 8:9-24).

May the grace of spiritual discernment be given the reader to see whether his Christian profession be real or a sham, whether his hope is built upon the Rock of Ages or the quicksands of human resolutions, efforts, decisions, or feelings; whether, in short, his salvation is "of The Lord" or the vain imaginations of his own deceitful heart. [Arthur Pink; Experimental Salvation].

Jesus said the purpose for giving us what we asked for was for the Father to be glorified in the Son (v13). This is why He said a couple verses later, "If you love me, you will keep My commandments." [v15]. If we love God, we will not pursue our own glory; we will pursue His glory by keeping His commands. We are not saved by our works, but if we are truly saved, our works will reflect obedience to Him. This is something to pray for and He will give it.

The work of God is not money, possessions, power or fame. It is the salvation of souls and the sanctification of His people. These are things to pray for and expect to receive. If the works are of God, they give glory to God.
IN CLOSING

Jesus said over and over in His ministry, He and the Father were one. He said, "If you had known Me, you would have known the Father as well. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him." [v7].

Jesus explained to Philip, the works He did were proof He came from the Father; He revealed the Father to man through His words and works.

Jesus promised whoever believes in Him will do greater works than He did. This is not a promise of power, fame and fortune for the believer.

To do greater works for Christ is to preach the Word and watch as God brings people to repent and follow Him. It is the promise that salvation is no longer only for the Jew, but the Gentile people also will come to Christ and follow Him. This is the greater works.

Receiving what we ask in prayer is sandwiched between 1) doing the works Jesus did, teaching and preaching to reach souls for Christ (v12); and 2) obeying His commandments (v15). If we are doing these two things, our prayers will be for God's kingdom and helping us to grow in Christ.

Those who pray for their own power, fame and fortune have no interest in reaching souls for Christ or obeying His commands. So many professing Christians are in search of their own kingdom, but to live a carnal life is to hate God.

To discern the works of God: be in the Word, be obedient and seek God's kingdom; His glory. If the works are of God, they give glory to God.
John 14:15-20 If You Love Me, Keep My Commandments

Jesus began with the Gospel: how to come to God and what the works of God look like. Now, He will explain how to know when we have come to God.

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. [v15].

John the Baptist equated believing with obedience (3:36). The writer of the Book of Hebrews says those who are disobedient do not believe (Heb 3:18-19). If we truly believe in Christ, if we truly love Him, we will obey Him. This is what Jesus said.

Many people claim to love God, they feel like they love God, but they live to please themselves. They live in sin and walk in darkness. They believe they can be worldly and love God at the same time. They claim, "God knows my heart." However, there is no such person as a carnal Christian. A true believer is obedient. To live a carnal or worldly life is to live in rebellion to God.

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it. [Rom 6:1-2].

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know . . .you are slaves of the one whom you obey. . . [Rom 6:15-16].

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. [Rom 6:23].

Jesus said people love darkness because their deeds are evil (3:19). The Apostle John told us we cannot have fellowship with God if we walk in darkness (1Jo 1:6-7).

God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. [1Jo 1:5].

Some people live what appears to be a moral life and they think they love God. They do good works to win the praise of man or they do
good works to earn their salvation or they think their good works contribute to their salvation. They do good works of their own energy and they are not saved.

We cannot be saved by any work we do (Eph 2:8-9). Jesus told us He is the vine and we are the branches. We must abide in Him to produce fruit. If we abide in Him, He produces good fruit in us (15:4-5). This is what it means to love God and keep His commandments: if we truly love God, He will produce this work in us and we will keep His commandments. It is not the result of our effort, lest any man should boast.

... For You have done for us all our works. [Isa 26:12].

Jesus said if we love Christ and keep His commandments, we will be loved by the Father and have fellowship with the Father and the Son (v23).

if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. [1Jo 1:7].

Christ set the example of love by obeying the Father (v31). The Apostle Paul wrote Jesus was God but "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped." In obedience to the Father, He became a man and became "obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." [Php 2:6-8]. He did this to demonstrate His love for the Father by glorifying Him through His obedience. He said if we love Him, we will keep His commandments (v15).

THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. [v16-17].

"AND." This is the connector. The previous verse said those who love Christ will keep His commandments. This "and" connects the
obedient with the promise of the Holy Spirit. If we follow Christ, the promised Holy Spirit lives in us; He cannot live in those who walk in darkness (1Jo 1:5-6). How can the Holy Spirit live in darkness or sin?

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. [Eph 4:30].

Do not quench the Spirit. [1Th 5:19].

Jesus was leaving this world soon. His mission, His death on the cross and His resurrection, was soon to be complete. Christ had been guiding the disciples in truth and the Spirit was with them because He was in Christ. Soon Christ would no longer be with the disciples, so the Holy Spirit was given to keep them in the truth.

When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth. [16:13].

This Helper or Advocate (v16) is the Spirit of Truth (v17). The Helper, the Holy Spirit, is God, just as the Father and the Son are God. Christ was leaving, but God was not going to leave His chosen ones alone. God left the person of the Holy Spirit to bear witness of the Son (15:26) and to guide us into all truth (16:13).

In His promise of the Holy Spirit, Christ revealed the full Trinity of the Godhead to the disciples. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and Holy Spirit is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God... The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. [Athanasian Creed 15,16,21,22,23].

1) 14:16 the Holy Spirit is given by the Father at the request of the Son;

2) 14:26 the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father in the Son's name;
The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit. Once again, here is this word "world." Who is the world, in this case? The world is every person in the world who follows Satan's lies; everyone who is not a follower of Christ. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice." [10:27]. The world cannot hear His voice, so they cannot see or know the Holy Spirit; the Spirit of truth.

Jesus called the Holy Spirit the Spirit of Truth. Jesus said if we abide in His Word, we will know the truth (8:31-32) and the Spirit guides us in the Word (16:23). The world cannot know the truth because the Holy Spirit will not reveal truth to them. If a carnal man were to spend time in the Word, he may read the words but he will lack understanding.

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. [1Co 2:14].

the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the Gospel. [2Co 4:4].

The Holy Spirit is truth. He reveals this truth to those who are His.

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. [1Co 2:12-13].

Christ told the disciples they knew the Holy Spirit because He dwelt WITH them, but in the future He will dwell IN them (v17). The purpose of this distinction was the Holy Spirit did not come to dwell in man until after Christ ascended into heaven. This was recorded among the Jews in the second chapter of Acts, when the Holy Spirit came as tongues of fire upon those who followed Christ. In the tenth chapter of Acts, there is recorded the filling of the Gentiles with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit inaugurated ceremonially or in official
form, but after these events took place, the Holy Spirit dwells in all believers upon regeneration.

In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your Salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory. [Eph 1:13-14].

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. [Tit 3:5-7].

The Holy Spirit is at work in all true believers. He guides us into all truth (16:13). His work in us produces fruit in our lives (Gal 5:22-23). Here are some more things we know from Scripture about the Holy Spirit.

1) 6:63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all."
2) Act 5:9-10 It is a mortal sin to try to deceive the Holy Spirit.
3) Rom 8:9 ". . .Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him."
4) 2Co 1:22 the Holy Spirit is God's seal upon us; the guarantee of our hope.
5) 2Co 3:17 ". . .where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."
6) Gal 4:6 "Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. . ."
7) Php 1:19 The Holy Spirit helps us.
8) 1Th 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit.
Jesus promised to those who believe and obey, He will send His Holy Spirit.

**YOU WILL KNOW I AM IN THE FATHER**

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live. [v18-19].

This is an amazing thought: The Creator of the world, who condescended Himself to dwell among men and die for those who are His, now dwells within His creation to keep those who are His. He is not willing to leave us alone. We are not orphans, but we are children of God (1:12-13); we are adopted as sons into God's family (Rom 8:14-17; Eph 1:4-6).

To those who love and obey Christ, He has promised He will not leave us as orphans. We have His promise He will return for us.

He left us and yet we are not left orphans. He is our comfort and He is gone, but we are not comfortless. Our comfort is that He will come to us and this is consolation enough to sustain us through His prolonged absence. Jesus is already on His way; He says, "I come quickly." [Charles Spurgeon].

After Christ was crucified, the world would see Him no more. The disciples, however, would see Him again after the resurrection. They would seem Him again in eternal life.

Christ promised, "because I live, you also will live." [v19]. This was His promise He would rise from the dead. This resurrection by Christ not only proved He is God, but it is also a promise to us, we will rise again and live with Him forever.

Who is the "world" in this instance; the world who will see Him no more? This world is anyone and everyone who is not among the disciples; those who do not follow and obey Christ.

In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. [v20].
What day is this? When Christ appears after His resurrection; this is one day. When we all appear before Him in glory; this is another day. On this day, we will know, firsthand, He is in the Father and we are in Him. We will see this; we will experience this. Until then, we know if we walk in the light, we have fellowship with God and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin (1Jo 1:7).

This is a two-fold promise: this is our promise of fellowship with God and this is our promise of eternal life with God. Christ is in the Father. Jesus told the disciples if they have seen Him, they have seen the Father. He was not talking about physical characteristics; He was describing God's union. Christ and the Father have perfect fellowship and they have an eternal union. If we are in Christ, we will have fellowship; fellowship now and perfect fellowship in eternity.

But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. [1Jo 1:7].

IN CLOSING

How do we have fellowship with God? Jesus said, if we love Him, we will obey Him. To those who obey, He promised we will be one with Him, just as He is one with the Father.

Christ promised not to leave us as orphans. He will send us His Holy Spirit who will guide us into all truth. When Christ returns for us, our fellowship will be complete.

It will be quite difficult to desire a carnal life if this is our hope. If our hope is to have perfect fellowship with God, we will love Him and obey Him. We will seek this fellowship with God; we will not seek another master (Mat 6:24). We will keep His commandments.
If we love Christ, we will keep His commandments (v15). We will seek to please Him; we will not seek to please ourselves.

> Whoever has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him. [v21].

Christ gave a new promise: those who love Him, those who obey Him, will be loved by the Father. If Christ is in the Father and we are in Christ, it follows whomever loves Him will be loved by the Father. This is the picture of fellowship with God.

In these verses, Christ has promised the fellowship of the Trinity to those who keep His commandments. If we love God, if we are truly seeking His fellowship, we will live obedient lives and Christ's blood will cleanse us from our sin (1Jo 1:7).

Christ promised if we love Him, He will manifest Himself to us (v21), that is, He will make Himself known. Moses prayed, "Please show me now Your ways, that I may know You in order to find favor in Your sight." [Exo 33:13]. This should be our prayer also; to know Jesus and desire fellowship with God.

Who is a true believer? What does this passage tell us about those who are saved? Jesus began the promise of being loved by the Father by identifying the people of this promise as those who have His commandments and keep them (v21). Therefore, to be saved, we must be a follower of Christ, one who is obedient to His commands.

Getting saved is not an event of "accepting Jesus into your heart" or "saying the sinner's prayer" as preached by the modern American gospel. Being saved is to be born again. If we are born again, we turn from sin and walk in obedience to what Christ has told us in His Word. This is the work of God, not of man (6:29). So repentance and walking in obedience is not a matter of works on our part; it is the work of the grace of God in our lives. Lest any man should boast (Eph 2:8-9).
The Apostle John wrote we love God because He first loved us (1Jo 4:19). To be born again means God has regenerated our rebellious hearts and given us a love for Him and we know we love Him if we are keeping His commands.

By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. Whoever says "I know Him," but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps His Word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. [1Jo 2:3-5].

Judas (not the betrayer) asked Christ, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" [v22]. Jesus' answer was to repeat what He just said; those who love Him will keep His Word and will be loved by the Father. "We will come to him and make Our home with him." [v23]. This is very important because Jesus said this twice in a very short span.

1. Those who love Christ will obey His Word;
2. Those who love Christ and obey will be loved by the Father.

Christ will reveal Himself and the Father to those who love Him and keep His commandments. This means, if we love God, we will obey Him and if we obey Him, we will have fellowship with Him. The Father and the Son will make their home with us; the Father will send the Holy Spirit to help us and teach us. He is in us and will lead us into all truth.

If we truly love Christ, we will be obedient, just as Christ was obedient to the Father; our lives will glorify the Father, just like His life glorified the Father. We are promised to have this fellowship with God and, one day, we will experience this fellowship in all its glory and majesty. This is promised to us and this is our hope.

**Whoever does not love Me does not keep My words. And the word that you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.** [v24].

Conversely, those who do not love Christ will not keep His Word. This is a repeat of what He said when He told the disciples He would send the Holy Spirit; He said the world cannot receive Him.
(v17). In chapter ten, we learned His sheep hear His voice and follow Him, but the world cannot believe because they are not His sheep (10:26-27). Jesus does not manifest Himself to those who do not believe.

This is the seriousness of keeping His words: The words Christ spoke were the words of the Father. He did not speak on His own, as a man. He spoke on the authority of God the Father who sent Him; the Highest Authority. If these words are the commands of God, those who cannot keep them are doomed.

In the first chapter, John wrote He came to make the Father known (1:18). The words He spoke made the Father known because they were the words of the Father. Those who love Him will hear His voice, but those who do not love Him cannot keep His words, the very words of God.

Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God. [8:47].

Three times in this chapter, Christ said if we love Him we will keep His commandments (15,21,23). Many professing Christians proclaim their love for God but they do not keep His commandments. They encourage others in their sin, claiming God loves them and He understands them. They serve a god of feelings: they have made a god in their own image. Jesus made it clear: if we do not obey His commands, we do not love Him.

These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. [v25-26].

Christ is the Word (1:1). While He was in the world, He spoke the Word and made the Father known. When He left this Earth, the Father sent the Spirit to remind the disciples what the Son had taught them. They recorded these words in the New Testament, so we have it to read and study. If we diligently study the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit will teach us and He will bring the words to our remembrance.
And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. [1Co 2:13-14].

What the Apostle Paul wrote is similar to what Jesus told disciples: the world cannot believe because they cannot hear His voice. Paul also made the point the epistles were based on revelation given by the Holy Spirit.

In the early church, it was necessary to have the Holy Spirit bring revelation to the apostles because the Scriptures were not complete. Today, the Scriptures are complete; there is no need for new revelation. Many professing Christian teachers claim the Holy Spirit gave them new revelations, but these revelations are false gospels, because those who claim to have "new" revelation always contradict Scripture. However, the Holy Spirit will never contradict the Word.

When Jesus said the Holy Spirit will teach us, the meaning is the Holy Spirit will open up the Word, giving us spiritual discernment. But we must be in the Word to receive this. Jesus taught the disciples, in person. He teaches us if we remain in and diligently study His Word (15:4). He helps us remember His Word.

If we love God, we will obey Him. The Holy Spirit will help us by bringing His Word to our remembrance. This is our fellowship with God.

**IN CLOSING**

Three times Christ told the disciples if they love Him, they will keep His commands. He gave His example: He obeyed the Father so all may know He loved the Father. Our love for Christ is displayed to the world by our obedience.

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. [v15].
Whoever has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. . . [v21].

If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. [v23].

I do as the Father has commanded Me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. [v31].

How do you know you are saved? You obey what Christ has commanded. Many professing Christians live ungodly lives. They claim God knows their hearts and they claim to love Him. But Jesus said they do not love Him because they do not obey. John the Baptist said if they do not obey, the wrath of God remains on them (3:36).

Contrary to the teaching of the modern American gospel, there are no carnal Christians.

Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit. He will lead us into truth; He opens Scripture to us; He leads us into fellowship with God. God wants those He loves to have fellowship with Him (v23). This chapter (John 14) is a prescription for fellowship with God:

1. Have no worries but have complete dependence upon God.
2. If we love Christ, we will obey Him and be loved by the Father.
3. Christ will ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit, who will lead us into all truth.
4. Do not let your hearts be trouble or afraid.

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock. [Isa 26:3-4].
John 14:1-31 Chapter Recap And Why Christ Told Them

This chapter begins and ends with not letting our hearts be troubled.

THE BOOKENDS OF THIS CHAPTER

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. [v1-3].

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. You heard Me say to you, "I am going away, and I will come to you." If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. [v27-28]

In this set of bookends, Christ admonished the disciples to believe and not worry because they have the assurance He will come again. By extension (17:20), this applies to us, also. In between the bookends, Christ explained:

1. He will come again (v3,18,28);
2. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life (v6);
3. He and the Father are one (v7,9-11,20);
4. If we love Him, we will obey Him (v15,21,23);
5. He will send the Holy Spirit (v16,26).

The bookends first showed up in the first three verses of this chapter: "Let not your hearts be troubled." In verses 27-28, Christ
closed the bookends. He reassured the disciples of His peace, which He gives, far surpassing the world's peace (v27).

What is this peace the world gives? The world gives no peace, but people are seduced to believe they can find peace in money, wealth, fame and power. The world calls people to satisfy themselves; but there is no peace and there is no satisfaction.

The Apostle Paul said the peace of God surpasses all understanding and it guards our hearts and minds (Php 4:7). We can find comfort in knowing we can trust God and in leaving everything in His control.

"Let not your heart be troubled" is a command. This is a command requiring action. Earlier we discussed this required action. How do we keep this hope alive? How do we reduce the stress and worry in our lives?

1. Be in the Word, abiding in Him and preparing to be with Him forever (15:1-6).

2. Take up our cross and follow Him, forsaking our lives; forsaking our search for money, wealth, fame and power (Mat 16:24-26; Luk 14:26-33).

3. Accept the hardships of life with gladness, knowing this world is not our home (Rom 8:18; Php 4:13).

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. [Col 3:1-4].

Jesus was going away and the disciples were feeling sorry for themselves. He said, "If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced." [v28]. What a rebuke! The disciples were thinking of themselves; they were not loving Jesus. If we love Christ our walk is not about how we feel; it is about our hope: Christ is with the Father making intercession for us and when He comes back, we will be with God forever. Always keep this hope alive.
Jesus told the disciples He was going to be with the Father, "for the Father is greater than I." [v28]. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: all three are God; one God but three persons. Is one of them a lesser God? God forbid! Over and over, Christ told the disciples and the crowds, He and the Father are one. This seems to mean they are equal, so what could He have meant when He said "the Father is greater than I"?

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and Holy Spirit is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. . . The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. . . And in this Trinity none is before, or after another; none is greater, or less than another. But the whole three persons are co-eternal, and co-equal. So that in all things, as said before, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. [Athanasian Creed 15,16,21-23,25-27].

When Christ said the Father was greater, He was talking about His humanity, His earthly incarnation. Paul said He humbled Himself to become a man (Php 2:6-8). The Father is greater than Christ's earthly humanity, but Christ was returning to His former glory. Now, He is seated with the Father; sitting at His right hand; reigning in Heaven as equal to the Father.

So then the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. [Mar 16:19].

Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died; more than that, who was raised; who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. [Rom 8:34].

[The Father] raised [Christ] from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places. [Eph 1:20].
If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. [Col 3:1].

But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until His enemies should be made a footstool for His feet. [Heb 10:12-13].

Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to Him. [1Pe 3:22].

**WHY JESUS TOLD THEM THESE THINGS**

**And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe.** [v29].

In the last two chapters, Christ told the disciples He would be betrayed; He told them He was going to die; He told them He was going to be with the Father; and He told them He would send the Holy Spirit.

About His betrayal and death, He told them in the last chapter, "I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am He [Messiah]." [13:19]. About His going to the Father and sending the Holy Spirit, He said the same thing, in this chapter; this passage. So, He told them twice, He revealed these things to them so they would believe.

Did the disciples believe at this moment? This is a good question because what we see here is a picture of a group of confused men feeling sorry for themselves. They had walked with the Messiah for three years, believing He was going to set up His kingdom on Earth and rule from Jerusalem. They believed they were going to reign with Him. And now, He told them He was going to be betrayed and die.
SATAN HOLDS NO POWER OVER GOD'S PLANS

I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on Me, but I do as the Father has commanded Me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here. [v30-31].

Jesus described Satan as the ruler of this world. In another passage, Jesus said the ruler of this world will be cast out (12:31).

This night was going to be a fearsome night. It would appear to the disciples Satan had unleashed his fury and would be in full control. But Christ reminded the disciples, Satan had no claim on Him. Though Satan desired Christ's death, he had no power to bring it about. Jesus would do as the Father told Him. And, in fact, this night they would see the Son obedient unto death. Christ died to show the world His love for the Father.

Satan was successful in causing one disciple to betray Christ; he also caused the remaining disciples to scatter; he caused great confusion and fear; and he stirred up the hearts of men to crucify the Son of God. Nonetheless, he had no control over Christ nor the events leading to His death.

Many preachers falsely claim Christ died to ransom men from Satan. Nothing could be further from the truth. Here, Christ said Satan had no claim on Him.

- The devil could not call for Christ's death on any pretext of justice, for Christ was sinless; He obeyed the Law with perfection. Therefore, the devil had to work for Christ's death by deceit and through blinding the hearts of men. But even in this, Christ satisfied NO claim of Satan's.

- The devil could not call for a ransom for man, for although man is a slave to sin and Satan is the ruler of this world, it was God's wrath which had to be satisfied to redeem sinners. Only God had any claim calling for a ransom and the Son was willing to die to satisfy God's claim upon man.

Satan would work to bring about Jesus' death, but he had no control; he played into the hands of the One who is always in control. Jesus
said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. . . I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord." [10:11-18].

All through the Gospel of John, mention is made of His time having not yet come, but in this conversation, Christ let the disciples know, the time had come. Everything is under God's control and everything is subject to His timing. Even though the devil had come to murder Christ and he was successful in this endeavor, yet it was God's plan and purpose which was accomplished.

The Father demanded the death of His Son.

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush Him; He has put Him to grief. [Isa 53:10].

This is what the Father commanded: Christ, the sinless Son of God, would lay down His life to redeem a people chosen by the Father and given to His Son. And Christ said He was obedient "so that the world may know that I love the Father." [v31]. Christ was motivated to die for man by His love for the Father.

God used the devil's nature of hatred and death to accomplish the goal of sacrificing His Son. What Satan intended for evil, God had planned for good and for His praise.

Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. [Php 2:5-11].
IN CLOSING

The bookends of chapter 14 are "Let not your hearts be troubled." Christ reassured the disciples of His peace; He gives this peace, but not as the world gives (v27) and He commanded them not to be troubled or afraid. This is a command which requires action.

What is this required action?

1. Be in the Word, abiding in Him and preparing to be with Him forever (15:1-6).

2. Take up our cross and follow Him, forsaking our lives; forsaking our search for money, wealth, fame and power (Mat 16:24-26; Luk 14:26-33).

3. Accept the hardships of life with gladness, knowing this world is not our home (Rom 8:18; Php 4:13).

Christ told this to the disciples, so when the events came about, they would believe. No matter how bad things became, Satan had no power because God is always in control.

Christ commands us not to be troubled, for God is in control. When we worry, we doubt God's sovereignty; we doubt God is sitting on His throne. This is sin.

Christ never suggested we place our confidence in Him; He commanded us to believe in Him, so our hearts will not be troubled.
John 15:1-6 Dwell In The Vine Or Burn Forever

Easy-believism or the modern American gospel claims if you say the sinner's prayer and sincerely mean it, you will be saved. You can change your mind tomorrow, but you can never lose this salvation; you are free to live as you please because, grace. For the "carnal Christian" this is called fire insurance, but Jesus warned many who profess His name are not saved (Mat 7:21-23).

The modern American gospel is patting people on the back on their way to Hell. In this chapter, Christ described a different path to salvation; the narrow path. The Gospel Jesus described is much different than the modern American gospel.

I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. [v1-6].

The Prophet Isaiah told the story of God's vineyard; a picture of the nation of Israel. Israel was God's chosen nation; a people set aside for Himself. They were called to honor Him, obey Him and be an example to the nations. Yet they chased after the gods of the nations around them. They looked for acceptance and glory from their international peers, if you will.

This vineyard Isaiah described, did not produce good fruit and a touchy-feely gospel would say God would accept them anyway, just the way they were because God loves them. But the Bible tells us
God's love is holy and His holiness demands justice. If His people were unwilling to glorify Him in their own land, He would send them off, in humility, shame and exile, to glorify Him in foreign lands.

And now I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will make it a waste. . . Therefore my people go into exile . . . Man is humbled, and each one is brought low, and the eyes of the haughty are brought low. But the Lord of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows Himself holy in righteousness. [Isa 5:5-16].

Seeking his own glory, mankind has created ten thousand gods. Man seeks a god who will satisfy him; he seeks a god who lets him be in control of his salvation. In America, he seeks a god who will give him comfort and prosperity; a god who loves him and accepts him just as he is. Mans' religions are about mans' glory, but God calls all men to repent for His glory (Act 17:30-31).

Like the false religions clung to by the chosen nation of Israel, the modern American gospel is leading the visible church away from God. This false gospel is convincing professing Christians they can serve God while winking at sin and following the false gods among their peers.

The modern American gospel has created a god of its own imagination. This is no different than the pagan gods of wood and stone.

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

I am the true vine and My Father is the vinedresser. [v1].

Jesus began this portion of the conversation describing Himself as the true vine. Professing Christians are the branches in the vine. I say "professing Christian" because not all who profess Christ are saved and, in verse six, Jesus said some of these branches are going
to Hell. We know those who are truly saved cannot lose their salvation, they cannot go to Hell, because Jesus said no one can snatch them out of His hand nor His Father's (10:28-29). So in this parable, the vine is filled with branches, who are those who profess to believe in Christ.

Jesus is the true vine. He is life for the branches. The Father is the vinedresser; He is the one responsible to maintain the health of the vine.

My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. [v1b-2].

Like a gardener or vine grower, the Father maintains the health of the vine by removing the dead wood and pruning the productive wood so it will bear more fruit.

The branches which do not bear fruit, the Father takes away (v2). What happens to the branches taken away? According to verse six, they burn in the fire, that is, they suffer God's wrath in Hell. So just as every seed does not lead to life, in the parable of the sower (Mat 13; Mar 4; Luk 8), not every profession of faith leads to salvation.

It is clear, many who profess faith in Christ are not saved at all. In Matthew chapter 7, Jesus said many will say, "Didn't we do this for you" or "Didn't we do that for you" but the Son of God will say, "Depart from Me; I never knew you." Therefore, it is wise to heed the Apostle Paul's warning, "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith." [2Co 13:5]. Many who profess faith in Christ are not saved at all; they have entered through the wide gate (Mat 7:13-14).

The branches which bear fruit, the Father prunes. Pruning is a description of the Lord's discipline. When we submit to God's discipline in our lives, we will bear more fruit.

For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. [Heb 12:11].

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People like the verse, "All things work together for good" but few stop to consider what this verse is really saying. [Rom 8:28]. The Apostle Paul did not say in the working this would be pleasant or easy; nor did he mean every trial will work for our financial or social prosperity. He said, in the next verse, these things, these prunings, work to conform us to be more like Christ.

We bear fruit as we become more like Christ.

Already you are clean because of the word I have spoken to you. [v3].

In chapter 13, Christ said the disciples were cleaned or sanctified through the teachings of Christ. Here, Jesus affirmed again they were clean because of the word He had spoken to them. The hearing of the Word is cleansing to to the soul.

Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. [17:17].

We are sanctified through the Word. The Apostle Paul wrote Christ cleanses the church, "by the washing of water with the word." [Eph 5:26].

The first verse of the Gospel of John says Jesus Christ is the Word. It is not frivolous that God equates His Son with the Word.

We may not have the benefit the disciples had of sitting under Christ's spoken teachings, but we have the Holy Bible, which is the written word of God. Therefore, we must be in the Word, so we can hear Him speak to us. As the saying goes, "If you want to hear God speak, read the Word; if you want to hear Him speak audibly, read the Word out loud." [Justin Peters].

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. [v4].

How do we abide in Christ? Through the prayerful reading, study and meditation of the Word. Some professing Christians liken themselves to be prayer warriors, but they are not in the Word. How do they know what to pray for if they are not in the Word?

The Word is central to abiding in Christ.
If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples. . [8:31].

As we are in the Word, we know the Spirit opens up the Word to those who are His.

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. [1Co 2:14].

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. [1Jo 5:20].

The command is to abide. We make our home in Christ. Our lives revolve around Him; we want to know how to be like Him; He consumes our time. Are you wasting time or do you spend your time in the Word of God?

If you profess to know Christ but are not satisfied with the fruit in your life, then spend more time in the Word. The branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine (v4b). Those who believe they can bear fruit for Christ through positive motivation or self-determination are deceived and they are not following Christ.

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. [v5].

This is not a works based religion. All through this passage, the emphasis is upon abiding in Christ or in the Word. The promise or the result is we will bear fruit. As we abide in the Word, God produces His work in us (cf Rom 8:28-29).

The problem with a works-based salvation is, as the Prophet Isaiah warned us, all our good works are filthy rags (Isa 64:6). We can do nothing of our own to attain a righteous standing with God. The only righteousness we have is the righteousness of Christ which is given to us by faith.
For by works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law . . . the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. [Rom 3:20-22a].

For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. [2Co 5:21].

The Apostle Paul lamented in the seventh chapter of Romans the good he wanted to do, he could not, but he found himself doing the bad he did not want to do. He wrote he is wretched and cannot rid himself of his sin nature. It is only through Jesus Christ we will be delivered from this body of sin and death. Therefore, apart from abiding in Christ, spending time in His Word, we cannot bear fruit no matter how great our desire or intentions. The fruit is a result of time spent with Christ.

This is an important point because Christ said it twice.

1. In verse four, He admonished us to abide in Him because, just as the branch cannot bear fruit without the vine, we cannot bear fruit without abiding in Him.

2. In verse five, He took the metaphor one step further by saying He is the vine and we are the branches; the one who abides in Him will bear much fruit, but apart from Him we can do nothing. Furthermore, in both verses, He promised to abide in those who abide in Him.

This is a core principle: we cannot be saved unless we walk with Christ (Mat 16:24; Mar 8:34; Luk 9:23) and we cannot walk with Christ unless we abide in Him. The Apostle James warned it is not enough to believe with a mere head knowledge because even the demons do this (Jam 2:19).

And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. [1Jo 2:3].

Christ said, if we do not abide in Him, we can do nothing, including keeping His commands. Too many professing Christians have
defined salvation as an event, but to be truly saved is a lifestyle; we must abide in Christ.

If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. [v6].

In verse two, Christ said the Father will remove this branch. In verse six, Christ said the removed branch will wither and all the dead branches will be gathered and thrown into the fire and burned. He said this twice and with greater emphasis the second time, so it is important. This is a warning to professing Christians.

Remember in chapters six and eight, Christ addressed the crowd of believers and told them why they were not saved. Your profession of faith does not save you. If you are not bearing fruit, that is, if you do not see God producing fruit in you, you are not saved.

- Are you trusting in an event, such as getting saved, accepting Christ or saying the sinner's prayer?
- Are you trusting in your work of "accepting Jesus Christ as your savior" or "making a decision for Christ"?
- Or, are you trusting in Jesus Christ and abiding in Him?

The Apostle Paul's warning cannot be declared often enough. We must test our salvation according to the Word of God.

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? - unless indeed you fail to meet the test! [2Co 13:5].

According to the teaching of Jesus in this passage (15:1-6), Jesus Christ abides only in those who abide in Him and He produces fruit in those who abide in Him. There are many professing Christians who do not have time for God and they have no fruit. According to Christ's teaching, these branches will be cast into Hell.

Do not be deceived by easy-believism. We are not saved by an event nor are we saved by our profession of faith. According to Jesus Christ, we are saved by abiding in Him. In the sixth chapter, He told
us we must desire Him like food and water; we must chew on Him and drink Him in.

We cannot straddle our lives between God's kingdom and our own; we cannot serve two masters (Mat 6:24). If our desire is to be great in this world; if we are chasing after the wisdom of the world, we cannot be saved.

How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? [5:44].

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. [Psa 1:1-2].

SOME SCRIPTURES REGARDING BEARING FRUIT

1) Gal 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

2) Mat 3:8-10 "Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. . . Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

3) Mat 7:16-20 "You will recognize them by their fruits. . . Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits."

4) Mat 12:33-37 "You will recognize them by their fruits. . . So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. . . Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

5) Mat 13:3-23 "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path. . . Other seeds fell on rocky ground. . . Other seeds fell among thorns. . . Other seeds fell
on good soil and produced grain. . . As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields. . . "

6) Luk 6:43-45 "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. . . The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."

7) Rom 7:4-5 "Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to Him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death."

8) 2Co 9:10 "He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness."

9) Eph 5:8-11 "For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them."

10) Php 1:9-11 "And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

11) Php 4:14-17 "Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. . . Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit."

12) Col 1:5-6 " . . . Of this you have heard before in the Word of the truth, the Gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing. . . "

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13) Col 1:9-10 "...that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

14) Heb 12:11 "For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

15) Heb 13:15 "Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name."

16) Jam 3:17 "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere."

17) Jud 8-13 "Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones... these people blaspheme all that they do not understand... Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain... These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever."

IN CLOSING

Salvation is not obtained through an event, an accepting of Christ, a profession of faith nor saying the sinner's prayer. You are not saved because you "made a decision for Christ." To be truly saved, we must abide in Christ; we must be prayerfully and constantly in His Word. This is what Jesus preached. It is proof of regeneration.

We are not saved by our works, but we cannot be saved without them. If we are saved, Christ will produce fruit in us. Jesus said we will judge them by their fruit and the only way to produce good fruit
is to abide in the Word, abide in Christ. This is the work of God in our life.

As the branch needs to abide in the vine, we need to abide in Christ. Just as Jesus said in chapter 6, if we do not need Him like we need food and drink, if He is not our food and drink, we cannot be saved.

Those who profess to be saved but produce no fruit are the withered branches. They will be cast in the fire; the fire of Hell. Examine yourself according to the Word to see if you are in the faith.
John 15:7-17 How Your Wildest Dreams Will Come True

The bookends of this passage tell us whatever we ask of God will be done for us.

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. [v7].

I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you. [v16b].

This is the dream of the "Word of Faith" or prosperity gospel: The televangelists proclaim from their jet planes or their expansive mansion estates, God will give us whatever we ask for as long as we have faith and send them some "seed" money.

But Jesus said this "light" is deep darkness, for we cannot serve two masters and we must trust Him for our provision and seek first the kingdom of God (Mat 6:22-34).

Two things to understand from verse seven:

1. "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you."
   
   • Christ has left us with His Word, the Holy Bible. If we love Christ, we will love His Word. If we love His Word, we will keep His Word. The Apostle John wrote we know we have come to know Him if we keep His commandments (1Jo 2:3) and to love God is to keep His commands (1Jo 5:3).

2. "Ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."

   • This does not refer to material gain. If you want to make this life your best life now, your next life will not be in heaven with God. Jesus said, "Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." (12:25) Christ commanded us to deny
ourself and take up our cross and follow Him (Mat 16:24; Mar 8:34; Luk 9:23). The Apostle John wrote, "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." [1Jo 2:15].

Therefore, if you are in the Word, you will know these verses are not a prescription for worldly gain.

You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. [Jam 4:3-4].

So, what are we to ask for?

**By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples. [v8].**

We are to pray we bear much fruit, or pray for things which will help us bear fruit. By this we glorify the Father and prove ourselves to be true followers of Christ.

God is glorified when we abide in Christ; when our minds are set upon Him; when we love our brothers; when we speak the Gospel; when we obey His commands. These are things to pray for and God will give it. The Apostle James said if anyone lacks wisdom, ask God and He will give it (Jam 1:5). God will give us whatever we ask, which will make us more like His Son.

What about our needs? What about our health? Isn't it proper we pray for our needs?

Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the
lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor
spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was
not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes
the grass of the field, which today is alive and
tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much
more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do
not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What
shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the
Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly
Father knows that you need them all. But seek first
the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all
these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be
anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be
anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own
trouble. [Mat 6:25-33].

Jesus did not say we cannot pray about our health and our needs, in
fact, in the example of the Lord's Prayer, He taught us to ask for our
daily needs (Mat 6:11). But He also told us our Father already
knows what we need. As surely as God takes care of the grass, the
flowers and the birds, we know He will take care of us.

So, if our prayers are an expression of our anxiety, we are not
praying in faith. The Apostle Peter told us to cast our care upon
Him, because we can know He cares for us (1Pe 5:7). The Apostle
Paul wrote we must not be anxious, but we must let our requests be
made known to God with thanksgiving (Php 4:6). In the last chapter,
Jesus told us not to let our hearts be troubled. This is a command
and to violate it is sin.

The Apostle Paul was given a thorn in the flesh. Three times he
pledged with God to remove this. God's reply was, "My grace is
sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." [2Co
12:9]. One thing we learn from this is we need to seek God's
purpose. Our desire, even what we think is our need, is not the same
as God's purpose. This is why we request of God with thanksgiving;
we know He is God, we know He is in control and He will
accomplish His purpose. We know He works His purpose for our
good to make us more like Christ (Rom 8:28-29).
As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. [v9-10].

Christ is loved by the Father worthily, because He is holy and righteous. But He loves us, though we are unworthy and have no merit of our own. While we were still sinners and enemies of God, Christ died for us. [Rom 5:8,10].

He bids us to abide in His love. This abiding is not passive because the next thing He said was keeping His commandments was essential to abiding in His love. Once again, this is not a works based salvation. Christ was not saying if we obey we will be saved. He was affirming if we abide in Him, that is, if we are saved, we will keep His commandments. Obedience is active but it is the work of God through us, if we abide in Him.

Jesus said He keeps His Father's commandments and abides in His love. Christ is not the Son of God because of His works of obedience to the Father. Rather, He keeps the commandments because He is the Son of God. He is God and righteousness is His nature.

Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light. [Mat 11:29-30].

The nature of man is to serve; he will serve God or he will serve sin (8:34; Rom 6:16). While serving sin, a man may think he is serving himself, but sin is a cruel task master. Serving Christ may seem to be hard, but in the end we find this is the law which brings liberty.

But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets, but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. [Jam 1:25].

Jesus said He spoke these things to them so their joy may be full (v11). True joy comes from abiding in Christ and living in
obedience to Him. We know we love Him if we keep His commandments; love for God is true joy.

All [who] love the Savior should continue in their love to Him, and take all occasions to show it. The joy of the hypocrite is, but for a moment, but the joy of those who abide in Christ's love is a continual feast. They are to show their love to Him by keeping His commandments. [Matthew Henry Commentary].

**LOVE ONE ANOTHER**

*This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. [v12].*

To love one another is a difficult thing to do because the inclination of our sinful nature is to be like the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:21-35. He was forgiven an insurmountable debt, but could not forgive another who owed him a pittance in comparison.

The disciples had been arguing over who was the greatest in the kingdom (Mar 9:33-37; Luk 9:46-48). On another occasion, the sons of Zebedee sought to be appointed to the highest places in Christ's kingdom and the rest of the disciples were indignant toward them (Mat 20:20-28). We all have aspirations and are no different than the disciples. The Apostle Paul warned us not to think too highly of ourselves, which is our natural tendency (Rom 12:3).

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. [1Jo 4:11].

We see ourselves as the protagonist in this play called life. Our natural inclination is to look out for ourselves, to seek our fame and glory, but we are called to be like Christ. He, though being God, humbled Himself and became man so He could show us the Father and redeem those He came to save. The only way to take our eyes off ourselves is to keep our eyes on Christ; to abide in Him; to spend time with God in prayer and in His Word.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own
interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. [Php 2:3-7].

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. [Rom 12:10].

He commanded them to love each other "as I have loved you." [v12]. How has He loved them? He showed them the Father, but there is more:

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. [v13-14].

Here, Christ told His disciples again He was going to die. He was going to die for them; He was going to die for those who do what He commands.

His death was a demonstration of His love for His friends; His friends are those who obey Him. He made this very clear. He was not going to die for the whole world; not for everyone in the world as many preachers claim. He died for those He loved; those He was willing to call His friends.

For I have given them the words that You gave Me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. [17:8-9].

Jesus said, "You are My friends if you do what I command you." [v14]. The modern American gospel has twisted this to mean Jesus is looking for a relationship; as if He just wants us to hang around. Jesus said if we are His friends, we obey Him.

And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. [1Jo 2:3].
If we abide in Christ, we will produce fruit and one of the fruits is love for each other, which will be evident. Does this mean we are supposed to physically die for each other? If need be, but this is not usually the case. To lay down our life for our brother is to forsake our own gain and to help them in need.

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. . . . By this we know love, that He laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? [1Jo 3:14,16-17].

If we don't help our brothers, we don't have God's love and have not passed from death to life. The Apostle Paul told us to, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." [Gal 6:2]. We demonstrate our love for each other and thus, our love for Christ, by helping each other with physical and spiritual needs.

If we have a hard time loving our brothers, Jesus said to ask what we will and it will be done for us.

**NO LONGER CALLED SERVANTS**

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. [v15].

Servants do not know what the master is doing, but Christ came to make the Father known to His servants (cf 1:18). We know this Scripture applies to us because He has given us His Word. He calls us friends because He has made the Father known to us.

We must, however, take this verse in context. Being friends with Christ is not a frivolous expression. We must not misconstrue this as the modern American gospel does: We do not have a casual relationship with Jesus nor does our relationship with God revolve around us. By saying we are no longer servants but friends, Christ was promising fellowship with God. He said, we are friends if we
obey. The Apostle John wrote we have fellowship with God if we walk in the light (1Jo 1:7).

The context is we are friends if we obey. A servant obeys. When Jesus said He no longer calls them servants, by context, we see He was not saying they were no longer servants or slaves. For a few verses later, He reminded them they were servants, when He said a servant is not above His master (v20).

\[
\text{Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty." [Luk 17:9-10].}
\]

Be warned: Never in Scripture did the apostles cling to this title of friend; they identified themselves as servants or slaves of Christ.

\[
\text{This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. [1Co 4:1].}
\]

\[
\text{Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. [1Pe 2:16].}
\]

Once again, this gets back to the fact, we will serve God or sin; there is no middle ground and we cannot serve two masters. Those who obey Christ, serve Him. He calls them His friends: they are servants who have fellowship with Him (1Jo 1:5-9).

If we have a hard time thinking of Jesus as a friend or if we have difficulty understanding our role as a servant, He told us to ask what we will and it will be done for us (v7,16).

**YOU DID NOT CHOOSE ME**

\[
\text{You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide. [v16a].}
\]

Many professing Christians speak of their salvation as something they did. They remember it as an event. They may even remember
when and where they made a decision for Christ, of their own freewill.

The Bible says we don't choose God. God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4). We were chosen according to God's purposes (Eph 1:11). The Apostle John wrote we were not saved by our own freewill, but by the will of God (1:13). The Apostle John also wrote, "We love Him because He first loved us." [1Jo 4:19].

While we were sinners, enemies of God and powerless to save ourselves (Rom 5:6,8,10), we were slaves of sin. Did we have freewill? Yes, but how does a slave to sin choose to become a slave to God without the work of the Spirit changing his affections, so that he no longer desires sin but desires God?

He chose us so we would bear fruit for His glory. This is what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians as to why God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, "that we should be holy and blameless before Him." [Eph 1:4b].

The Apostle Paul also wrote we are saved by grace and not by works, "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." [Eph 2:10]. We are saved by grace not by works, so that God's works may be seen in us.

And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. . . But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God. [3:19-21].

work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. [Php 2:12b-13].

He chose us to bear fruit so God will give us whatever we ask in Christ's name.

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit
and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you. [v16].

Once again, the admonition to bear fruit so whatever we request of God may be given us. When we ask of God, remember the admonition of the Apostle James to ask for wisdom, but ask in faith without doubting (Jam 1:5-6); and when we ask of God, do not ask to fulfill our covetous hearts because desiring the things of the world is to make ourselves enemies of God (Jam 4:1-10). If our goal in our requests is to draw nearer to God so that we can bear fruit for His glory, He "is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask." [Eph 3:20].

These things I command you, so that you will love one another. [v17].

This bookends with verse 12: "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." So, let us walk through verses 12 to 17 again.

- v12) Jesus gave a command: to love one another as He loved us.
- v13) There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for his friends; and this is what He was going to do.
- v14) We are His friends if we are obedient.
- v15) Jesus calls us friends because He has made known to us everything from the Father.
- v16) We did not choose Him, but He chose us, so that we might bear fruit and receive spiritual blessings from the Father.
- v17) Knowing what He has done for us should cause us to love our brothers.

If we obey Christ, we will love our brothers. Loving our brothers is contingent upon obedience to Christ.

By this we know we love the children of God, when we love God and obey His commandments. [1Jo 5:2].
Our love for each other is evidence we are walking with Christ.

Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. [1Jo 2:9-10].

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. . . . By this we know love, that He laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. [1Jo 3:14,16].

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. [1Jo 4:7].

IN CLOSING

The bookends of this passage tell us whatever we ask of God will be done for us (v7,16).

Then, there is the another bookend within and wrapping the main bookend: the command to love one another (v12,17).

God has promised to fulfill our wildest dream; He promised to give us anything we ask! What is this wildest dream? If we are abiding in Christ, our wildest dream will be to have fellowship with God, to be in the light and to have the grace and ability to share this dream with others, especially with our brothers.

We conclude, by abiding in the vine, we will live obedient to Christ; we will love our brothers; we will bear fruit. These are things to request and God will give us what we request.
The one sure sign a person has been born again is they obey Christ's commands. The one sure way to grow more obedient to His rule, His lordship, is to abide or be in the Word.

You will be in the Word or you will be in the world. You cannot serve two masters (Mat 6:24).

If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. [v18-19].

The world is opposed to God. The creation is opposed to the Creator. From the beginning, man has been in rebellion to God.

After God destroyed the world by flood, man still defied Him. Rather than spread out across the land, they came together in one city, seeking to elevate Babel above their Creator and Lawmaker (Gen 11:1-9). Even after God destroyed their work and tore the land apart, dividing the land and the people into continents (Gen 10:25), which would have been a dreadful and frightening occasion for man, they continued to pursue their rebellion.

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed. [Psa 2:1-2].

The Apostle John wrote in Revelation chapter twenty, Satan would be bound during Christ's thousand year reign on earth. But after the thousand years, he would deceive the rulers of nations and lead them into battle against the Lord. They will be defeated, just as the psalmist described it in Psalm two. But the key thing to understand is this: after one thousand years with Christ reigning on earth, Satan is able to turn the nations against Him, quickly and entirely.

Jesus said the world will hate us as it has hated Him. Once again, we meet this word "world." Who is the world? Certainly not every last
person; if this were so, it would include even the elect. The world, in this case, is everyone who is not following Christ and it is also the world system, in general. The world, in this case, is all who follow "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience." [Eph 2:2].

Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. [Jam 4:4].

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." [1Jo 2:15].

Many professing Christians are comfortable mixing their faith with worldly wisdom. They seek the favor of man. Jesus asked the question, "If you seek the favor of man, how can you be saved?" [5:44, modified].

These people promote sayings and proverbs which seem to sound wise, may even sound Biblical, but the wisdom of the world is designed to be a substitute for God. Jesus said His sheep hear His voice and they will not follow the voice of an imposter (10:5). If we cling to clever or positive sayings and ideals, which are based upon worldly wisdom, we are following the voice of an imposter. And this imposter, the prince of this world, is in opposition to the One we claim to serve.

If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other. [Mat 6:23b-24a].

Christ warned us against storing up worldly wealth (Mat 6:19-21). We should view all things in this life as passing. We are soldiers here and ambassadors for Christ. We build no kingdoms here because we are looking and praying for God's kingdom (Mat 6:10). We do not seek the wealth down here, which is destroyed by moths and rust and eventually by fire. We are looking forward to a kingdom and "an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you." [1Pe 1:4].

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To follow Christ, we must forsake the world. We forsake its comfort; we forsake its glory; we forsake its wealth, power and fame. We seek God's kingdom (Mat 6:10,33) and forsake our own (Luk 14:26-33).

Christ warned us, the world will hate us because it hated Him first (v18). He reminded us, once again, He chose us; choosing us out of the world (v19). We are no longer part of the world, therefore the world hates us. If you find the world does not hate you, maybe there is not much of Christ showing through you.

**Remember the word that I said to you: "A servant is not greater than his master." If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they do not know Him who sent Me. [v20-21].**

We serve Christ as Christ serves the Father. Christ came to make the Father known. If we are servants of Christ, we will make Him known. He told us to make disciples and teach His commands (Mat 28:18-20). The world does not want to know Christ; they rebel against His Word; they do not want to follow His commands (Psa 107:11). Therefore, as the world hated Christ for making the Father known, the world will hate us for making Christ known.

Amidst affliction, there is also respite: When Jesus said, "If they kept My word, they will also keep yours" [v20], He was describing brothers in Christ. Not all will persecute: If we preach Christ, we will be persecuted but we will also find other brothers in Christ. The message of the Gospel draws those who love Christ.

Nonetheless, if we stand for the Word of God, we will face persecution. Often times, this persecution will come from other professing Christians. When someone is street preaching or handing out tracks or speaking Scripture in public, there is always the professing Christian on hand who is more concerned about how this looks to others or some other such nonsense in their attempt to shut up or humiliate the evangelizing believer.
Modern American Christianity has accepted the easy-believism which is commonly preached from the pulpits. They have combined faith in Christ with the world's wisdom. They seek worldly acceptance and the comforts of this world. A bold defense of Scripture or the true preaching of the Gospel are offensive to them and they will attack you. You may think of them as brothers, for they are professing Christians, but they will attack you because they do not know the Father, just as Jesus said. When this happens, do not be confused; just know, a profession of faith does not make one a follower of Christ.

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both Me and My Father. But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: "They hated Me without a cause." [v22-25].

Most the world has the Word of God. People can choose to denounce it, defame it, accuse it or they can read it, accept it and defend it. If you are a professing Christian, it is important to be in the Word. It is hard to fight against the Word if you feast on a constant diet of it. It is hard to defend it if you seldom are in it.

Whoever hates Christ, hates the Father also (v23) because, as Christ said, "I and the Father are one." [10:30]. God is one God in three persons. Those who refuse the Trinity do not worship the true God. Those who say they worship only Christ Jesus, do not worship the true God. If you despise any of the Trinity, you despise all. Though God is three persons, He is one God.

The world is convicted or without excuse because Christ spoke the words of the Father and even now, the world has this Word (v22). Jesus did the works of the Father, which had never been done before or since and the world has a record of these miracles; but they have still chosen to hate Christ (v24). In the first chapter of the Book of Romans, the Apostle Paul wrote those who refuse Christ suppress the truth, even though God made it plain to them. The world will be
judged because Christ brought the Word and confirmed the Word with miracles, but the world hated Christ and the Father.

We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true. [1Jo 5:19-20].

but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. [1Pe 2:7b-8; quoting Psa 118:22 and Isa 8:14].

Jesus said this hatred for Him from the world is to fulfill the Scripture, "They hated Me without a cause." [v25, quoting Psa 35:19; 69:4]. And, truly it is without cause: For God is the Creator and He has given good gifts to those whom He has created (Psa 85:12; Jam 1:17). Even to those who reject Him, He provides food, clothing and other resources or common graces. Yet, their rebellious hearts despise Him and rage against Him.

While man plots and schemes against Almighty God, His plan and His will cannot be defeated. According to Psalm two, this plan is for the Father to give His Son a kingdom and to bless all those who trust in Him. This is the eternal covenant. God's plan will come to pass.

**But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.** [v26].

Although the world will hate us because we follow Christ, God has not left us alone. Christ said He will send the Holy Spirit who will "bear witness about Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning." [v26-27].

The Holy Spirit's work is to bear witness of the Son and He works in us so we will bear witness, also. There is no private faith. If we
believe in Christ, we will testify of His authority and glory to others; we will make disciples and teach them to study and obey the Scriptures He has given.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. [Mat 28:18-20].

Continuing on to the first four verses of chapter sixteen: Christ gave the disciples practical application what this hatred of the world is going to look like. He explained this to keep them from falling away (v1).

I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor Me. But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you. [v1-4].

This is a rehash with amplification of what He said in chapter fifteen. He said in addition to the world hating them, "They will put you out of the synagogues." [v2]. He said they will kill His followers, thinking they are serving God (v2). He said they will do these things because they do not know the Father (v3). In chapter eight, Jesus said they serve their father, the devil.

Verse 1 and 4 are bookends: "I have said these things to keep you from falling away." [v1]. "I have said these things . . . you may remember that I told them to you." [v4].

First, Christ warned us so we may expect it to happen and not fall away when it does. To follow Christ, we must count the cost.
Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? . . . So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be My disciple. [Luk 14:27,28,33].

Second, Christ warned us so when it happens, we will remember He told us. To know events will happen as He said, gives us assurance He is in control and we are in His plan. Therefore, we can look forward to suffering for the sake of our Master.

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. [2Ti 3:12].

To be put out of the temple would be difficult situation indeed. For the disciples were raised to respect the authority of the temple leaders and to run afoul of them might cause some to second guess themselves; and maybe fall away. So Christ warned them in advance, so they could know, when this happened, it was ordained by God.

Most professing Christian churches in our nation have fallen asleep. They preach a watered-down gospel; all about easy grace and no mention of repentance, following Christ, abiding in Him and producing fruit. We have a duty to stand up for the Word of God and we will run afoul of many church leaders and laymen who are quite comfortable with the system in place. When this happens, do not second guess yourself; stay in the Word and stand strong in the Lord.

Jesus told them whoever kills them will think they are serving God, but they do not know God (v2-3). Some will persecute followers of Christ in the name of God. The Jewish leaders believed they spoke for God, yet they cast those who followed Christ out of the temple; they imprisoned some; they killed some. They did this in the name of God.

The Apostle Paul was one of these before Christ regenerated him. He approved the stoning of Stephen. He was on his way to Damascus to persecute and take prisoners back to Jerusalem, when Christ called him, saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting..."
Me?" [Act 9:4]. They will persecute followers of Christ in the name of God, but they do not know God.

The Apostle John later wrote, "Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you." [1Jo 3:13]. The Apostle Peter wrote, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you." [1Pe 4:12]. Jesus warned the disciples so when the trials came they would remember and not fall away and the apostles continued this warning to us with, "do not be surprised."

Do you see clearly how and why a follower of Christ cannot seek the pleasures, comfort and approval of the world? Do you see how and why James said if we are friends with the world, we are enemies of God? Do you see how and why Jesus asked the question, if we are friends with the world, how can we be saved?

This last section, verses 1 to 4, is a test of our greatest desire. Do we desire Christ above all things? or will we fall away when persecution comes? If we desire the world, we cannot desire God; Jesus said we cannot serve two masters (Mat 6:24). If we desire Christ above all things, we will rejoice in trials, knowing we are suffering as our Lord suffered at the hands of men.

and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus. [Act 5:40-42].

For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for His sake. [Php 1:29].

IN CLOSING

Chapter fifteen in a nut is this: Abide in Me, love each other and if you do this, the world will hate you.
We have a choice:

- To follow Christ and be hated by the world. This persecution will also come from professing Christians who do not follow Christ.

or

- To find our comfort and approval in the world and be an enemy of Christ.

There is no middle ground; we cannot serve two masters. We cannot be friends with the world and followers of Christ. We cannot mix the "good" or the "positive" of the world with the teachings of Christ. Any effort to make the Gospel attractive to the world, will always compromise the Gospel.

If we follow Christ, He chose us; He chose us out of the world. Therefore, if we follow Christ, we must cling to Him and leave the world and its comforts and pleasures. We must take up our cross and follow Him (Mat 16:24-26; Luk 9:23-25).

A servant is not greater than his master. Christ was persecuted by men; they will persecute His followers, as well. If you do not suffer any persecution, maybe it is because the world cannot see Christ in you.

The world is without excuse because He performed miracles no one else has ever done. They saw Him and hated Him without cause. Many professing Christians claim we can win the world for Christ. If the world could ever have been won for Christ, it was while He was on the Earth. The world hates Him. Therefore, we are called to stand for the truth, He is responsible for the results.

Christ commanded us to bear witness about Him and He promised the Holy Spirit to help us. So, this is true: a follower of Christ cannot follow in secret.

Stand for Christ and be hated by the world. Christ told us these things to keep us from falling away.
John 16:5-15 The Promised Work Of The Holy Spirit

Jesus taught the disciples how to abide in Him and warned the world will hate them. He was warning them because He will no longer be with them (v4).

But now I am going to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, "Where are you going?" But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. [v5-6].

Christ was soon to return to the Father. He rebuked the disciples because they showed no interest in where He was going (v5-6). They were feeling sorry for themselves and it blinded them to the significance of the events Jesus described and were soon to come.

Earlier, at this dinner, Peter and Thomas had asked where He was going (13:36; 14:5). He told them they could not follow now but they would follow later; He told them He was going to prepare a place for them; He told them He was the only way to the Father. Now, it was clear, they did not understand what Jesus was saying.

The disciples were not keen to come to Jerusalem, in the first place. They knew the Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus. Nonetheless, they still believed He was the Messiah, but they still mistakenly believed He was going to set up His kingdom in Jerusalem and rescue Israel from her enemies. When they experienced Christ's triumphal entry into the city, this hope was restored. However, now He told them He was leaving and their eyes were clouded by the prospect of losing Him. This was happening at the same time they were expecting great glory. This was truly a huge letdown, indeed.

WHY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL COME

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. [v7].
In chapter seven, Jesus spoke at the Feast of Booths. He said, "Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." [7:38]. This was a promise of the Holy Spirit. At that time, however, the time for the Spirit had not yet come because Christ was still on the earth. Now, Christ promised when He leaves, He will send the Holy Spirit. He also said if He did not go away, the Holy Spirit would not come. None of this seemed to arouse any anticipation from the disciples.

They did not yet understand Christ had come to take God's wrath for mans' sin. They did not understand He came to die on the cross and to raise up to life again to reconcile man to God. They did not understand, rather than reign with the Messiah on earthly thrones, their mission would be to proclaim the authority of Christ to all people; calling people into a kingdom they could not see. They did not understand to do this, they would need the help of the Holy Spirit.

Christ gave the disciples and quick review of what the Holy Spirit would do:

1. He will convict the world of sin [v8].
2. He will convict the world of righteousness [v8].
3. He will convict the world of judgment [v8].
4. He will guide believers into all the truth [v13].
5. He will not speak on His own authority but what He hears from the Father [v13].
6. He will glorify Christ [v14].
7. He will take what is Christ's [the Word] and declare [open] it to the believers [v14-15].

Never once did Christ indicate the Holy Spirit would come to satisfy our earthly desires and give us possession of our idols. Christ gave no indication the Spirit would make people act like they were possessed, cause them to speak gibberish in public, speak new revelations and prophecies which contradict the Word and such. Christ said the Holy Spirit would come to convict the world and guide believers into truth. He would come to glorify Christ; He will not glorify man.
Beware of false prophets, beware of the prosperity gospel and Word of Faith teachings: Jesus said we will know them by their fruits (Mat 7:15-16).

Christ said this about the Holy Spirit: "He will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment." [v8] and "He will guide you into all the truth . . . for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you." [v13-14]. On the one hand, God deals with the rebellious in judgment; on the other hand, He increases knowledge and understanding to those committed to following Him.

**Concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me.**

[v9].

The root of sin is unbelief; sin is the fruit, unbelief is the root. Unbelief gives birth to sin and nourishes it. It sets people up for judgment.

Unless you believe that I am He you will die in your sins. [8:24].

And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. [Heb 3:18-19].

Scripture equates disobedience with unbelief. John the Baptist said those who believe have eternal life but those who disobey remain under God's wrath (3:36). Disobedience is sin. We should not take disobedience lightly; God does not wink at our shortcomings.

Nonetheless, the believer cannot live perfectly righteous lives, This brings the true believer to live with an attitude of repentance. When we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive (1Jo 1:9).

**Concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer.** [v10].

The Apostle Paul said Christ will judge the world in righteousness and the Father has fixed a day this will happen "and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead." [Act 17:31]. What greater evidence to the truth of Christ's claim to be the Son of God than the Father should raise Him from the dead? Would the
Father have raised a blasphemer from the dead? Christ was the only man to live a righteous life and the evidence would show forth when He would raise from the dead and go to the Father.

The Prophet Isaiah foretold God would send His Son to suffer for the many. He would bear their sins and account them as righteous.

Out of the anguish of [Christ's] soul He shall see and be satisfied; by His knowledge shall the Righteous One, My servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and He shall bear their iniquities. [Isa 53:11].

The Apostle Paul wrote Christ was perfect but made to be sin, so that we who are sin can take on the righteousness of God.

For our sake [the Father] made [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. [2Co 5:21].

God sees the believer as righteous through Jesus Christ. Without righteousness, no one can stand before God. It is vain to follow the Law, because no one can keep it. There is no power in our own intention or resolution. This is why it is vain to look to any effort of our own, any decision we can make. Nothing can make us righteous before God, except the blood of Jesus Christ.

Concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. [v11].

In another passage, Jesus said the ruler of this world, Satan, would be cast out (12:31-32). If the ruler of this world is judged, we can know Christ will judge all who follow the ruler of this world. Sin will be of a limited duration. Take warning all you who love your sin: There will be an end to it and to those who follow sin.

For all who believe in Christ, He nailed our sins to the cross. He canceled our debt to God, while exposing Satan and his rulers to open shame. Satan and his empire were destroyed by the cross of Christ.

And you, who were dead in your [sins], God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our
trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Him. [Col 2:13-15].

. . .that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil. [Heb 2:14].

. . .The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. [1Jo 3:8].

The work of Satan was to keep man in rebellion to God (Gen 3:1); to keep him in slavery to sin (Rom 6:16); to keep man blinded to God's promise of righteousness (2Co 4:4). Nonetheless, Jesus said all who are His will come to Him (6:37). When Christ was lifted up, He drew His people from every nation to Him (12:32); the devil could not keep His people from Him. Satan has no power and he is destroyed.

The modern American gospel proclaims we are free to do what we want, for we are no longer slaves. It says we are not religious because God is looking for relationship. This is the lie of the devil to keep professing believers enslaved to sin. If we truly believe, then we are slaves to Christ; we cannot serve two masters (Mat 6:24). If we truly believe, then we worship God in all things; we worship God with our lives (Rom 12:1-2). To come out of our sin and worship God: this is our religion.

As believers, we cannot take sin lightly; we cannot take the blood of Jesus, our Redeemer, lightly. If we are a new creation, then we will come out from under the yoke of the devil and take on the yoke of Christ. The Apostle Paul told us we are a slave to whom we obey (Rom 6:16). The price God paid to redeem man from sin was great and the judgment upon Satan and all who follow him will be great. This is a serious and terrible matter; we must not wink at sin.

And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. . .because the ruler of this world is judged. [v8,11].

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We come upon this word, "world" once again. In this passage, there are several meanings:

- He will convict the world concerning sin because they do not believe in Him. The world is every person who will not obey Christ. "whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." [3:36b].

- He will convict the world concerning righteousness because He will go to the Father. This world are the ones who follow Christ by faith. Christ is our righteousness (1Co 1:30;Php 3:9); He has satisfied God's wrath (Rom 3:25;Heb 2:17); and He is making intercession for us to the Father (Heb 7:25).

- In convicting the world of righteousness, there is the view that wherever Christianity has gone, there has been a standard of righteousness or morality. No other religions of the world have left a conviction for godly living among the people.

- He will convict the world concerning judgment because the ruler of this world is judged. The world which will be judged is all who follow the ruler of this world, the devil; everyone whose name is not found written in the Book of Life (Rev 13:8,17:8).

The Apostle Paul wrote when we were dead in our sins, we followed the prince of the power of the air and were sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2). Jesus said when He is lifted up, the world will be judged and the ruler of the world will be cast out (12:31-32). The Apostle John wrote about the eternal destruction of Satan and his followers, "This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." [Rev 20:14b-15]. All who do not follow Christ, remain dead in their sins and are destined for eternal destruction.

**ALL THE TEACHING IS DONE**

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth
He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come. [v12-13].

Now the lesson is over. They could not bear more teaching because, we see, they had not been listening so far; they were distracted by the news Christ is leaving. Earlier they were distracted by arguments of who would be the greatest in Christ's kingdom, which, to them now looked like it was not happening. Indeed, we see in the hours ahead, the disciples were scattered, having forgotten everything Christ had told them.

Christ's time was coming to a close, but He reminded them the Holy Spirit will come and will give them instruction (v13), guiding them in all truth. He was not going to leave them alone.

Describing the Holy Spirit, Christ said, "He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak." [v13]. This is the same thing Christ said about Himself: He only did what He saw the Father doing and only spoke what He heard from the Father (5:19; 12:49).

The Godhead has a hierarchy and they are obedient to the Father. If it is a serious matter and no small thing for God to obey God, how can we look at our "small" sins frivolously? Why are we so casual about obedience, as if grace is all we need?

Many take Christ's declaration, "He will declare to you the things that are to come," as authority for their own self-given prophecies. These are false teachers. The reason for early church prophecies and tongues was the disciples did not have the New Testament Scriptures. Until this was completed, the Holy Spirit disclosed what they needed to know and He revealed Scripture to them to give to us. We, however, have the Word, including all the prophecies we need to know.

He will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is Mine; therefore I said that He will take what is Mine and declare it to you. [v14-15].
Just as the Son came to reveal the Father (Mat 11:27), the Holy Spirit reveals Christ. All the Father has belongs to Christ. This is because He is the firstborn; He is the heir of all things. The Holy Spirit has revealed what is Christ's to His followers. The Holy Spirit has given us Scripture; the Scripture is the Word, it is about Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has revealed this and glorified Christ.

Just as Christ only did and said what the Father was doing and saying, the Holy Spirit will do the same. The three persons of the Godhead are in agreement because the three are God and they enjoy everything together. The Godhead works together for God's glory.

**IN CLOSING**

Christ told the disciples He was going away but He would send them the Holy Spirit. They were filled with sorrow.

It is human nature to ignore God's purposes and focus on what we want and how we feel. So often, our prayers echo our desires rather than seek God's purposes.

Jesus told us what the Holy Spirit would do:

1. He will convict the world of sin [v8].
2. He will convict the world of righteousness [v8].
3. He will convict the world of judgment [v8].
4. He will guide believers into all the truth [v13].
5. He will not speak on His own authority but what He hears from the Father [v13].
6. He will glorify Christ [v14].
7. He will take what is Christ's [the Word] and declare [open] it to the believers [v14-15].

The Godhead works for God's glory. We should seek God's glory.

The Holy Spirit has revealed Christ in the Scriptures. To know more about Christ, we need to be in the Word. As we abide in the Word, the Holy Spirit will reveal truth to us (8:31-32).
**John 16:16-33 You Will Suffer But I Have Overcome**

Christ has finished His teaching. Now He will instruct them on the coming events.

"A little while, and you will see Me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see Me."

So some of his disciples said to one another, "What is this that He says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I am going to the Father'?"

So they were saying, "What does He mean by 'a little while'? We do not know what He is talking about."

Jesus knew that they wanted to ask Him, so He said to them, "Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, 'A little while and you will not see Me, and again a little while and you will see Me'? [v16-19]."

Christ was soon to die and the disciples would not see Him. Soon after, He would rise from the dead and they would see Him. When they did not see Him, they would experience a heavy loss. When He rose from the dead, they would know an unspeakable joy.

The disciples were confused. Keep in mind, like all religious Jews at that time, they believed the Messiah would come to set up His kingdom in Jerusalem. Though the Jewish leaders wanted to kill Him, He just had a triumphal entry into Jerusalem; like a hero returning from battle, except riding on a colt of a donkey. The time seemed to be at hand, but now He was telling them He would be leaving soon. This did not seem to be in harmony with the plan; and where was He going to go?

Christ's statement He is going away and returning is restated and repeated three times. There appears to be a wrenching, an agony within them. They felt such exhilaration during Christ's triumphal
entry into Jerusalem and every hope they had of reigning with Christ seemed to be falling into place. But death and gloom hung over them like a cloud. The disciples were unsettled and confused.

YOU WILL WEEP WHILE THE WORLD REJOICES

Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. [v20-22].

Jesus answered their bewilderment with a prophecy. The disciples were destined to weep while the world rejoiced. Their sorrow, however, would turn to joy.

The world rejoiced at His death because the world hates Christ. The world falsely believed they could murder the Truth.

Christ's impending death was much like a pregnancy, as He described. Because, after the agony, there would be a new revelation; a new hope for man. As the agony of pregnancy gives way to joy in the new born, the agony of crucifixion and being crushed by the Father would give way to the joy of Christ's resurrection and the adoption of man into God's kingdom.

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush Him; He has put Him to grief; when His soul makes an offering for guilt, He shall see His offspring; He shall prolong His days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. Out of the anguish of His soul He shall see and be satisfied; by His knowledge shall the righteous one, My servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and He shall bear their iniquities. [Isa 53:10-11].
The disciples, too, were pregnant with agony as Jesus talked about His coming death and His departure. They had spent three years with the Messiah, hoping to reign with Him and now it appeared everything was for naught and their lives were at risk. Jesus promised their sorrow would be turned to joy, but they could not understand.

It is human nature to focus on the immediate circumstances. This is why, when God brings trials, we grieve, we sorrow, we worry; we forget everything is under God's control. But God is in control of every circumstance. Jesus told the disciples these things, so when it happened, they would understand He is God and He is in control. We have these lessons in the Word to help us; we need to learn from them and trust God with every detail in our lives.

**ASK WHATEVER YOU WILL**

In that day you will ask nothing of Me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. [v23-24].

Asking nothing of Christ is a reference to the coming of the Spirit (Acts 2). They will ask nothing of Christ because the Spirit will be with them.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. [14:26].

Before the Scriptures were complete, the disciples and early Christians relied upon the Spirit to speak to them directly, through tongues and prophecies. Today, we have the Word complete, but some people, rather than spend time in the Word, are looking for something special and often the spirit they are listening to is not the Holy Spirit.

Does the Spirit speak today? Yes. But most times He speaks through the Word and, whenever He speaks otherwise, He will never
contradict the Word. There are no new messages or revelations. The Word has been given to us and it is complete.

Many people cling to what they believe are manifestations of the Spirit today. They chase after a secret knowledge. These revelations, however, are opposite to what is declared in Scripture. The Holy Spirit will never contradict Scripture; so we can be certain these phenomena are false. We should seek nothing more than God's Word.

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. [Deu 29:29].

He told the disciples to ask anything of the Father, praying in His name and it will be given (v23-24). This seems to be a running theme throughout His teaching this night of the Last Supper.

Whatever you ask in My name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. [14:13-14].

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. [15:7].

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you. [15:16].

In that day you will ask nothing of Me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. [v23-24].

Many use these verses to appeal to God for money, possessions and comfort; that their joy may be full. Jesus was talking about asking the Father to help us in our walk with Him and understanding His
revealed Word. God will freely give us all things so we can grow in Him and glorify Him with our lives.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. [Jam 1:5].

God is exalted in His glory. He does not seek our glory; He did not save us for our glory. Jesus instructed us to pray for God's glory and His kingdom (Mat 6:9-10). It is okay to pray for our needs, but we praying knowing God knows our needs (Mat 6:8,25-32). So, we thank Him and we seek first the kingdom of God and don't worry about our needs (Mat 6:33-34). When we focus on ourselves, we go beyond our needs and covet for our wants. We cannot bear fruit for God when our minds desire comfort and wealth in the world. Jesus said we cannot serve God and our possessions; we cannot serve two masters (Mat 6:24).

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? . . . You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?" [Jam 4:1-4].

We are told to ask so our joy may be full. If we are truly seeking God, we cannot find joy in this world. We might find some things which make us temporarily happy, but there is no lasting joy down here. Our joy comes from having fellowship with God and bearing fruit for Him. He has promised to work out this fellowship and the fruit if we ask Him.

The disciples were soon to be torn away from the Lord. Things are about to get violent and there will be turmoil as they go into hiding. Several times in this conversation, Jesus told them to ask what they want. We can see from this context Jesus was telling them to ask for faith, for strength, for a closer walk, for perseverance and such. When trials come our way and life gets hard, rather than pray for the trials to leave, we can ask for God's Word to grow in our hearts and for Him to make us more like His Son. He will give it.
I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father. [v25-28].

Proverbs and parables had been the standard practice of Christ for imparting spiritual truth to the crowds and even to the disciples. Christ said He would now speak plainly. As if in an immediate turn around, in verse 29, the disciples said now He was speaking plainly.

This was not the result of an immediate switch in style on Christ's part; this was because their eyes and ears were opened to understand. We know this by context; for in verse 30, they said, "Now we know that You know all things and do not need anyone to question You; this is why we believe that you came from God." They could not have made this declaration from one paragraph of exposition or even one conversation with Jesus. All the things they saw and heard for the last three years were coming together into a clear understanding.

Jesus reiterated what He had told them several times already: Ask the Father in My name. This is the pattern of prayer as Jesus laid out: we pray to the Father in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ. The disciples must have grasped this because they responded, "now you are speaking plainly." [v29].

Regarding asking the Father, Jesus said, "I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf." We know Jesus is making intercession for us (Rom 8:34) and He promised whatever we ask in His name will be given (15:16). So, it does not appear He was saying He will not ask the Father on our behalf. From the context, it seems the meaning is He does not have to coerce a reluctant or unwilling Father to grant our request, for the Father loves us.
If we love Christ and believe He was sent by the Father, the Father loves us. He is more than willing to grant our requests because of our love for Christ. We know we love God if we keep His commandments (1Jo 2:3; 5:3). The Father is eager to fellowship with those who believe and obey (1Jo 1:5-9).

If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. [14:23].

But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. [1Jo 1:7].

Jesus told them He was leaving the world and going back to the Father. This, too, had been a running theme in this conversation.

He returned to the Father to make intercession for the believers; He is making intercession to a Father who is willing to forgive us and to love us. The Apostle John said if we confess our sins, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness." [1Jo 1:9]. This demonstrates a willingness on the part of the Father to forgive us and keep us in fellowship with Him.

After Jesus said these things, the disciples said now He was speaking plainly and now they knew He knew all things and came from God (v29-30). As we said before, this was not the result of Jesus saying He would speak plainly to them in the future and suddenly they heard plainly. God opened them up to understand what they had been taught. In the hours to come, they were going to need this.

THE DISCIPLES WILL BE SCATTERED

Do you now believe? [v31].

Though Jesus spent much time teaching the disciples and they believed He was the Son of God, the Messiah, they were still slow to understand. They still wanted to call down lightning upon the Samaritans (Luk 9:54), hinder children from "bothering" Christ (Mar 10:13; Luk 18:15-18) and they were arguing who was the
greatest among them (Luk 9:46; 22:24-27). They still had this mindset Christ would rule and they would be great.

**Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave Me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with Me. [v32].**

Jesus told them the hour is coming. He did not say the day is coming. The time was upon them and the hour was imminent.

Jesus warned them not to rest upon their knowledge or their feelings at this moment because they would soon be scattered and leave Him. In the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, Jesus told the disciples they would be scattered, but the disciples, led by Peter, vowed they would die for Him (Mat 26:31-35; Mar 14:27-31). When they were scattered and hiding for their lives, how they must have reflected upon their words.

> Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn My hand against the little ones. [Zec 13:7].

Christ was sent by the Father and Christ came to do His will (6:38). The Father was with the Son during the trial, the mockings and the crucifixion. Though Christ would feel abandoned by the Father as He poured out His wrath upon His Son (Mat 27:46; Mar 15:34), yet the Father would be with Him.

> My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me? [Psa 22:1].

When the disciples saw Christ on the cross, did they understand the Father was with Christ? Did they understand He had overcome the world?

**DID THE FATHER ABANDON CHRIST ON THE CROSS?**

Many preach Jesus was separated from the Father when He suffered on the cross. This cannot be so, because Jesus said the Father was with Him (v32).
One argument made for God abandoning Christ on the cross is He cannot look at sin (Hab 1:13). This was the cry of Habakkuk as he saw the wicked prosper and he sought to remind God of the favor these men appear to receive. But, in fact, this very God "who cannot look at sin," became sin for us. So, this was Habakkuk making a case from human understanding.

When we examine whether God can look at sin, Scripture seems to indicate the meaning to be God cannot look on sin with favor; He cannot give approval to sin. The Bible says the wicked will not stand in the judgment (Psa 1:5) and the boastful shall not stand before God (Psa 5:5). However, the Bible says every knee will bow before Him (Rom 14:11; Php 2:10). This means sinners, full of sin, will be looking upon Christ while kneeling, not standing and God will be looking upon these sinners. The Bible says they will perish; they will be destroyed (Psa 1:6; 5:6). Those who practice sin cannot stand before Him, because God will not approve sin.

The Bible says Christ became sin for us (2Co 5:21). He did not become a sinner; He did not become sinful; He never practiced sin nor did He sin even once (Heb 4:15; 1Pe 2:22). Scripture says He took our sin and nailed it to the cross (Col 2:14). This means when Christ was nailed to the cross our sin was nailed with Him. He bore God's wrath and He paid our debt.

The Prophet Isaiah wrote it was the will of God to crush Him (Isa 53:10-11). God's wrath was poured out on Jesus Christ while on the cross. The Bible says He is our propitiation (Rom 3:25-26; Heb 2:17; 1Jo 2:2, 4:10). To be our propitiation means He satisfied God's wrath. We are saved from God's wrath through Christ's blood (Rom 5:9). Therefore, God saved us from Himself.

So, was God angry at Christ? and did He turn away?

The purpose of God's wrath is to demonstrate His justice (Rom 1:18; 2:5; 3:25-26; Rev 19:15). When God exercises His wrath, does He turn away or does He look upon His enemies in triumph? The Bible says, those who worship the Beast will suffer torment, God's wrath, forever. They will suffer in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb (Rev 14:10). Forever, Christ will look upon His enemies in triumph. If God looks upon His enemies while pouring out His
wrath, could God's wrath be satisfied if the Father turned away while He crushed His Son who was made sin on our behalf? Therefore, if God was executing His wrath upon His Son for all the sins of His people, would He not look upon the Son as He executed His wrath?

My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me? Why are You so far from saving Me, from the words of My groaning? [Psa 22:1].

Was the question, "why have You forsaken Me?" describing the Father as turning away? Or was the question rhetorical? The second half of the verse complains of lack of salvation or help from the torment of this wrath. This was the "forsaking." Psalm 22 describes the agony of Christ on the cross and declares the Father has not hidden His face from Him.

For He has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and He has not hidden his face from Him, but has heard, when He cried to Him. [Psa 22:24].

There is much to consider here. Some who argue the Father and the Son were separated at the cross make some humanly reasonable arguments. However, the Trinity of God has never been separated. God is One; the three persons of the Godhead are one and nothing can separate Them. Furthermore, Jesus said He was not alone because the Father was with Him (v32). He said the disciples would scatter and leave Him, but the Father would be with Him; this means the Father would not leave Him or turn away.

Many professing Christians shy away from speaking about the wrath of God. But God's wrath against sinners is terrible and real. To redeem man His wrath must be satisfied. Christ took this wrath upon Himself (10:11). To those who disobey Christ, God's wrath remains upon them (3:36). His wrath will remain upon them forever; it will never be satisfied. We must warn the unbeliever, he will face the wrath of God if he does not repent.
PREPARING THE DISCIPLES FOR TRIAL

I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world. [v33].

Christians are not promised prosperity in this world. Nor should we desire it. Jesus said where our treasure is, so will our heart be (Mat 6:21; Luk 12:24). The Bible does not say wealth is bad or wrong but it does warn against desiring it and seeking it (1Ti 6:10). We are to seek the Kingdom of God; He is our provision (Mat 6:10,11,33). We cannot seek God's kingdom if we are seeking our own (Mat 6:24).

These things He said to the disciples that night: He taught them to serve; He warned He would be betrayed; He gave them a commandment to love each other; He promised them He will prepare a place for them with Him in Heaven; He told them He is the only way to the Father and He told them He is life and truth; He told them if they have seen Him, they have seen the Father; He promised to send the Holy Spirit after Him who will teach them; He told them if they love Him, they will keep His commandments; He told them they cannot produce fruit unless they abide in Him and if they do not produce fruit, they will burn in Hell; He told them the world will hate them just as the world hates Him; He told them they would be scattered but the Father would be with Him. He told them all these things so they would have peace; so they would think on these things and have peace through Him.

Before He left, before things got crazy, before they were scattered, He gave them assurance in Him and gave them a foundation of sound doctrine. When everything seemed chaotic and wrong and they would be overwhelmed by events and authorities, He wanted them to remember these things. As He hung, dying on the cross, He wanted them to remember He had overcome the world.

When we focus our eyes upon what we want in the world and the problems we face here, we cannot have peace. But when we seek God, as the Apostle Paul taught, "by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving," we will have "the peace of God, which surpasses all
understanding, [guarding our] hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." [Php 4:6-7]. God, alone, is our sanity in an insane world.

In chapter eight of Romans, the Apostle Paul wrote everything works for our good because God is conforming us into the image of His Son (Rom 8:28-29). This means there are no frivolous trials, temptations or persecutions. So Paul asked the question, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" [Rom 8:31].

If God spared not His own Son on our behalf, will He not give us all things to keep us in Him? Can anyone bring a charge against us before God, when He has justified us and Christ is interceding for us? Can anything separate us from God's love? Tribulation, distress, persecution, hunger, nakedness, danger or sword; even if we are killed can we be separated from God? NO! We are more than conquerors through God who loves us and nothing can separate us from Him (Rom 8:28-39).

God did not spare His Son and Christ died to bring us to God (Rom 8:32; 1Pe 3:18). When the world overwhelms us, remember Jesus said He has overcome the world and Paul said we are more than overcomers because of what Christ has done for us (v33; Rom 8:37). God works everything for good, to make us more like Christ.

Remember in trial, our hope is in Christ.

Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. [1Jo 4:4].

For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. [1Jo 5:4].

IN CLOSING

Jesus was giving His final teaching before He would leave the disciples. He told them He was leaving and they would see Him no more but a while later, they would see Him again. He was going to die on the cross but He was going to rise again. Death was not the end for Christ.
Christ compared their coming sufferings and His death to a pregnancy. There is much agony in the process but there is great joy when new life springs forth.

Whatever we ask the Father, in Christ's name, He will give it so our joy will be full. Can our joy be full in the world? No. In the world we will have trouble. Our joy is complete in Christ and the Father will give us anything we ask which will bring our walk closer to Him. The Apostle James wrote if we lack wisdom to ask of God and He will hold nothing back (Jam 1:5).

Jesus warned the disciples they would be scattered but He would not be alone, for the Father would be with Him.

He told them they would have trouble in the world but He has overcome the world. In the world, we will have trouble, but no trial, no temptation, no oppression is frivolous. Christ has overcome the world.

Do not seek after the world or anything in it; seek after Christ and the Father has promised to give us anything we ask. The more we become like Christ, the more we become overcomers.

And they have conquered [overcome] him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. [Rev 12:11].
John 17:1-8 Christ Revealed The Father to the Elect

During the Last Supper, Jesus began His teaching with, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me." [14:1]. He ended with, "I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." [16:33]. Peace is the result of taking our eyes off the world and trusting in Christ.

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. [Isa 26:3].

His teaching is over and time to give His life is close at hand. He ended His teaching with a prayer to the Father. He did this in the presence of His disciples, for their benefit, and in this prayer He confirmed solid doctrine.

Some professing Christians want to dispute or water down some of these doctrines Jesus professed in His prayer. How can we think we can refute what God said when He talked with God? If you feel inclined to disagree with some of the doctrines Jesus taught, you might want to examine yourself to see if you are in the faith (2Co 13:5). It matters not that some heavy hitters might agree with you: it is a dangerous thing to question what God has made clear.

Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You, since You have given Him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. [v1b-2].

"Glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You." [v1]. The hour had come for the Son to glorify the Father by His obedience unto death. The Father would glorify the Son by raising Him from the dead.

The eternal covenant: The Son glorifying the Father by His obedience; even to His death upon the cross. The Father glorifying the Son by giving Him a Bride and a Kingdom. Through this covenant and for this covenant, the Son became man and the Father
exalted the Son to the highest authority and has made Him judge over all mankind.

who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. [Php 2:6-11].

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead. [Act 17:30-31].

In chapter twelve, when some Greek men asked to be introduced to Jesus, He replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." [12:23]. He described His imminent death as a seed which dies and bears much fruit. His death was soon to bring much fruit among the Gentiles.

In the current passage, the context for His imminent glorification is the Father had "given Him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him." [v2]. He was glorified in death by crushing death and giving life to those who are His.

that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. . .For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself. [5:23,26].

Christ stated plainly the doctrine of election. He did not say He would give eternal life to all who accepted Him into their heart or who made a decision for Christ. He said He will give eternal life to
those whom the Father has given Him. The Apostle Paul wrote, the Father chose us in Christ before the world was created (Eph 1:4-11), this is by God's grace, lest any man should boast (Eph 2:8-9). To be elect, is a gift from God.

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one. [10:28-30].

"You have given Him authority over all flesh (v2)." In the Great Commission (Mat 28:18-20), Jesus said all authority had been given to Him. Therefore, we are commanded to make disciples and teach all nations. Yet, the modern American gospel teaches Jesus wants to be our friend; they proclaim a Savior, while forgetting He must first be LORD.

With this authority over all flesh, He gives life to those whom the Father has given Him (and, implicitly, condemns those who disobey). The Son is glorified in His death because the fruit of His death is life; life for all God has given the Son.

Yet it was the will of the [Father] to crush Him; He has put Him to grief; when His soul makes an offering for guilt, He shall see His offspring; He shall prolong His days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. Out of the anguish of His soul He shall see and be satisfied; by His knowledge shall the righteous One, My servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the many, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors. [Isa 53:10-12].

This is why He is called the Firstborn: not because He was created, but His offspring are those given Him by the Father; those whose sins He took upon Himself. He is the firstborn among many brothers
(Rom 8:29). He is "the firstborn of the dead . . . who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood." [Rev 1:5].

The One who has all authority, came to earth to be crushed by the Father, so that, He could bring life to those the Father chose in Him from before the creation of the world. This is an amazing thing and we do well to meditate upon this daily. everyday.

**THIS IS ETERNAL LIFE**

This is eternal life, that they know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. [v3].

And eternal life is this: to be caught up in this circle of love and glory between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; to know the only true God.

But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. [1Jo 1:7].

The Apostle John wrote Christ has made the Father known (1:18). Jesus Christ has come in the flesh and dwelt among man so we may know God and, thereby, have eternal life. John wrote later to the Christian Jews, Christ has given us understanding so we may know Him who is true; we may know the Father.

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true [the Father]; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. [1Jo 5:20].

But whom do we seek to know? Most professing Christians seek to know a god acceptable to the world. They compromise the Gospel to make it pleasing to their peers; to make Jesus relevant. But, be warned: He rebuked those who worked for the praise of man rather than the glory of God (5:44). He said these people cannot be saved.

The foundation of God's glory is His holiness and righteousness. Anything which impunes His glory is an attack against God. Yet, so
many professing Christians think God winks at sin. They claim God "knows my heart." They do not fear God. They think frivolously of His holiness and His wrath. This is the god they seek.

Eternal life is this: to know the Father and the Son; to know the true God. Our attitude should be the same as the Prophet Hosea. We should strive to know the God of the Bible.

Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord. [Hos 6:3].

Press on to know God. Abide in Christ and persevere to the end. There is no coasting or retirement in the faith. If we do not abide in Christ, in the Word, then, like the branch, we wither. If we wither, then we will be tossed into the fire. Those who do not persevere cannot be saved (Mat 24:13).

CHRIST CAME TO GLORIFY THE FATHER

I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me in Your own presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed. [v4-5].

God is ultimately and intimately interested in glorifying Himself; every member of the Godhead glorifying each other. In verses four and five, Christ continued His request for the Father to glorify the Son, which began in verse one. He affirmed to the Father He glorified Him on earth by accomplishing the work He gave Him to do. Christ was obedient, even to His death on the cross (Php 2:8). These first five verses affirm, the Persons of the Godhead do everything to glorify each other.

Christ desired the glory He had in the Father's presence; the glory He had with Him before the world was created. Before the world began and through all eternity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, rejoiced and gloried in their love for each other. Everything they do is for the glory of each other.
God's provision for salvation and eternal life is not about the glory of man nor is it about the value of man; this is for the glory of God. God will exalt His holiness and righteousness.

. . . Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. [Isa 6:3].

CHRIST REVEALED THE FATHER TO THOSE THE FATHER HAD GIVEN HIM

I have manifested Your name to the people whom You gave Me out of the world. Yours they were, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they know that everything that You have given Me is from You. For I have given them the words that You gave Me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from You; and they have believed that You sent me. [v6-8].

Those who follow Christ and believe, the disciples and everyone after them, are given to the Son by the Father. This means they belong to the Father. Christ said no one comes to Him, unless the Father draws him (6:44). God draws all those who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4) and Christ said all those given to Him will come to Him (6:37).

The elect are not a mere foreknowing of God. For these have been chosen and they belonged to the Father, who gave them to Christ. Can the doctrine of election be more clear than the plain words of Christ? Nothing God does is by chance; everything happens for God's purposes (Eph 1:11). In this passage, the disciples and those who believe were given to the Son by the Father, because they belonged to the Father.

Christ manifested the Father to the disciples. He showed them the Father through His miracles and His teaching. He displayed the Father in the way He sought out people and reached out to the crowds. In turn, it was clear to the disciples, the miracles and the teachings of Christ were from the Father. Christ said He only spoke
the words given Him by the Father and He only did the things He saw the Father doing.

Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. [5:19].

I have much to say about you and much to judge, but He who sent Me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from Him. . . .I do nothing on My own authority, but speak just as the Father taught Me. [8:26,28b].

For I have not spoken on My own authority, but the Father who sent Me has Himself given Me a commandment; what to say and what to speak. [12:49].

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. [15:15].

Christ said He revealed the Father to those the Father had given Him. The Apostle John said He has made the Father known (1:18). He spoke to the crowds, but the multitudes did not hear. The Apostle John explained God hardened their hearts lest they believe and be healed (12:49). To understand the Word, is the work of the Spirit (6:29); to the unbeliever, the Word is foolishness (1Co 2:14). Jesus rebuked the unbelievers, saying they could not hear Him because they were not of His sheep (10:26).

"...They have kept Your Word." [v6]. Christ manifested the Father to His followers, whom the Father had given to Him, and the result was they kept His Word; they honored Him with obedience. They were doers of the Word and not just hearers (Jam 1:22). True faith results in action. If we truly believe, Christ produces fruit in us (15:1-6). How do we know if we are truly saved? We keep His Word. This is God's doing (6:29).
What does it mean to "keep" the Word? Doesn't the word "keep" have to do with care and feeding, preserving, maintaining and such? So the idea of keeping would be to feed upon, protect and obey, would it not?

This is the sign of a true follower of Christ: they abide in the Word, they defend the Word and they obey the Word. Whatever is written in the Word, they feast upon, they defend, they obey. They do not question it; they do not water it down; they do not compromise; they do not substitute niceness; they do not seek man's approval. This is what Jesus meant when He said we must eat His flesh and drink His blood in chapter six: we need His Word so we feed upon it.

By this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know Him" but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps His word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in Him: whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked. [1Jo 2:3].

The Apostle James wrote if we hear the Word, but do not do what it says, we are deceiving ourselves (Jam 1:22). This obedience is not a legalism nor is it a salvation of works; for no one can be justified by what they do (Rom 3:20). We are powerless to obey the Law; the Apostle Paul wrote what he wants to do, he cannot, but he does what he does not want to do (Rom 7:4-25) and the Apostle James wrote if we fail on one point of the Law, we violate all the Law (Jam 2:10). However, through Christ we keep the Law.

Jesus told us to abide in Him. He said if we abide in Him, He will abide in us and, just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can we produce fruit unless we abide in Him; for it is He who produces fruit in us (15:1-6). The Apostle Paul built upon this when he wrote telling us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. He said it is God who works in us (Php 2:12-13). If we are truly following Christ, God will produce this fruit in us; we will abide in the Word, we will defend the Word and we will obey the Word.
Jesus said, "everything that You have given Me is from You. For I have given them the words that You gave Me." [v7-8]. Several times, Jesus said He only spoke what the Father told Him (5:19; 8:26,28,40; 12:49) and to the disciples He iterated to them all He heard from the Father (15:15). Christ made the Father known, so those who are His will believe. This is for the glory of God.

IN CLOSING

All authority has been given to Christ. He is God, yet He chose to become man in order to redeem the elect for God.

The definition of eternal life is to know the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. To have fellowship with God is eternal life.

We see in this picture and other Scripture, God is ultimately and intimately interested in glorifying Himself; every member of the Godhead glorifying the others. Everything God does is for His own glory. Even the death of the Son and His taking upon Himself the sin of man, was done for the glory of God.

Jesus clearly spoke the doctrine of election: "the people whom You gave Me out of the world. Yours they were, and You gave them to Me." How can this doctrine be denied or watered down? Scripture is clear the Father chose His own before the creation of the world and He has given them to Christ. This doctrine was reiterated in Jesus' prayer to the Father; it was spoken by God to God, yet some professing Christians take offense and deny the words of Christ.
**John 17:9-19 Christ Works To Sanctify And Preserve Believers**

In the opening of His prayer to the Father, the Son confirmed He had come to glorify the Father. He also came to give life to those the Father had given Him; those whom the Father had chosen before the creation of the world.

> I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. [v9].

Christ's love and attention are toward those who believe; not to the world. In verse twenty, Christ extended this scope toward all those who will believe in Him through the extended word of His disciples. Christ loved and prayed for every person the Father has given Him; every person who will be saved.

In this verse, the meaning of "world" is everyone who does not belong to Christ. And here He said in plain words, He is not praying for the world; for those who do not belong to Him. People misconstrue the meaning of John 3:16 when they say God loves the whole world. There are many who say God loves everyone, but there is little Scripture to give indication to this. We know Christ makes intercession for the believers constantly before the Father (Heb 7:25), but He makes no request to the Father for those who do not follow Him; and He affirmed this here.

Therefore, it is a lie to tell the unbeliever, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." Jesus said He will not even pray for them. This was stated by the Son to the Father; said from God to God. The psalmist said God is indignant toward the unbeliever everyday (Psa 7:11).

> All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. [v10].

This claim put Jesus Christ on equal footing with the Father. We can pray "all mine is Yours," but we cannot pray "all Yours are mine." We receive from God, but we can give nothing to Him. Only Christ, who is equal to the Father, can make this claim.
Those who believe belong to the Father and to the Son. We are God's possession. We serve Him, we do not serve ourselves. We seek His glory, not the glory of our own. We will persevere to the end because no one can take us from His hand (10:28-29). We are His possession.

Here we see the love of the Father and the Son working in unison to preserve those who are His. This should give us great joy, for we know Christ is working to intercede for us constantly before the Father (Rom 8:34), but it is not as if the Father is hostile toward us. On the contrary, here we see the Father, who is holy, righteous and just, is nonetheless determined for us to persevere and no one can take us from His hand.

This also gives us a glimpse into the purpose of creation when Jesus said He is glorified in them. We who believe are the glory of Christ and we have been given to Him for this purpose. This should be a clear message and a reminder, salvation and eternal life are not about us and our glory; these mysteries are about the glory of God.

And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given Me, that they may be one, even as We are one. [v11].

Christ spoke as if His work was done. God is not bound by time and it was determined before the creation of the world, Christ would die to redeem His own. He will not turn back from His task nor is He bound by time. Therefore, He could speak as if the work was already done.

He was looking forward to returning to the Father again. The Apostle Paul wrote, "[the Father] raised [Christ] from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named. . ." [Eph 1:20-21].

His concern here was for those He was leaving behind. He prayed the Father would keep those He had given Him. This includes the disciples and all those who would follow after; even us. Jesus said no one can snatch His sheep out of His hand (10:28); nor can they
snatch them from His Father's hand (10:29). Those who are His are held by Him and the Father.

When He prayed the Father to keep them, He gave a reason: "that they may be one, even as We are one." [v11]. When we look at the visible church, we see fractured groups and people. There are many denominations. Within these groups or denominations, some individuals are walking with Christ and others are promoting sin. This used to bother me considerably, but I came to realize many or most people within the visible church do not follow Christ. This is what Jesus taught in the parable of the wheat and the tares (Mat 13:24-30).

Nonetheless, those who are truly His, do enjoy sweet fellowship and brotherhood together. Not in perfection, because we all have a sin nature. But we take seriously the admonition in the Book of Hebrews not to forsake the gathering together. We seek to be with our brothers and sisters to encourage each other in the faith (Heb 10:24-25).

I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. [v12].

Here Christ spoke clearly the doctrine of election. Some people are chosen for destruction: "vessels of wrath prepared for destruction." [Rom 9:22].

When Jesus said He had lost none "except," He did not mean somehow one got away. Although he was one of the twelve, Judas was never chosen for life. His purpose was to betray Christ, thus fulfilling prophecy (Psa 41:9; Zec 11:12-13). Though he was destined for destruction, yet he was not destined against his will. Christ taught this, therefore, we should look closely into it, rather than be offended.

Those the Father has given Him truly believe and no one can ever take them out of His hand (10:28). If we abide in Christ, we are assured we will persevere to the end because Christ holds us and guards us with His hand.
But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. [v13].

Many pastors proclaim they do not teach doctrine because it divides. But Christ said His teachings or doctrines bring joy.

Even as He knew He was on His way to die, He spent this last evening fellowshipping with those He loved and instructing them in sound doctrine. The study of sound doctrine, what God has given us in His Word and wants us to know, leads to joy.

I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. [v14].

Many hear the Word of God, but it does nothing for them; it makes no change in them. But some are given the Word; this means the Holy Spirit has given them understanding of the Word (1Co 2:14; 1Jo 5:20). Those who have been given the Word will speak the Word. This is not of the world. The world loves those who speak the world. Those who speak the Word are repulsive to those who speak the world.

If we have been given the Word, we will spend time in the Word. We will not be attracted to worldly wisdom. The more time we spend in the Word, the more repulsive becomes the psychology and positive motivation of the world and the more the world hates us. When we cast off the world's wisdom, we demonstrate we are not of the world.

If the world's wisdom, such as positive motivation or eastern thought, is appealing to you, then you are of the world and are not following Christ.

Many preachers and professing Christians try to make the Gospel appealing to the world. If we truly love Christ, why would we compromise His Gospel for the world's approval? Many professing Christians claim preaching God's holiness and man's need to repent is repulsive and hinders people from coming to Christ. But didn't Jesus say no one comes to Him unless the Father draw them (6:44)? And, didn't Jesus say all whom the Father has given Him will come
to Him (6:37)? Will we take God at His Word or will we trust in our own devices to bring man to God?

To change the Gospel is to change who Jesus Christ is. Will we seek to win people to a Jesus Christ made in our own image, an acceptable Christ? Or will we seek to win people to the Jesus Christ of the Bible?

If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will also keep yours. [15:18-20].

The world loves those who are of the world; men are focused upon creating their empires here on earth. They enrich each other with opportunities for worldly pleasures. "Will not their livestock, their property and all their beasts be ours?" [Gen 34:23]. This is the world's view; this is the world's wisdom.

However, those who have been given God's Word, who view their life as a sojourn in enemy territory, as ambassadors for Christ, cannot be loved by the world. The truly saved know their home is in Heaven and they value nothing of this world.

The follower of Christ takes to heart the admonition of Christ, "A servant is not greater than his Master." [13:16; 15:20]. Because the world hated Christ, if we truly follow Him, we will never seek to win the approval of the world nor fill our lives with the pleasures thereof.

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. [v15].

In the parable of the sower and the seed, Jesus said the evil one looks to snatch away the Word which has been sown (Mat 13:19). One of the most effective ways he has of doing this is by corrupting the company one keeps. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Bad company
ruins good morals." [1Co 15:33]. And "a little leaven leavens the whole lump." [1Co 5:6].

We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but He who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. [1Jo 5:18].

Verse 14 through 16 begin and end with, "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world." Between these two, Christ did not pray we would be taken out of the world, for He has work for us to do. He prayed for our protection from evil, so we would persevere without being corrupted.

Many professing Christians do become corrupted and they fall away. They are not saved. But those who are His will persevere (Heb 6:11-12; 1Jo 2:19). Paul admonished us to keep alert with all perseverance, praying for each other (Eph 6:18).

Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. [v17].

Sanctify means to set apart or declare holy; to consecrate or purify. Sanctification is God's work in us to conform us to the likeness of His Son (Rom 8:28-29). Through sanctification, we become more like Christ (1Jo 3:2-3).

In this passage, Jesus said we are sanctified through the Word. This is not a once-over; this is daily in the Word, taking up our cross to follow Christ. Jesus told the disciples, "Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you." [15:3]. We are sanctified by the Word of God (v17). God's Word purifies us; exposure to the Word creates a desire to obey the truth (1Pe 1:22).

The sum of Your word is truth. [Psa 119:160].

God's revealed Word, the Scriptures, is truth (Eph 1:13; Col 1:5). The more we are in the Word, the more we are exposed to the truth and the more we become sanctified.

Those who are sanctified are not taken out of the world. We are protected from evil (v15) so we will not be corrupted (v16). Christ
said He sends them into the world, just as the Father sent Him in the world (v18).

1. We have been given the Word; we are not of the world (v14).

2. God protects us from the devil (v15).

3. We are not of the world but are sanctified in the Word (v16-17).

4. God sends us into the world to proclaim His Word (v18).

Christ had a mission to give His life for our sins. We have a mission to spend our lives telling others what Christ has done (Eph 2:10). Though we are in the world, we are not of the world. We are sent into it to testify.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. [Mat 28:18-20].

As the Father sent the Son, so the Son sends us. To make the Father known. "He has made Him known." [1:18]. "I made known to them Your name." [7:26].

**For their sake I consecrate Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.** [v19].

To consecrate is to set apart as sacred; it is a synonym for sanctify. At another time, Jesus said He was consecrated by the Father (10:36). Here He said He consecrated Himself. So the Father and the Son are in agreement, Christ is set apart as sacred. His work in redeeming His people is a sacred work. He gave Himself to the cross; He gave Himself to die for our sin (15:13). The purpose is to sanctify or set apart as holy those whom He has redeemed.

[He] gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for
His own possession who are zealous for good works.  
[Tit 2:14].

The modern American gospel says God loves you the way you are and Christ died so you can go to Heaven. But the Bible says Christ died to redeem us from sin. He did not die so we could remain in our sin. He died to purify us and make us zealous for good works (Eph 2:10). He died to sanctify us and make us more like Himself. If we are happy in our sin, we might want to examine ourselves because we might not be saved (2Co 13:5).

For our sanctification, Christ has left us in the world; He has sent us into the world. Not to be like the world, but to be a witness for His Gospel of salvation. Christ has performed a sacred, sanctifying work and He is setting aside a holy, sanctified people to declare His salvation. We are sent into the world. Not to be of it, but to be ambassadors for Christ (2Co 5:20).

To be in the world and not of it requires perseverance. This is why the Apostles wrote admonishing us to persevere (Rom 5:3-4; 2Th 1:4-5; Heb 12:1-2; Jam 1:2-4, 12; Jud 1:20-21).

we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. [Heb 3:14].

To be truly saved, we must heed the words of Christ, deny ourselves and daily pick up our cross and follow Him (Mat 16:24; Luk 9:23).

The one who endures to the end will be saved. [Mat 24:13].

IN CLOSING

In the ninth verse, the meaning of "world" is everyone who does not belong to Christ. And here He said in plain words, He is not praying for the world. He is not praying for those who do not belong to Him. When people say John 3:16 means God loves the whole world, even those who do not believe, it is because they do not understand the meaning of the word "world" in proper context.

Those who believe, belong to the Father and the Son. Jesus said He is glorified in those who are His. The Apostle Paul wrote we are
chosen in Christ before the creation of the world for His purpose; for His glory (Eph 1:11-12).

Those who follow Christ are kept by God and they are united with others who belong to Him. Furthermore, Jesus said they were given to Him from the Father. This means, before they belong to Christ, they belonged to the Father.

In plain words, Jesus said the Father has given Him those who are His. The elect are chosen for life. When speaking of Judas, Christ confirmed some are chosen for destruction. This is irrefutable doctrine, because God said this to God.

Jesus said He has given us His Word and the world hates us. This means, if we have His Word, we will speak it. For the world cannot hate us if it does not know we have His Word. You cannot be a secret Christian.

We are in the world, not of it. For we are sanctified in the Word.

Christ sanctified Himself so we may be sanctified. His sanctification was His death on the cross for our sins and He rose again, conquering death. Our sanctification is to be in the Word.
Christ had prayed those whom the Father had given Him would be sanctified in the Word and protected from the evil one. Now, He makes clear, His prayer is for all the elect, not just the disciples.

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. [v20-21].

Jesus prayed for those who would believe as a result of the testimony of the disciples; this includes all the elect, through all generations. Everything He prayed for the disciples, He prayed for all believers.

In verse 11, Jesus prayed the Father keep them in His name, "that they may be one, even as We are one." In this keeping, He had prayed the Father not take us out of the world but protect us from evil and sanctify us in His Word. There is no room for carnality or sinful lifestyles among the believers, because He prayed we may be in the Father and the Son, as they are in each other. As they live for each other's glory, we would live for His glory.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. [Col 3:16-17].

...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. [1Co 10:31].

He prayed for all believers, in all generations. He prayed for God's keeping and He prayed for our unity. Therefore, it follows, our unity is not built on feelings, nor is it built upon all professing Christians getting along. The tares and the wheat cannot get along. Our unity is built on persevering in righteousness and in truth. "As You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us." [v21].
God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [1Jo 1:5-9].

Jesus prayed for this unity so the world will believe the Father sent the Son (v21). We don't see the world being saved; not in our time. But Christ was not praying the world believe unto salvation. If this were the case, He would not have said He was not praying for the world (v9). The belief of the world, to which Jesus was referring, is that by our witness they will know. They may not receive the truth, but they will know.

The Apostle Paul assured us, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Php 2:10-11). The world will know and will finally acknowledge, but this knowing will not lead to salvation.

Jesus said everyone will know we are disciples of Christ by our love for each other (13:35). Here He prayed the Father keep His people out of evil and in the truth so the world will know the Father sent the Son. How we live makes a great impact on the world. The world does not love; the world clings to evil. If we follow Christ, we are different from the world and the world will know Christ is truth. Jesus told Nicodemus, the world clings to darkness because their deeds are evil (3:19). But those who follow Him come to the light, "so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God." [3:20].

The glory that You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as We are one. [v22].

Christ has given us His glory. If we truly follow Christ, we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. Just as the Son was in the Father and the
Father in the Son, so too, we have this fellowship in us. The Holy Spirit works in us to sanctify us and make us more like Christ.

For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified. [Rom 8:29-30].

Those who are His, He predestined, He called, He justified and He glorified. We have this glory in the Holy Spirit's work in our lives and we have a future glory, which is our hope.

To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. [Col 1:27].

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. [2Pe 1:3-4].

Christ gave us this glory so we can be in Him as He is in the Father (v23); escaping the corruption in the world, so we can have fellowship with God. Christ has given us His glory and we are united with other believers for His glory. John MacArthur said we participate in all the attributes and essence of God through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (Study Bible, at 17:22).

Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world. [v24].

Christ is anxious for us to be with Him, to see His glory. This is more than I can comprehend; it gives me great hope. Those who
truly believe will be there and will glorify Him because He is the one who died for our sins to satisfy God's wrath and He imputed His righteousness upon us, so the Father will receive us. He chose us or predestined before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4), He called us, He justified us and He glorified us (Rom 8:30). Though we see this glory veiled in this fallen world, it is our hope and we should be eager for it. We should be eager daily to see Christ; He is anxious for us to be with Him.

Christ ended His prayer with His acknowledgment of the Father. Though the world does not know the Father, those who are in the Son know He is sent from the Father (v25).

Why cannot the world know the Father? Because the Father is righteous and this is how Christ addressed Him, "O righteous Father." [v25]. He said those who follow Him, know the Father has sent Him (v25). How do we know the Father? Jesus said He made the Father known.

I made known to them Your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them. [v26].

We did not come to Christ on our own; here Christ affirmed it is the work of God. He made the Father known to us; we were not seeking. It is the work of God we are in the world, but not of it and we persevere as He continues to make God's name known to us. His goal is for the love which the Father has for the Son may be in us, His followers.

We cannot love God and the world (1Jo 2:15; Jam 4:4). We must be careful not to build our empires down here. For where our treasure is, there will our heart be (Mat 6:21).

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. [1Ti 4:16].

Keep a close watch means our walk with Christ must be deliberate and it must be our priority. We must take time to check our lives according the Word; we must live our lives to glorify God alone.
And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. [1Jo 5:20-21].

IN CLOSING

John chapter 17 is a chapter of prayer and doctrine. A prayer from the Son to the Father. Many call it Christ's high priestly prayer.

In this closing section, Christ expressed His concern for all believers, in all generations, so we may be one as He and the Father are one. His desire is for His people to be a witness to the world, so the world will know the Father sent Christ into the world.

Christ has given His glory to us, so we may be one. One with God, not in the world. This too, is a witness to the world so they may know the Father sent the Son and that He loves those who follow Christ.

Christ is anxious for those who love Him to be with Him. This is a glorious hope.

The world does not know God. We who believe, know Him and believe the Father sent the Son. But Christ has made this known to us and He will continue to reveal this to us, so the love of God will be in us; Christ in us.
What Christ Taught Us As He Prayed

The final night together for Jesus and the disciples, before His crucifixion, is presented in the Gospel of John beginning in chapter thirteen. The night began with Jesus washing the disciples' feet. After this, Jesus announced one of them would betray Him; He gave a command to love each other; and He foretold Peter's denial.

After these things, in chapters 14 through 16, He imparted solid doctrine. Christ told them He is preparing a place for them and He wants them to be with Him. He told them He is the only way to the Father and He is life and truth. He promised to send the Holy Spirit who will guide them into all truth. He told them they could not bear fruit unless they abide in Him and He promised whatever they asked in His name He would do. He warned them the world would hate them but assured them He has overcome the world. And, He reaffirmed He would send them the Holy Spirit.

Then, seamlessly, rolls into Christ's high priestly prayer (ch17): "When Jesus had spoken these words, He lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, 'Father, the hour has come. . . '' [v1]. He began His prayer, which contains more doctrine, in the presence of the disciples; teaching them to pray in agreement with Scripture.

Many professing Christians have trouble with certain doctrines in the Bible, even though these doctrines may be stated in plain, clear words. For example, many find the doctrine of election, as presented in Romans chapter nine or Ephesians chapter one, to be offensive or difficult to accept, although the doctrine is stated clearly. So, they do not fully deny the doctrine, but they feel the need to explain it away or water it down. However, in this chapter, Christ iterates the doctrine of election as well as other doctrines in His conversation to the Father and the words are plain and clear. Therefore, it is a dangerous matter to parse these words, for these words were spoken by God, to God.

In His prayer to the Father, Christ expressed His love for His disciples and He reiterated all the doctrine He had taught them that night. He reiterated so much of His teaching in His prayer to the Father. Here is a partial list of the points of doctrine in chapter 17,
gleaned from a once or twice through. This list cannot be considered to be comprehensive for there is so much more to mine from this passage.

1) "The hour has come." [v1]. God designed a specific time and place for Christ to die. Several other times people tried to arrest Him or kill Him, but it did not happen because "His Hour had not yet come." God is always in control.

2) Jesus sought glory from the Father and sought to glorify the Father (v1). Before the creation of the world, throughout eternity past, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit lived in perfect love and unity, glorifying each other. Christ left this glory and came to earth to make the Father known and redeem His people. Still and always seeking God's glory.

3) About His imminent death on the cross, Jesus asked to be glorified (v1). When He took on our sin and gave us His righteousness, He was glorified. There is an eternal covenant and Christ satisfied the wrath of God, for the glory of God.

4) The glory of the Son, glorifies the Father (v1). The Apostle Paul wrote every knee shall bow and every tongue confess Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Php 2:10-11). When Christ is glorified, the Father is glorified.

5) All authority has been given to Jesus (v2). This means He is Lord; we don't make Him Lord (Rom 14:11). The Father has already made Him Lord (Act 2:36). Jesus is our Lord; He is our King; He is our Master. We bow to Him now and follow or we will bow in the end. As Paul wrote in Philippians, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess.

6) The Son gives eternal life to all those given Him by the Father (v2). This is part of His authority. Though no one comes to the Son unless the Father draw Him (6:44), no one comes to the Father except through the Son (14:6). Whoever comes, He will not cast out but He will raise them up to eternal life (6:37-39).

7) What is eternal life? It is knowing the Father and the Son (v3). How do we know the Father and the Son? By spending
time in the Word and in prayer. This wreaks havoc on the false doctrine of fire insurance, given by the modern American gospel. The whole point of going to Heaven is not salvation from Hell; it is to be with God. If you don't have time for God down here, why would you want to spend eternity with Him?

8) Christ came to do the work the Father sent Him to do and He finished it (v4). He came to make the Father known (1:18) and He came to save sinners (1Ti 1:15). He finished the work.

9) The cross was imminent but Christ spoke as if the work was done (v4). God is not constrained by time but in the context of time, there was no question whether Christ would complete the work. This is part of the eternal covenant.

10) Now the work was done, Christ desired His glory once again (v5). He had this glory before the creation of the world; He left this glory to come to earth as a man. When Christ humbled Himself to become a man, He did not set aside His divinity, as some blasphemously proclaim. He set aside His glory, with the promise or covenant He would be glorified again (Php 2:6-11).

11) Christ revealed the Father to those the Father gave Him (v6). Those who are saved were chosen in Christ before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4).

12) The elect were given Him by the Father (v6); they belonged to the Father. This is not a random "coming to Christ." As He said, "all the Father gives Me, will come to me." [6:37].

13) Those who are saved obey God's Word (v6). Jesus taught the disciples, whoever loves Him will keep His Word (14:23). This is an evidence of following Christ, as well as a practice.

14) Those who are saved know everything Christ taught came from the Father (v7). They do not mix the wisdom of the world with the wisdom of God (1Co 3:18-19). Jesus said His sheep hear His voice and will not listen to the voice of another (10:4-5).
15) Christ gave His people the words the Father gave Him (v8). Jesus is the Word (1:1). He has given us His Word in Scripture; this is why we must be in the Word to know Him.

16) The truth is Jesus Christ came from God the Father (v8). He was with Him through all eternity. He is the Truth.

17) Those who follow Christ receive the words and know the truth (v8). This is not a head knowledge. This receiving and knowing are signs of taking this truth as their life. It is a knowing which changes the life. It is a believing unto salvation (3:36).

18) Christ did not come to save the world; in His prayer He specifically did not pray for the world (v9). Christ prayed for those given Him by the Father and this prayer continues as He is in Heaven making intercession for us who believe and are saved (Heb 7:25).

19) Once again, those the Father gave the Son, belong to the Father (v9).

20) All Mine are Yours and Yours are Mine (v10). If we are saved, we belong to God. We don't give ourselves to God because we already belong to Him. We were chosen by the Father in Christ before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4). Those who are saved, belonged to the Father and the Son from the beginning.

21) The reason we are saved is to glorify God (v10). We belonged to God and He saves us for His glory. This idea we are saved to keep us from Hell or to have a relationship with God or to help us with our life is a man centered religion; it is the modern American gospel. If we are saved, we seek to bring glory to Christ. Sure we want to be saved from Hell but if this is the scope of our faith, we are not saved. Jesus said those who are saved "have kept Your Word." [v6] The saved are obedient; they bring glory to Christ and desire to be with Him. To abandon ourself and to seek God's glory is our religion.
22) "I am no longer in the world." [v11]. Once again, God is not constrained by time, but in the context of time, there was no question whether Christ would complete the work.

23) They are in the world. . .keep them in Your name (v11). Jesus said no one can take us from His hand, nor take them from the Father's hand (10:28-29). We belong to God and cannot be taken from Him. This is the reason and the how we persevere. He keeps us to the end.

24) He helps us persevere in unity so we may be one as God is one (v11). Those who are truly saved are in unity. This is God's doing; it does not come about by good feelings or good intentions; it is the work of God. Why do we see division in the visible church? Jesus explained this in the parable of the wheat and the tares (Mat 13:24-30). Many in the visible church do not belong to the bride of Christ; but we who belong are united with others who do.

25) While Christ was on earth, He kept those who were His (v12). Now, He looked to the Father to keep them and we can never be separated from Him (10:29).

26) Christ allowed Judas to betray Him (v12). Judas was the only one lost of the disciples and this was in fulfillment of Scripture. This confirms the teaching in Romans 9; some are destined for or created for destruction. Jesus called Judas "the son of destruction."

27) Christ was going back to the Father (v13). He is seated at the right hand of the Father, ruling with Him in Heaven (Rom 8:34).

28) Christ spoke to bring joy to His followers (v13). Do we take joy in the Scriptures? If we don't find ourselves desiring the Word, we need to examine ourselves to see if we are saved. "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." [15:11].

29) Christ has given us His Word (v14). He taught the disciples and He has left Scripture with us. His Scripture and teaching
continue to this day. If we are following Him, we will prize this gift; we will be in His Word.

30) The world hates those who follow Christ because we are not of this world (v14). The world hates Christ and it will hate us who follow Him. Jesus explained this in chapter fifteen. Those who love the world are enemies of God (Jam 4:4). This should cause us to examine ourselves and see if we love the things of this world more than we desire to spend time with Him.

31) Christ is not of this world (v14). He was not a mere man who lived and died. He lived in eternity with the Father and the Holy Spirit; He lived in perfect glory (v5, et al). But He left all this unspeakable glory to come down to earth (2Co 8:9; Php 2:6-8). He is God (1:1) but He became man (1:14). He is fully God and fully man (Col 2:9; Gal 4:4).

32) Jesus prayed the Father to protect His followers from the evil one (v15). He did not pray we be taken out of the world. We remain to overcome. "And they [overcame Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death." [Rev 12:11]. Sometimes we want to pray God remove all trials from us, but even Christ had to go through trials. Therefore, we should pray God help us overcome temptation and not deliver us over to evil (Mat 6:13).

33) We are not of the world (16). Christ is not of this world, therefore, those who follow Him are not of this world. We are in the world but not of it. We are here to declare His authority and His glory (Mat 28:18-20).

34) We are sanctified in truth; not in how we feel about God (17). Sanctification is the process of the Holy Spirit making us more like Christ. Many professing Christians believe we are called to be a kinder version of the world. Nothing could be further from the truth.

35) God's Word is truth (v17).
36) We are sanctified through the Word of God (17). Jesus told the disciples they were clean because of the word He had spoken to them (15:3). He said if we abide in His Word, we will know the truth and the truth will set us free (8:31-32). The more we are in the Word, the more we become like Christ. The Word sanctifies us.

37) Christ sent us into the world as the Father sent Him (v18). He came to make the Father known (1:18). So, too, we are here to declare Christ's authority and to teach His commandments (Mat 28:18-20). We are not here to have our best life now; we are here to proclaim Christ (Rom 10:14-15).

38) Christ set Himself apart so we may be sanctified (v19). Christ died to ransom those who are His. Those who are His, He sanctifies; He sanctifies them through the Word. He doesn't take us out of the world, yet we are not of the world. We are here to proclaim the authority of Christ. Therefore, if we seek the pleasures of the world and do not seek the Word, we are not set apart; we are not sanctified. If we are not sanctified, we are not saved.

39) Those who believe will declare the truth to others (v20). Christ prayed for those who followed Him and for those who would believe through their word. This is ongoing and it was prayed as if those who believe will tell others, who will believe and tell others. . . Jesus said we are a city on a hill and we do not hide the light under a basket (Mat 5:14-16). The world was in darkness when He came as the Light (1:4,5,9). If we have this Light, we cannot hide it.

40) Christ's work spans the generations of man (v20). Christ prayed not only for those who followed Him when He was alive, but also for those who would believe through their testimony.

41) Faith in Christ comes through the Word (v20). "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone
preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?" [Rom 10:14-15]. We are sent by Christ to proclaim salvation and the authority of Christ.

42) Unity in the body of Christ must be based upon truth (v21-23). We are one as the Father and the Son are one. Christ gave the parable of the wheat and the tares (Mat 13:24-30). There will be tares in the visible church. If we seek unity among all those in the visible church, the believing and the unbelieving, the obedient and the disobedient, the truth will compromised. Our unity must be based upon the Word of God.

43) Christ's desire is for all who follow Him to be in unity (v21). This spans the generations and this is the Bride of Christ. Our unity is expressed in our love for Christ and our declaration of His Lordship (Rom 10:8-13).

44) One of the purposes of unity among believers is so the world may believe the Father sent the Son (v21). He did not say, so the world may come to a saving faith. Many in the church want to compromise the Gospel: they think by being inclusive we have unity and by this (false) unity, we can attract the world, so the world can be saved. But if we compromise the Gospel, we are proclaiming a false god; a false christ; a false gospel. This is not what God is looking for. The fact is true believers, those who are obedient to Christ, are in unity; the world sees this and is convicted. They believe, though they will resist a saving faith; and the tares who sowed the seed of false unity are among those who resist a saving faith.

45) The glory the Father gave the Son, the Son has given those who follow Him (v22). Christ was conceived in the virgin by the Holy Spirit; everything Christ said and did was prepared by the Holy Spirit. Remember when the Christ warned against the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? The Jews had accused Jesus' work as the work of Beelzebub or Satan (Mat 12:22-32). What Jesus said was the work He performed was the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ is the Son of God; He came to make the Father known; He said and did what He
saw the Father doing; and the work He did, He did through the Holy Spirit. So, too, as the Father gave the Spirit to the Son, the Son has given the Spirit to those who follow Him. "Do not quench the Spirit." [1Th 5:19].

46) The Holy Spirit works for our unity (v22). He gave us the Holy Spirit "that they may be one as We are one." Unity among the brothers is based upon truth. The Holy Spirit does not bring new revelation; He will never contradict the Word of God. He bears witness of Christ and guides us into truth (15:26; 16:13).

47) True followers of Christ will be in unity (v23). "I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfectly one." The divisions within the visible church are the conflicts between the wheat and the tares. Those who follow Christ are united upon the truth of the Word of God. Though we are not yet perfect, we are unity. When the Bride is presented to Christ, she will be perfect.

48) Another purpose of unity among believers is so the world may know the Father loves those who follow Christ as He loves His Son (v23). The world loves those who are of the world. Yet, it is a selfish love; everyone is looking to build their wealth or comfort on the back of someone else (Gen 34:23). But the love among the brothers is pure; we do not build our life here and we look to help each other (Gal 6:2; Php 2:3). The world notices this difference; they know this is from God; and they are convicted.

49) Christ desires all who follow Him to be with Him (v24). This is exciting to know He is anxious for us to be with Him. This should be our thought everyday, to desire to be with the One who desires us.

50) Christ desires all who follow Him to be with Him and see His glory (v24). He loves His glory and wants His followers to see it and celebrate it with Him.

51) Christ's glory was before the foundation of the world (v24).
52) The Father, Son and Holy Spirit were rejoicing together in perfect love before the creation of the world (v24). God did not create man because He was lonely, far from it. Put aside all these man-centered reasons for salvation. The Trinity possessed all glory and they rejoiced together in perfect love and unity. We must conclude man was made for this glory and salvation was brought to man for this glory. All glory and honor and power belong to God.

53) The Father is righteous: God is righteous (v25).

54) The world does not know the Father (v25). Christ came to make the Father known; known to those whom the Father had given Him. Just as Christ did not pray for the world (v9), He did not reveal the truth to the world (12:40).

55) Christ knows the Father (v25). To declare He knows the Father, He must have been with Him. In the beginning Christ was with God and was God (1:1).

56) Those who follow Christ know the Father and know He sent the Son (v25). Christ came to make the Father known (1:18). Though the world did not believe (1:10-11) some did believe (1:12-13). Jesus said if we have seen or know Him, we know the Father also (14:9).

57) Christ made the Father known to those who follow Him (v26); for they were given to Him (v6). Many claim to have made a decision for Christ, but the Apostle Paul tells us we were saved by grace, lest any man should boast (Eph 2:8-9).

58) Christ will continue to make the Father known to those who follow Him (v26). He has given us His Word (v17) and His Spirit (v22). The Holy Spirit will lead us into truth (16:13). How does He lead us? The Spirit does not speak on His own authority, but, like the Son, He speaks what He hears from the Father (16:13). The Father has left us His Word. We must be in the Word for the Holy Spirit to reveal truth (8:31-32). Christ continues to make the Father known to us as we continue to be in the Word.
59) If we follow Christ, the love the Father had for the Son will be in us (v26). The Father will love us because we love the Son (16:27). Yet, we know, He loved us before we loved Him (1Jo 4:19).

60) If we follow Christ, He will be in us (v26). Christ in us, the hope of glory (Col 1:27). If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with God and are forgiven of our sin (1Jo 1:5-9).

61) Christ is glorified by making the Father known and those the Father has given to Him know and believe. We are loved by God and Christ dwells in us. All this is for Christ to be glorified and Christ is glorified for the Father's glory (v1-26).

IN CLOSING

The doctrines of election and perseverance of the saints are irrefutable as they are clearly put forward in the words of the Son to the Father. Furthermore, our salvation is for God's glory. It is not man-centered, but it is God-centered. We can argue all the nuances of Scripture but it is a dangerous thing to argue against the plain words of Christ.
John 18:1-12 The Betrayal And Arrest Of Jesus Christ

Christ's teaching was over. The time had come to die.

When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. [v1].

The Kidron Brook is directly to the East of Jerusalem, opposite the Temple and between the city and the Mount of Olives. Not far; close distances. The garden they frequented, on the Mount of Olives, was called Gethsemane. The Gospels mention traveling to the Mount of Olives on several occasions, but this is the only mention of crossing the brook to get there.

This is the same brook David crossed when he fled from his son Absalom (2Sa 15:23). This is the same brook Solomon forbade Shimei from crossing on pain of death (1Ki 2:37).

Beside the Kidron Brook is where the Israelites would burn their garbage. There are a few mentions in the Old Testament when idols were removed from the Temple by Asa, Hezekiah and Josiah (1Ki 15:13; 2Ch 29:16; 2Ki 23:6). On these three occasions, when the idolatry was cleansed from the Temple, the filth was burned at the Kidron Brook. The Kidron Brook represents cleansing.

Historical records of Jesus' time indicate that as many as a quarter-million lambs were slain in a typical Passover season, requiring hundreds of priests to carry out the task." This is a lot of blood. The blood from the slaughtered lambs would be carried by the priests and dumped in the brook to flow down this valley. So, here we have water and blood. [John MacArthur; "Experiencing the Passion"].

But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. [19:34].

About this night, Matthew and Mark wrote in their gospels, "When they had sung a hymn, they went to the Mount of Olives." [Mat
Christ finished His teaching and His prayer, they sung a hymn and went to the garden to pray.

Now Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with His disciples. So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. [v2-3].

This was an intimate location. A place Jesus and the disciples had often shared fellowship. Jesus talked with them and taught them here. A place of fond memories, if you will.

Judas came to betray, while the rest of the mob came to arrest Jesus. Matthew, Mark and Luke wrote Judas betrayed Christ with a kiss (Mat 26:48-49; Mar 14:44-45; Luk 22:47-48). The people Judas brought with him, brought lanterns, torches and weapons (v3). Matthew and Mark wrote they also brought swords and clubs (Mat 26:47; Mar 14:43;). Peter had a sword (v10).

If it had been the intent of Christ to avoid His crucifixion, He would have hid out somewhere else. He knew Judas, being one of His close disciples, would know He would be in the garden (v2). He went to the garden to pray and waited, for His time had come. As He said before, "No one takes [My life] from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again." [10:18]. Everything was coming together as the Father had planned, for God always accomplishes His purpose.

When Judas came with soldiers, Christ did not try to escape. He stepped forward and asked, "Whom do you seek?" [v4]. The answer came back, "Jesus of Nazareth." [v5]. Jesus answered, "I AM." [v5].

In most major Bible translations, the word "He" is in italic. As the introduction to each translation will explain, the purpose of italic is to designate an added word. The word is usually added for clarity, to fix grammar structure and such. So, the answer from Jesus was not "I am He," as we would respond with proper grammar. Jesus answered, "I AM." I AM is a name for God. He gave this name to Himself. It is a name expressing His authority and His eternity. This is one of the seven I AMs in the Gospel of John.
When God directed Moses to go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, Moses knew he needed some kind of authority, else the people of Israel would not believe he was sent from God. God told Moses to tell them I AM had sent him.

Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?'
what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" [Exo 3:13-14; capitalization added].

Therefore, when Jesus answered, "I AM," He was expressing His authority and declaring all the events taking place were under His control. The soldiers and those with them, including Judas, fell backward to the ground (v6). Christ's authority was overwhelming. In a subtle, yet paralyzing way He displayed His power over them. He had all power; the crowd had no power; all they could do was fall to the ground. Though overpowered and humiliated, they were still determined to take Him by force.

He asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" [v7]. In this, Christ may have given them the opportunity to recant their mission, having encountered the power of God. Regardless, they proceeded with their mission; but no longer in blind ignorance, they now knew full well they were opposing the hand of God.

Hard is the heart that refuses to repent. The leaders of the band were the Chief Priest and his entourage of high ranking Pharisees. They were in the Word; they taught the Scriptures. Yet, they were opposed to God, who would not conform to their image. Many, so many are the professing Christian, daily in the Word, yet professing a god in their image and opposing every Scripture which does not meet their approval.

To Jesus' question, they answered back the same as before, "Jesus of Nazareth." [v7]. Again, Jesus answered, "I told you I AM." Then He added, "So, if you seek Me, let these men go." [v8]. John MacArthur, in his Study Bible, wrote Jesus asked this question twice to force "them to acknowledge that they had no authority to take the
disciples. . . the force of His demand was established by the power of His words." [at 18:4-8].

The Apostle John wrote He commanded them to let His disciples go to fulfill what He had said previously, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost not one." [v9, quoting 17:12]. That Christ would lose none of all the Father had given Him, had a temporal physical meaning at this moment, but it has a permanent spiritual meaning as well.

And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given Me, but raise it up on the last day. [6:39].

The disciples were in fear. They did not want to come to Jerusalem, in the first place, because the Jews wanted to kill Jesus. Yet they had not rid themselves of the idea Christ, the Messiah, would set up His kingdom in Jerusalem and reign over the nations. When they witnessed the triumphal entry of Christ into the city, just days before, their hopes were revived. Now, with this turn of events, they were faced with many soldiers, angry officials and a bitter mob. It did not appear Christ was in control nor did it appear He was about to be made king. Nonetheless, before victory, there must be a battle; and, in desperation, Peter made an awkward attempt toward this end.

Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) [v10].

All four Gospels have the record of one of the disciples striking the ear of a servant of the high priest. The Gospel of John names both the disciple and the servant. The Gospel of Luke records Jesus healing the servant's ear.

And when those who were around Him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And He touched his ear and healed him. [Luke 22:49-51]
In this passage from Luke, we can see the stress level was getting high. Those around Christ "saw what would follow." If Christ was going to reign, if He was going to show His power, this was the moment, otherwise, they were doomed. So Peter drew his sword. But Christ did not follow Peter's lead and rise up to overcome this crowd. According to the Gospel of Luke, Christ healed the man's ear and He told Peter to put away the sword because He was perfectly willing to drink the cup the Father had given Him (v11).

**Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given Me? [v11].**

The Apostle Matthew gave the account of Christ wrestling with the Father in regards to this cup (Mat 26:39-42). Nonetheless, Christ concluded, "Your will be done." [Mat 26:42]. Many professing Christian think the death of Christ to be a frivolous matter. They think because He was God, it was an easy chore to die for mans' sin. But here we see, in this passage and others, to be obedient unto death was a very difficult matter.

And being in agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. [Luk 22:44].

In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death. . . [Heb 5:7].

Nonetheless, because of His love for the Father, Christ was determined to be obedient and would not turn back, even when Peter gave Him the opportunity. On several occasions, Jesus said, "I seek not My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." [5:30, cf 4:34; 6:38; 12:49; 14:31]. The Apostle Paul wrote He was "obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." [Php 2:8]. Christ came to do the Father's will and He was willing to die for sinful man; and now the time had come.

Although He was a son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. And being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. [Heb 5:8-9].
Twice, Christ showed His power: First, He overwhelmed the crowd with His authority, causing them to fall back at the mention of His name; and Second, He demonstrated His healing power by restoring the servant Malchus' ear. Yet, the mob was determined to press on. There can be no doubt at this point, Judas and his entourage knew they were going up against God and, at the very least, Christ was a man sent from God.

So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. [v12].

Though the disciples had displayed a willingness to fight, Christ did not resist the arrest. For His time had come. The Creator of all mankind and of everything that exists, allowed these hateful men to bind Him, try Him and kill Him.

But our fingers do not point to these men; for just as surely as the Fall of Adam was a figure or picture of us all, so too, these men represented every human being. There is no difference between this mob and the world today. Many still come against Christ with swords, clubs and other weapons, if you will. They seek to defame Him and rob Him of His glory. Some attack Him with words and intellectual arguments; others by rape, torture, murder and pillage of those who are His. Just as the psalmist described in Psalm two, the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain. Our hearts are rebellious and it is our nature to defy the eternal God, even to our death. Paul wrote to the Romans, Christ died for us while we were enemies of God (Rom 5:10). Christ had come, willingly, to die for those who were unable to save themselves (Rom 5:6).

The Apostle Paul wrote "God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." [Php 2:9-11]. God's purposes will stand. He gives hope to those who cling to Him (Rom 5:1-11; 8:1-11) and laughs at those who mock Him as He pours His wrath upon them (Psa 2:4-5).

Do you seek the one who will save you from God's wrath?
Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.

Then He will speak to them in His wrath, and terrify them in His fury, saying, "As for Me, I have set My King on Zion, My holy hill." I will tell of the decree:

The Lord said to Me, "You are My Son; today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will make the nations Your heritage, and the ends of the earth Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him. [Psa 2].

The nations rage against Christ; the soldiers and the mob came to carry Christ to His doom. But these same people who scoff and deride will one day bow. As the psalmist revealed, the Father and the Son have an eternal covenant (decree) and the Son will rule over the nations.

IN CLOSING

After the last supper, where Christ ate and taught the disciples, they left the upper room, went out of the city, crossed the Kidron Brook, which was flowing with blood and water, and went to the Garden of Gethsemane. Christ went to pray and wait, for His time had come.

Soldiers and a mob came to take Christ away. They were eager to see Him put to death. He had done nothing wrong. He had done nothing deserving death, but those of the world hate the things of God.
What could be a greater display of God to man than the Son of God Himself? Could anything incite more hatred of God within man than the Son of God come to man?

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. [1:9-11].

The disciples had been hesitant to come to Jerusalem with Jesus, knowing the authorities were seeking to kill Him. They believed to the end, though, Christ was going to set up His kingdom, in Jerusalem, and rule over the nations.

All this evening, they were looking for Christ to act, as they pledged their undying allegiance to Him.

Now, surrounded by soldiers and mobs, they knew something had to happen. The disciples saw the crowd fall away when Christ spoke His name, I AM. But the crowd did not relent. So, Peter, with sword, struck a man and cut off his ear. Nonetheless, Christ did not take this occasion to rise up in power, but He humbly healed the man and He rebuked Peter and the crowd.

Though the disciples had displayed a willingness to fight, Christ did not resist the arrest. For His time had come. God was in complete control and, at just the right time, the hour had come. The Creator of all mankind had come to die to satisfy God's wrath, while we were helpless to save ourselves.

Do you seek the one who will save you from God's wrath or do you still resist Him?
John 18:13-40 The Trial Of Christ And Peter's Denials

Jesus was arrested and bound by the soldiers and officers of the Jews (v12). They took Him to Annas, who was the father-in-law to Caiaphas, the high priest (v13). It appears, from other Scripture, Annas and Caiaphas may have had a co-regency (Luke 3:2; Act 4:6). It was Caiaphas who prophesied "it would be expedient that one man should die for the people." [v14].

Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish." He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. [11:49-52].

Here is an example where God used an evil person to prophecy what He was going to do. The office of the high priest was to be honored even when an evil man was in this office.

The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. [Mat 23:2-3].

PETER'S FIRST DENIAL

Peter and another disciple were following Christ (v15). We know this was John because the writer of this gospel always referred to himself in the third party.

They followed Christ. The Gospel of Matthew says Peter was following at a distance (Mat 26:58). John was known by the high priest (v15); that is, John probably had privileged family connections. So, he went into the courtyard while Peter stood
outside the gate (v15-16). When Peter and John arrived at the tomb, this situation would be reversed.

"You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." [v17b].

John went to the servant girl, who kept watch at the gate, to see about letting Peter in (v16). She let him in, but questioned him whether he was a disciple. Peter denied it (v17), although he was probably in no danger; for it appears she knew John was a disciple and he was under no threat. Here, Peter denied a fact which was known and obvious. This question put him in no immediate danger, yet he feared and denied knowing Christ.

As they had followed Christ into this courtyard, Peter was probably still within earshot of the Lord.

The servants and officers of the high priest had made a charcoal fire to warm themselves. These are likely the same group of people who had arrested Jesus. John and Peter warmed themselves at the fire with them (v18). The Mark and Luke accounts claim the servant girl confronted Peter at the fire (Mar 14:66-68; Luk 22:56-57). The fire was likely close to the gate.

THE QUESTIONING OF CHRIST BY THE HIGH PRIEST


The high priest questioned Christ about His teachings and what He said to His disciples (v19). Most likely to set a trap or to glean anything because they had no real evidence against Him. Jesus answered, exposing their obvious hypocrisy.

I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them; they know what I said. [v20-21].
Among "those who have heard Me" were the accusers themselves. In this way, Christ's defense was also an accusation. They had nothing on Him and Christ exposed the fact they had nothing on Him.

I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, "Seek me in vain." I the Lord speak the truth; I declare what is right. [Isa 45:19].

Draw near to me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there. [Isa 48:16].

God has not kept the truth secret (Rom 1:19-20). Christ came revealing the Father to man (1:18; 14:9; 15:24). He promised if we abide in Him we will know the truth (8:31-32). Nonetheless, the leaders of the Jews, who considered themselves the gatekeepers of the truth, refused the truth. Though God made the truth obvious, they preferred their temporary positions of power more than the eternal riches of the Almighty God.

But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. [Mat 23:13].

The Apostle Paul wrote about the wrath to come on those who refuse God's revealed truth and pursue self-centered lives.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. [Rom 1:18-21].
After Christ challenged this kangaroo court, a court intent on a lynching, one of the officers struck Jesus and demanded respect for the high priest (v22). As always, Jesus responded with the core issue:

**If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike Me?** [v23].

The officer demanded respect for a foolish and ungodly high priest. Though the priest was an evil man, he was God's representative and the office demanded respect. However, at this moment, God Himself was facing this official and calling him out for his evil and hypocrisy. Though Christ is God and had authority to confront the high priest, He did not lash out in anger nor did He speak disrespectfully. So, striking Jesus was not warranted.

Annas, the former high priest, sent Christ bound like a prisoner to Caiaphas the current high priest (v24). Some commentaries claim this was after the fact, explaining He had already been sent and this current line of questioning was in front of Caiaphas. However, the account of the trial of Jesus in front of Caiaphas is different in the other gospels. In the three synoptic accounts, Christ admits to Caiaphas to being the Son of God. Therefore, it is more likely the questioning of Christ in this passage was in front of Annas prior to sending him to Caiaphas, just the way John gives the account.

**PETER'S SECOND AND THIRD DENIAL OF CHRIST**

Peter was standing around the fire, warming himself. He was probably anxious. If he had been seated, he might not have been as noticeable.

Among the others gathered around the fire were those who came to arrest Jesus in the garden. One of these men asked Peter, whether he was a disciple. Peter denied it. However, one of the men, who was related to the man whose ear Peter cut off, recognized him and claimed he was there. Again, Peter denied it and the rooster crowed; just as Christ told him (13:38).

I will lay down my life for You. [13:37]
When Peter said he was willing to die for Christ, he was relying upon his own strength (13:37). But at this time, he did not have the strength to face his accusers when he thought his life was on the line. He vowed loyalty when he was strong of feeling and emotion.

On another occasion, when Peter asked Christ to let him walk on the water, he did well while his eyes were on Christ (Mat 14:22-33). But feeling the wind and seeing the waves and hearing them roar, caused him to fear and lose his trust. This is human nature. This is the difference between faith and feelings: true faith will not lose sight of God, no matter the hardship and chaos going on around us.

**CHRIST IS QUESTIONED BY PILATE**

John left off the content of the questioning by Caiaphas. Most likely because he had nothing to add to the synoptic Gospel accounts.

John wrote Jesus was taken from Caiaphas to the Praetorium (v28), which is the governor's mansion. John said it was early; the synoptic gospels say it was in the morning. This was Friday morning.

The Jews would not enter the governor's mansion because Pilate, the governor, was a Gentile. It was unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit in the home of anyone of another nation; to do so, would make them unclean (Act 10:28). If they should enter the building, they would be unclean and would not be allowed to eat the Passover feast.

Marcus Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor over Judea, appointed by the Emperor Tiberius. He was not an empathetic ruler. He was a tyrant and ruled with an iron fist. Nonetheless, the high priest held much political clout and he came to Pilate with a mob. So, he had to be heard.

So Pilate went outside to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered him, "If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered Him over to you." [v29-30].

They had no case, so rather than clarify the charge, they answered defensively; which did not answer Pilate's question at all. It was
obvious to Pilate, these grown men were having a temper tantrum and he wanted nothing to do with it. So he responded:

Take Him yourselves and judge Him by your own law. [v31a].

The Jews replied it was not lawful for them to put anyone to death (v31b). However, the fact of the matter was they had a history of stoning people and the Romans usually paid no attention. Jesus was a high profile figure and popular. Many believed He came from God. To stone Him would possibly cause a riot and they would have to answer to Rome. And, as Caiaphas had previously pointed out, they would do so at the risk of losing their position and possibly their lives (11:50; 18:14). At the very least, they would raise the ire of their own people. Therefore, they brought Him to the Roman authorities to put Him to death because they did not want to answer for His blood.

This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death He was going to die. [v32].

Christ's prophecy is recorded by John in chapter twelve. If the Jews killed Him, it would be by stoning; if the Romans put Him to death, it would be by crucifixion. Christ's prophecy was to be lifted up, or crucified.

"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself." He said this to show by what kind of death He was going to die. [12:32-33].

Pilate went inside and called Jesus in after him. He then asked Him if He were the King of the Jews (v33). According to Luke's account, the Jews had claimed, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a king." [Luk 23:2]. This might have led to this line of questioning by Pilate. Jesus' response, as always, was to get to the core issue.

Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about Me? [v34].
Jesus' answer was more than rhetorical; it was an important question. For if Pilate were to consider Christ's claim of kingship to be political, he had an obligation to prosecute this on behalf of Rome. However, if Pilate were to consider His claim to be religious, this would be a matter for the Jews to resolve. In either event, the question brought up the motive of Pilate's heart.

In John's account, the Jews brought no charges against Christ, at least not when they first brought Him to Pilate. In the Luke account, the charges which were finally brought were obviously designed to bring the jealousy of Rome (Luk 23:1-3)

1) They charged Christ had forbidden monetary payments or tribute to Rome; and

2) They charged Christ had claimed to be a king in defiance of Caesar.

Jesus' question upset Pilate and he answered back, "What did you do to make your own people so upset that they have handed you over to a foreign government?" There can be no greater rejection from your own people than for them to hand you over to a foreign government to be tried, sentenced and executed. He came to His own people and His own people did not receive Him (1:11).

\[
\text{Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done? [v35].}
\]

Jesus was not intimidated. He answered Pilate's attack stating His kingdom is not of this world (v36). Thus, He affirmed He was a king indeed. On another occasion, He told the Jews He was not of this world: "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world." [8:23]. On this occasion, He proclaimed He is the king of the world He came from. This would give Pilate cause to fear.

\[
\text{My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But My kingdom is not from the world. [v36].}
\]
Regarding the servants of Christ fighting for Him: Jesus addressed this when Peter cut the ear off the servant of the high priest in the account of Matthew. He said if He asked, His Father would send Him more than twelve legions of angels (Mat 26:52-54). But there would be no fight, for Christ was willing to lay down His life.

So you are a king? [v37].

Pilate does not appear to be mocking Christ. He was, no doubt, influenced by Christ's demeanor and was contemplating the seriousness of all the forces at work here. He was considering the possibility Christ may be a king in another world, which was totally compatible with Roman religious views. Roman mythology was full of stories of man-gods who came from different worlds.

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world; to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in Him." [v37-38].

When Christ said, "I have come into the world," this was an affirmation He existed before He was born as a man (1:1-3,9-10). He told the disciples He came from the Father and has come into the world (16:28). To fulfill His purpose, He had to be born. Not like each individual person whom God created. This was Christ, alive before birth, making a way to come to man.

He came to bear witness to the truth. He came to make the Father known to man (1:18). But man was not ready to listen. Even those who searched the Scriptures, looking for the Messiah, were not ready to listen. For this, Christ rebuked Nicodemus:

We speak of what We know, and bear witness to what We have seen, but you do not receive Our testimony. [3:11].

Regarding His claim everyone who is of the truth listens to His voice, He said His sheep hear His voice (10:27).
We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. [1Jo 4:6].

Pilate did not deny nor did he affirm Christ's kingship. His answer was, nonetheless, cynical, "What is truth?" [v38]. The question of the ages, which was first posed by Satan when tempting the woman in the garden, "Did God really say?" (Gen 3:1).

Most people who claim to be in pursuit of the truth are not seeking God. They seek a truth which fits their own bias. Many are as the Apostle Paul described, "always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth." [2Ti 3:7]. No one is seeking truth. no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. [Rom 3:11-12].

Christ's claim to be king found affinity in Pilate's cynicism. Pilate's misgivings against his own government and the people he governed was greater than his apprehension of this man on trial before him. With this, he went outside to the Jews and declared he found no guilt in the man, Christ (v38). In this way, he told the high priest and his toadies, he found their claim to be petty.

So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" They cried out again, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber. [v39b-40].

Pilate offered to release Him. He thought this a good way to relieve the tensions of the mob. The Gospels say his custom was to release one man at the Passover, but his offer did not reduce the stress at all. The Jews demanded he release Barabbas and crucify Christ (v39-40).

Barabbas means son of the father. So here we have a choice: the Son of the Father or the son of the father. The choice is between God and man. Man has been in rebellion to God from the beginning. When given a choice between man and God, man will always choose man.
Man seeks to make God in his own image and here is an example where man chose to redeem one who is evil like himself and crucify the true and righteous God.

John stated Barabbas was a robber (which could also be translated insurrectionist). In his sermon to the Jews, Peter claimed he was a murderer. So, the Jews released a very bad man, in order to kill their Creator, who had come to give them life.

But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. [Act 3:14-15].

Here is a paradox: In this scene, the secular man, a ruler and philosopher, one who had difficulty grasping the truth, could see clearly the innocence of the Son of God. While the Jews, the self-professed keepers of the truth, were determined to bring the Truth to His death.

Who is the liar, but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? [1Jo 2:22].

IN CLOSING

Earlier this night, Peter declared his undying allegiance to Christ; he was willing to die for Him. When the mob around Jesus was getting fierce, Peter struck a man with a sword, cutting off his ear. It may have been his thought this was the last hope Christ would set up His kingdom and overcome His enemies. But Jesus healed the man's ear and gave Himself up to those who would arrest Him.

As Peter followed Him, three times he was identified as a disciple of Christ and three times he denied knowing Him. Though he felt so strong and committed earlier in the evening, when the battle became intense, he folded.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths. [Pro 3:5-6].

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Peter's faith in Christ and his desire to please Him had come to the point where he thought it could cost his life. He was under a lot of stress but worse than this, he was relying upon his own strength. He was a rugged, strong man; he was proud and feared nothing. He was willing to start a war in the midst of the hostile crowd. But without the Lord by his side, he had no strength at all.

Jesus endured a kangaroo court trial. He was shipped between Annas and Caiaphas, Herod and Pilate. It seemed to those around He had brought this upon His own head. Or as Isaiah phrased it, we thought He was stricken, smitten and afflicted by God (Isa 53:4b).

All through the four trials, it was clear Christ was innocent. But the forces of evil were determined to put Him to death. Those who represented truth, the religious leaders, wanted the death of an innocent man, the death of God; while the secular man who had no regard for God clearly saw His innocence. Furthermore, Pilate could not understand the scope of what Christ had done to offend His own people, that they should turn Him over to a foreign government to be tried, sentenced and executed.

Someone may defend the religious leaders, by arguing they did not know Jesus is God. But this is no defense for their error was of their own creation: they made God in their own image; they served a god who suited their needs and wants, a god who gave them power and authority. They did not worship the God of the Bible. They were looking for a Messiah who would give them more power; one who would give them authority over the Romans. Had they looked for the Messiah, as described by the prophets, they would have worshiped the Christ.

People today worship gods who fit their worldview. Most professing Christians worship a kind and gentle Jesus; a god who "knows their heart" and winks at their "small" sins. They do not know or worship the God of the Bible. They cannot know the truth, because they are not in the Word.

Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a
branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. [15:5-6].

Speaking of a kind and gentle Jesus: when people met Jesus, He confronted them with their sin and their need to repent. He was not unkind about it, but He was not soft and fuzzy either. At one of the hearings or trials, Jesus rebuked the man who struck Him. In this, He rebuked the entire kangaroo court, for He said if He had done wrong, they should speak it out, say it, but if what He said was right, they have no reason to assault Him (v23).

Pilate was impressed with Christ. He was impressed by His confidence and authority; Christ had the bearing of a king. When Pilate asked the question, "What is truth?" [v38], he was expressing the cynicism he had acquired from his work. He lived his life surrounded by liars, hypocrites, back-stabbers and such; people seeking their own power and gain at the cost of truth and justice. When Jesus, the man in front of him, said, "Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice," he could only respond with his disenchantment.

If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. [8:31-32].

Pilate gave the Jews a choice between setting free an innocent man or setting free a robber and murderer. Their choice proved the natural man is an enemy of God; they chose to release an evil man rather than the Innocent. They were blind to the truth; they preferred darkness to light.

And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. [3:19].

It is easy for us to sit in judgment of the Jewish leaders, the crowd, Pilate and Peter, for their actions on the night Christ was crucified. We can read the account in the shelter of our living room. However, like all men before us, we too, have expectations. Some seek comfort, some seek wealth, some seek power. Some envision this comfort, wealth and power within great realms, while many are satisfied with small domains. Even in "the best of us," most of our
pursuit flows from our sinful nature, even our desire for self-preservation. Many are those who desire to exalt God's kingdom, but are guilty of building their own.

Like the believers in the mob, many come to Christ, but are disappointed in their expectations. Some of these believers may stay awhile in the faith and others will leave as soon as discouragement arises, but all will eventually desert the faith. The Apostle John wrote, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us." [1Jo 2:19].

We tend to see ourselves as morally good, but few are truly following Christ.

We must be in the Word to understand God's truth. If we are not in the Word, our life will go the way of Peter, Pilate, the Jewish leaders or the crowd on this terrible night when Jesus was sentenced to die.
John 19:1-16 The Sentencing Of Christ, Behold Your King

Pilate was cynical of truth, but he could see Jesus Christ was innocent of the charges raised against him (18:38).

Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged Him. [v1].

Pilate determined Christ was innocent. So he had Jesus flogged, to punish Him before setting Him free. This was the Roman way; once charged, no one got off scot-free. However, He would suffer this flogging and still be crucified. This was as Jesus foretold, He would be "mocked and flogged and crucified." [Mat 20:19].

And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head and arrayed Him in a purple robe. They came up to Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck Him with their hands. [v2-3].

The thorns woven together for a crown mocked Christ's majesty. Thorns were symbols of futility and decay (Gen 3:18; Rom 8:20-21). So a crown of thorns would represent authority over a futile or dying kingdom. Satan would goad Christ to bring Him to a bitter end. But the devil was not in control and Christ was not deterred.

The regal robe He was adorned with was likely the same one Herod placed upon Him when he sent Christ back to Pilate (Luk 23:11). According to Matthew and Mark, the whole battalion was called in to take part in the mockery ceremony (Mat 27:28; Mar 15:16). The Gospel of Matthew also records a reed was placed in His hand as a scepter and the soldiers bowed their knees to Him in jest (Mat 27:29). All four gospel accounts tell us they mocked Him, spat upon Him and hit Him.

Not one of these mockers realized they were spitting upon the very One who created them and placed them in their mothers' womb. The Creator suffered at the hands of His creation without so much as a rebuke or raising a threat. Like a lamb, He went to be slaughtered. If Christ had merely been a good teacher, why was He treated with such contempt?
He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so He opened not his mouth. [Isa 53:7].

All the forces of evil thought they had Christ at a vulnerable moment and believed they could destroy Him; mocking Him to His death; hoping to bring Him to despair. But as surely as He was going to die, He was destined to rise again. How could they think it possible to overcome the author of life by putting Him to death?

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. [1:4].

Then, Pilate declared to the crowd he found no fault in Christ; no reason to put Him to death (v4). He brought Christ out in the robe, with the crown of thorns on His head. He had been flogged and tormented. It was in this humiliated state, Pilate displayed Him to the people, declaring, "Behold, the man!" [v5]. Quite possibly he had hoped this public disgrace of Christ was enough to satisfy the crowd of His offense. Perhaps he thought they would laugh at Him and jeer Him. But the Jewish leaders cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" [v6].

Pilate refused and told them to kill Him themselves because there was no guilt in this man (v6).

The Jewish leaders cried out, "We have a law, and according to that law He ought to die because He has made Himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid. [v7-8].

This was the Jewish law:

Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death. [Lev 24:16].

When the priests asked Jesus whether He was the Son of God, He replied, "You say that I am." [Luk 22:70-71; cf Mat 26:63-65]. To this they replied, "We have heard it ourselves from His own lips." They despised Him, they knew He was sent from God. There are no atheists. God puts eternity in our hearts (Ecc 3:11), that is, He puts a
knowledge of Himself within all men. But men refuse to believe because they refuse to obey.

Why would Pilate be "even more afraid" if Christ had merely broken a law? It was the words, "He has made Himself the Son of God." Pilate was fearful this Christ may well be the Son of God or the son of a god; a man-god in the Roman tradition. He listened with amazement as he interviewed Christ in the beginning and He was interested in Christ's claim to be a king; and not of this world. These claims were reinforced by Christ's composure in the face of His prosecutors and Pilate's fear was further reinforced by warnings from His wife to have nothing to do with this man (Mat 27:19). Pilate wanted nothing to do with the death of this man; he feared raising the ire of the gods.

Pilate went back inside to question Jesus and asked Him, "Where are you from?" [v9]. Pilate was very stressed at this point. But Jesus gave no answer. There was nothing more for Christ to say and He certainly had no reason to appease Pilate. For man held no control over His life and He had already proclaimed He was sent by the Father to die.

When Christ did not answer, this pricked Pilate's pride and he was already in an agitated state of mind. Pride can trump a man's conscience and though Christ may have been something in another world, Pilate had the authority down here or so he thought. He demanded Christ's respect.

So Pilate said to Him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release You and authority to crucify You?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over Me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered Me over to you has the greater sin." [v10-11].

Pilate was deceived to imagine himself to be a man of power. The Apostle Paul wrote, "there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." [Rom 13:1]. Daniel declared God removes kings and sets up kings (Dan 2:21). Now, the
Creator, facing His earthly judge, told him he would have no power unless it had been given him by God.

Man seeks power over man. This may be as simple as among friends and family or it may be a position at work or a government job or an elected office. Man falsely believes he can have power, even ultimate power. Most who have power, such as a government position, exercise their powers in selfish and brutal forms. But Jesus made it clear, no one has any authority, unless this was granted from the God of all authority. This is a fearful matter, for what will happen to the one who has abused his authority over another, when he comes face to face with God (Mat 24:45-51).

Pilate was agitated and demanded respect. He demanded respect from his Creator and Lawgiver, who was standing before him. This man, Christ, whom he mistakenly thought was under his control and authority, was not afraid of his threats, but set him straight for abusing his limited authority and this only added to Pilate's fears.

Jesus said the man who delivered Him to Pilate had committed the greater sin. Who was it who delivered Jesus over to Pilate? It was Caiaphas, the high priest. Though he was God's agent, by position, he acted upon evil and selfish intent. Caiaphas had arrested Jesus and delivered Him to Pilate to be crucified. Pilate was merely the pawn.

The chief priest and his accomplices had acted with premeditation (11:47-53); he predicted Christ would die for the nation (18:14). Murdering Christ was carefully planned and plotted, in defiance of all the evidence given for the Messiah in Scripture. The Jews had knowledge of the Messiah, but they despised Him and deliberately set out to kill Him.

The Jews prided themselves on their knowledge of Scripture, but they could not see they were blind to the truth. Jesus told them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains." [9:41].

If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar. [v12].

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Christ said nothing in His defense, but the more He spoke, the more Pilate was convicted. He was an innocent man and quite possibly a son of the gods. Pilate was more determined than ever to release Christ. But authorities seen are more felt than authorities unseen and when the Jews warned him he would be opposing Caesar, this was a direct threat of impeachment. So, Pilate was in quite the pickle.

It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. [Psa 118:8-9].

Here was Pilate, a secular man, caught in this quandary of choices. Every man faces this choice many times a day, though most times, we don't recognize it. Will we please man or please God?

Pilate resisted their threats. His next strategy was to bring Christ out once more in His humiliated state, hoping the Jew's zeal for His death would be appeased by the sight of Him in such a miserable condition. Pilate sat himself down on the judgment seat at the Stone Pavement (v13).

Behold your king! [v14].

It was getting on toward noon and it was the day of preparation for the feast (v14). Pilate may have hoped if he resisted long enough, the Jews would be happy to end this and get on with their celebrations. Or, maybe he thought if he could get them to laugh, it would diffuse the situation and they could all be done.

Three possible reasons for proclaiming, "Behold your king!" [v14].

1. In contrast to the humiliating spectacle of the Christ, maybe the people would laugh and this would break the tension.
2. He was expressing his contempt for the Jews.
3. He was convinced Christ was a king.

Nonetheless, Pilate's declaration did not change the mind of the Jews. They continued their call for His death by crucifixion. They were religious, but they had no fear of God.

Pilate asked them whether he should crucify their king (v15); still referring to Christ as king. The Jewish leaders, who previously
denied their enslavement to Rome (8:33) and who were looking for a Messiah to free them from Rome (12:13), now proclaimed, "We have no king, but Caesar!" [v15].

In the account of Matthew, Pilate washed his hands of this innocent man's blood in front of the crowd and they shouted, "His blood be on us and on our children!" [Mat 27:24-25]. They hated Christ so much, they were willing to flippantly bring a curse on their children. But, the lack of the fear of God, does not negate the power of God. God brought this curse to fruition forty years later, when Rome sacked Jerusalem, killing more than one million of their children and laying the city desolate for 2000 years.

So he delivered [Christ] over to them to be crucified. [v16].

Pilate could stonewall no longer. Though he believed Christ to be innocent; though he had been warned by his wife to have nothing to do with this man, Pilate sentenced Jesus to death on the cross. And they took Him to be crucified.

IN CLOSING

Pilate had determined Christ was innocent. So he had Jesus flogged, to punish Him before setting Him free. Christ was tormented, humiliated and disgraced. In this condition, He was paraded before the hateful crowd but the crowd continued to demand His death.

Pilate could find no guilt in Christ, but he was forced by social and political constraints to hand Him over for execution. He was unwilling to sacrifice his position of power for the truth standing in front of Him. Jesus asked the question, "If you desire the praise of man rather than the glory of God, how can you be saved?" (5:44).

The Jews claimed to love God but hated Him in their presence. When confronted with "their king," they wanted no king but Caesar. They chose to serve the world, rather than serve God. They claimed to love God but had no fear of God.

They had made God in their own image and the Messiah, Jesus Christ, did not fit this picture.
We justify ourselves and judge the Jews and Pilate, but we have the same sinful nature as these men. Our sin causes us to be blind to God's leading. It causes us to focus on our worldly desires and goals rather than the Messiah. Just like the Jews, we have a choice to make. Will we surrender to the Messiah, abandon ourselves and follow Him or will we crucify Him and continue on with our dreams and aspirations?

The Messiah has come. True repentance is to turn from your sin, leave your idols, pick up your cross and follow Christ. Who will be your king, the Messiah or Caesar? Let this question be rhetorical. You can find the answer by examining whom you seek to please everyday.
John 19:17-42 The Crucifixion, Death And Burial Of Christ

Pilate believed Christ to be innocent and even feared He may be a son of the gods, but he finally caved to the pressure and threats of the Jews. He handed Christ over to be crucified.

He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. [v17-18].

THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

God told Abraham to sacrifice his son; his son of promise whom he had waited for one hundred years. Abraham set out to obey God. He set out to sacrifice his son to God (Gen 22). Isaac carrying the wood for the sacrifice, is a picture of Christ carrying His cross. God providing Abraham a substitute ram to sacrifice, in place of his son, is a picture of Christ dying in our place.

In the synoptic Gospels, Simon of Cyrene, helped in this carrying of the cross (Mat 27:32; Mar 15:21; Luk 23:26). Though He is fully God, He carried the cross and died for our sins as a physical man. And this man had been tortured so badly, there was not much left of Him to carry the cross alone.

The cross and the tomb were outside the city, at Golgotha, the Place of the Skull (v17). This was a picture of Scripture requiring the sin offering to be disposed outside the camp (Exo 29:14). As the writer of the Book of Hebrews wrote:

For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through His own blood. [Heb 13:11-12].
Christ was crucified between two criminals (v18), as Isaiah prophesied:

. . .He poured out His soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors. . . [Isa 53:12].

Christ, the sinless one, was counted as a criminal and sentenced to die a gruesome death, with other criminals. Yet, He did this to satisfy God's wrath and make intercession for His people.

. . .you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. [Mat 1:21].

Pilate carved a plaque and put it on the cross (v19). It said, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." This plaque was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek; it was written for the whole world to read (v20). This made the Jews upset. They wanted him to change the inscription to say Jesus claimed to say this, not to state this as fact (v21). But Pilate refused to change it.

**What I have written I have written. [v22].**

Pilate may have done this to spite the Jews. For the Jews had forced him to crucify Christ against his will. They had threatened his high position, he was not going to let them take what little joy or protest he could get out of this. Furthermore, he knew Christ to be more than the Jews would give Him credit.

**When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took His garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier. . . [v23].**

But they cast lots for the tunic because it was woven in one piece and they did not want to divide it (v23-24). This is in accord with what the psalmist wrote hundreds of years before: "they divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." [Psa 22:18].

At His crucifixion, Jesus suffered the curse of nakedness. When Adam sinned, he discovered he was naked. He was afraid and embarrassed and hid himself from God (Gen 3:9-11). Then "the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them." [Gen 3:21]. God made clothing to cover sin, in
anticipation of Christ's atoning work. And when Christ was made sin for us, He was stripped naked, humiliated, with nothing to separate Him from the Father's wrath.

The Apostle Paul compared our earthly bodies to what God has prepared for us. Those who follow Christ have an innate desire not to be left naked and we will be further clothed with our new bodies in Heaven (2Co 5:1-6). In heaven, those coming out of the Tribulation will be clothed in white (Rev 7:13-14). God has put into our hearts the desire to be clothed; to have our nakedness covered. But Christ was stripped of all clothing and dignity and His torn flesh was exposed to the world as He suffered for our sins.

The synoptic Gospels mention how the people derided Him, scoffing and mocking Him. He must have looked pathetic (Mat 27:39-43; Mar 15:29-32; Luk 23:35-39). While Christ hung on the cross, suffering the wrath of God, the crowd expressed their hatred for Him. This, too, was a fulfillment of prophecy.

All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; "He trusts in the Lord; let Him deliver him; let Him rescue him, for He delights in him!" [Psa 22:7-8].

I am an object of scorn to my accusers; when they see me, they wag their heads. [Psa 109:25].

Christ, in His love, warned the people of coming destruction as He hung on the cross.

Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us, and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" [Luk 23:28-31].

Christ's warning came to fulfillment 40 years later. In AD 70 during the passover, when the city was full of people, Jerusalem was sacked.
and more than a million people were slaughtered. The scorn they rendered to Christ was then heaped upon them, as prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer 18:16; Lam 2:15).

At least three women named Mary were present at the cross. Mary, the wife of Clopas, Mary Magdalene (v25) and Mary the mother of Jesus (v26).

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold, your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!' And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home." [v26-27].

While He was suffering on the cross, Christ reaffirmed His concern for His mother and His affection for John. Although John's mother was with them, at the cross (Mat 27:56; Mar 15:40), Christ charged to John to look after His earthly mother. John obeyed and took Christ's mother into his home, as his own mother.

**CHRIST SATISFIED GOD'S WRATH**

But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed. . . it was the will of the Lord to crush Him; He has put Him to grief. . . [Isa 53:5,10a].

Christ suffered for us; He paid for our sins by suffering the curse of death on the cross.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us - for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree." [Gal 3:13].

The Apostle Paul based this upon Deuteronomy 21:22-23: "...a hanged man is cursed by God. . ." Here is an example of an execution in Scripture as a foretelling of Christ, to come. But Christ suffered this curse and He is our propitiation. He satisfied God's wrath.
Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood. . . [Rom 3:24-25].

He is the propitiation for our sins. . . [1Jo 2:2].

In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. [1Jo 4:10].

It is hard for most professing Christians to see God as wrathful. They have no fear of God because the modern American gospel says, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." They believe God loves them as they are and they stay in their sin. Oh, they may have rid themselves of what they think are big sins, but they cling to what they think are their small sins. They do not understand they are heaping wrath upon themselves for the day of wrath (Rom 2:5).

Man had sinned and God cannot look with favor upon sin (Hab 1:13). His wrath had to be satisfied. So great was the sin of man, no man could pay the price for sin; even to spend an eternity in Hell could not atone for his sin. This is why those who reject God's salvation through His Son will spend eternity in Hell: because their sin can never be paid and God's wrath toward them can never be satisfied.

For ages, throughout the Old Testament times, it appeared God had done nothing to satisfy His justice toward man. He promised Adam and Eve the day they sinned, they would die (Gen 2:17). But they lived on for almost one thousand years. God instituted animal sacrifices as a substitution for man's punishment but these were temporary and had to be renewed year after year. So, it appeared to the principalities of heaven God had done nothing about man's sin.

If God is just, how can He ignore man's sin?

At the right time, God sent the sinless, perfect man, the lamb without blemish to die for man and satisfy His wrath (Gal 4:4). Christ would be the permanent sacrifice. God's justice would be made right and displayed to all. This is why Isaiah said it pleased the Father to crush His Son ( Isa 53:10).
This was to show God's righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins. It was to show His righteousness at the present time, so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. [Rom 3:25-26].

This is why we cannot be saved by anything we do: Jesus satisfied God's wrath and we cannot. This is why we must repent of our sins and follow Christ to be saved, for He alone could satisfy God's wrath.

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead. [Act 17:30-31].

Christ became sin for us, so God would see us as righteous through Him. The Bible says Christ paid our debt and nailed our sins to the cross (Col 2:14; cf Rev 1:7). And the Apostle Paul declared Christ has given us His righteousness. If we follow Christ, our sins are canceled and God sees us as righteous through His Son. Praise God!

For our sake [God] made [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. [2Co 5:21].

**JESUS' DEATH**

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished. . . [v28].

All through this Gospel, John made note: "the time had not come" or "the time had come." These phrases and this knowing, that all was finished, speak to the fact God is in control; even of the moments. This tells us the sacrifice of our Savior was voluntary, in fact it was planned. Now, knowing all was finished, Christ fulfilled one last prophecy: He said, "I thirst." [v28].
my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my
tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of
death. [Psa 22:15].

Jesus, the Living Water (4:10-14; 7:37-39) was thirsty (v28). When
He thirst, they filled a sponge with sour wine and put it to His mouth
(v29). The Apostle John said this was to fulfill Scripture. The
Scripture fulfilled was Psalm 69:21: "...for My thirst they gave Me
sour wine to drink."

**It is finished. [v30].**

All things were fulfilled and Christ announced this. Christ had
satisfied the wrath of God against those who had been chosen in
Him before the creation of the world. He paid the ransom for these,
so that they may be with Him in glory forever. "...to put an end to
sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting
righteousness. . ." [Dan 9:24].

What is finished? The Law is fulfilled as never
before, nor since, in His "obedience unto death, even
the death of the cross" [Ed. Php 2:8]; Messianic
prophecy is accomplished; Redemption is completed;
"He hath finished the transgression, and made
reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting
righteousness, and sealed up the vision and prophecy,
and anointed a holy of holies" [Ed. Dan 9:24]; He has
inaugurated the kingdom of God and given birth to a
new world. [JFB].

Some commentaries make note that if Christ cried out, He was not
empty of strength and chose to die before nature had taken its
course. Other commentaries point out the Apostle Paul's claim, "For
He was crucified in weakness. . ." [2Co 13:4]. Some claim many a
martyr has had the energy to cry out in proclamation immediately
before their death, so the crying out did not indicate there was a lot
of life left.

His crying out proves nothing about how much strength He had
remaining, but the Bible says He bowed His head and gave up His
spirit (v30). This means He voluntarily died. He controlled the time
of His death. He gave up His spirit: This was not a matter of His flesh expiring; it was a matter of Christ setting His life aside.

Into Your hand I commit My spirit. . . [Psa 31:5].

Death by crucifixion would often drag on for days, but the Jews did not want the bodies up on the Sabbath during the Passover celebration. So they requested the legs of the men be broken (v31).

Without support from the legs, the weight of the crucified would be placed upon his lungs and he would suffocate to death.

But there is another reason why Christ's body had to be down; not that the Pharisees cared about this: God gave Israel a law those hung on a tree must be buried the same day. This was probably to typify the death of Christ. In this, Christ would fulfill the law even in His death, by dying and being buried the same day.

And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. . . [Deu 21:22-23].

When the soldiers went to break the legs of the men, they found Christ had already died, so they did not break His legs, but pierced His side (v32-34). When they pierced His side, blood and water flowed.

It is now well known that the effect of long-continued and intense agony is frequently to produce a secretion of a colorless lymph within the pericardium (the membrane enveloping the heart), amounting in many cases to a very considerable quantity." [JFB, quoting Webster and Wilkinson].

So we see, the death of Jesus Christ was not questioned. When they came to Him, it was obvious He was dead. However, to make sure of it or produce evidence of it, one soldier pierced His side. The outflow of blood and water confirmed Christ was dead and He had suffered much agony.
In verse 36, John claimed not breaking Christ's bones fulfilled the prophecy, not one of His bones will be broken (Psa 34:20). This also fulfilled an ordinance regarding the sacrifice of the Passover: they were not to break any bones of the lamb (Exo 12:46; Num 9:12). Christ was the perfect Lamb; the perfect sacrifice and the temporary Passover lamb typified Him in every way.

But though we are to see here the fulfillment of a very definite typical ordinance, we shall, on searching deeper, see in it a remarkable divine interposition to protect the sacred body of Christ from the last indignity after He had finished the work given Him to do. Every imaginable indignity had been permitted before that, up to the moment of His death. But no sooner is that over than an Unseen hand is found to have provided against the clubs of the rude soldiers coming in contact with that temple of the Godhead. [JFB].

The piercing of Jesus' side (v37), by fulfilling prophecy, left another prophecy yet to come: The prophecy of Zechariah was fulfilled, in that, he prophesied Christ would be pierced 500 years before Christ was crucified. But the fullness of the prophecy will be fulfilled when Christ returns to reign in Jerusalem and Israel turns to Him.

. . . when they look on Me, on Him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for Him. . . [Zec 12:10].

In writing the Book of Revelation, the Apostle John claimed those who pierced Him (the collective Jews, not just the singular soldier) would see Him again.

Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him. Even so. Amen. [Rev 1:7].

In concluding the events of Christ's crucifixion and death, John testified he was a witness and he testified to the reliability of his testimony (v35). His purpose for establishing his reliability was so everyone reading his account may believe in Jesus Christ.
1) "He who saw it has borne witness"; this was the Apostle John. [v35].

2) "His testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth." [v35].
   a) "This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true." [21:24].

3) "That you also may believe." [v35].
   a) "but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name." [20:31].

At the time of this writing, John was an elder in the church; a well known elder. He was the last of the Apostles. There were some who were trying to undermine the Gospel and he warned of them in the epistles he wrote. It was in this context he wrote confirming his witness and that his witness is faithful, so the reader can believe what he wrote.

**JESUS' BURIAL**

After Christ was confirmed dead, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took His body and prepared it for burial with the customary herbs and spices; approximately 75 pounds of it (v38-40). The KJV and NASB say one hundred pounds. The Greek is one hundred litras; a litra was a Roman pound, weighing 11.5 to 12 ounces. Therefore, one hundred litras is approximately 75 US pounds.

John described Joseph of Arimathea as one "who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews." [v38]. He described Nicodemus as the one who "had come to Jesus by night." [v39]. Both men believed, but were afraid to be counted with Him publicly. It appears they were not alone, for John wrote, rebuking such men, in an earlier passage:

   Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in Him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not
confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God. [12:42-43].

SIDENOTE: Even today, when confronted with their faith, many professing Christians are afraid to face the ridicule or judgment of their peers will claim their faith is a private matter. Is it possible to have a "private faith" and be truly saved? Here are five reasons the answer is "NO":

1. In chapter three, when Christ was talking with Nicodemus, He told him about the work of the Spirit and said, "You hear its sound." [3:8]. Meaning, when the Holy Spirit indwells in us, we cannot have a "private relationship" between us and God. Furthermore, Jesus said what is in the heart will come out of the mouth (Mat 15:18).

2. John the Baptist said, "Whoever receives His testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true." [3:33]. To set a seal is to publicly certify.

3. The Great Commission (Mat 28:18-20) is a command for all Christians to disciple others and teach the Gospel. The Apostle John wrote some of Christ's parting words, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you." [20:21].

4. The most common reason for holding to a "private faith" is the fear of man; whether this be fear of death or fear of ridicule. Jesus commanded, "What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." [Mat 10:27-28; cf Psa 18:8-9].

5. When we are concerned about receiving glory from man, Jesus warned, "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?" [5:44].
There was a new tomb in the garden, near to where Christ was crucified. This tomb was hewn out of a rock and had never been used. Just as Christ rode into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt which had never been ridden (Mar 11:2), He was buried in a tomb which had never been used (v41; cf Luk 23:53). This is a picture of God's holiness.

Matthew claimed the tomb belonged to Joseph (Mat 27:60). Joseph and Nicodemus took the body of Christ there. Because the time was at hand for the Passover celebration, they placed the body in the tomb partially prepared, with the intention to finish after the festivities (v41-42). "And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away." [Mat 27:60].

IN CLOSING

Christ died for our sin. He suffered physical torture but His greatest suffering and agony was bearing God's wrath on our behalf.

The modern American gospel says God loves you unconditionally; just believe. But this leaves us with a nagging question: Why would the perfect, sinless Son of God, who enjoyed perfect love and unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit, why would He take my sin upon Himself and suffer God's wrath, so I could remain in my sin?

In Romans 6, the Apostle Paul asked two questions and gave three answers:

Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? BY NO MEANS! If we died to sin, how can we still live in it. [Rom 6:1-2].

Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? BY NO MEANS! . . . you are slaves of the one whom you obey. . . [Rom 6:15-16]

The wages of sin is death. . . [Rom 6:23].

Christ satisfied God's wrath on behalf of those who belong to Him. He paid the price, settled our debt and nailed our sins to the cross. Those who follow Christ, God sees as righteous; not through any work of our own, but through the blood of Christ. Only what Christ
has done for us can save us. But if we think this means we can remain in our sin, we are not saved.

"It is finished." How terribly have these blessed words of Christ been misunderstood, misappropriated and misapplied! How many seem to think that on the cross the Lord Jesus accomplished a work which rendered it unnecessary for the beneficiaries of it to live holy lives on earth. So many have been deluded into thinking that, so far as reaching heaven is concerned, it matters not how they walk provided they are 'resting on the finished work of Christ.' They may be unfruitful, untruthful, disobedient, yet (though they may possibly miss some millennial crown) so long as they repudiate all righteousness of their own and have faith in Christ, they imagine they are 'eternally secure.' All around us are people who are worldly-minded, money-lovers, pleasure-seekers, Sabbath-breakers, yet who think all is well with them because they have 'accepted Christ as their personal Savior.' In their aspiration, conversation, and recreation, there is practically nothing to differentiate them from those who make no profession at all. Neither in their home-life nor social-life is there anything save empty pretensions to distinguish them from others. The fear of God is not upon them, the commands of God have no authority over them, the holiness of God has no attraction for them. 'It is finished.' How solemn to realize that these words of Christ must have been used to lull thousands into a false peace. Yet such is the case. We have come into close contact with many who have no private prayer-life, who are selfish, covetous, dishonest, but who suppose that a merciful God will overlook all such things provided they once put their trust in the Lord Jesus. What a horrible perversion of the truth! What a turning of God's grace 'into lasciviousness'!(Jude 4). Yes, those who now live the most self-seeking and flesh-pleasing lives, talk about their faith in the blood
of the Lamb, and suppose they are safe. How the devil has deceived them! [Arthur Pink, "It Is Finished"].
John 20:1-18 The Sunday Morning Resurrection Of Jesus Christ

From the beginning of His ministry, Christ professed He would die and resurrect again (2:19). Now Christ had died for mans' sin, as He promised, but to the disciples and those who loved Him, it was a discouraging time for the man was dead.

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. [v1].

The Passover celebration was over and the Sabbath was past. Now it was Sunday morning and Mary Magdalene went to the tomb before dawn (v1). She had come to finish applying the herbs and spices to Christ's body so He would have a proper burial. When she arrived at the tomb, she found the tomb was no longer sealed for the stone was rolled away.

This was most unsettling to find the stone rolled away and the body was missing or stolen. So, she ran to find Peter and John and told them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." [v2].

She still called Him "Lord." Although she, along with the disciples, had high hopes for the earthly reign of the Messiah; and although she was utterly crushed by His crucifixion, which seemed to fail her hopes, yet she still called Him "Lord." God, in the flesh had died; though she was crushed, she clung to the hope Christ was whom He said He was.

Peter and John ran to the tomb. John got there first. He did not go in, but he looked inside and saw the linen cloths. When Peter got there, he went inside. He also saw the cloths "and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded up in a place by itself." [v7].

not loosely, as if hastily thrown down, and indicative of a hurried and disorderly removal. [JFB].
There have arisen urban legends which say this folded or wrapped towel is a sign left by Jesus meaning He will come again. There is no support for this theory and the promoters have never given proof of this "Jewish tradition."

The fact is, Christ's body was resurrected. In the last chapter, Scripture says Joseph and Nicodemus had bound or wrapped the body of Christ in linen cloths (19:40). When His body was resurrected, He came out of the cloths. The face cloth was still wrapped and set aside, as if the cloth had come out of the linen cloths with the body and was removed separately, but still wrapped. This was proof of a resurrected body; no one had come to the tomb to unwrap the body of Christ.

John went into the tomb "and he saw and believed." [v8]. He could see the body had not been stolen, for all the cloths were lying there, still wrapped; just no body inside. If the body was stolen, most likely it would have been stolen with wraps and all. If Christ's body had been unwrapped, the cloths would have been in a pile. It was obvious the body had come out of the cloths. The evidence was Christ had arisen just like He said He would.

\textit{for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise from the dead}. [v9].

John saw and believed, but up until this time, he did not understand and even now, he must have had a multitude of questions in his head. This must have been very confusing for those who were close to Christ. So, Peter and John went home or, "back to their homes." [v10].

Neither disciple had a home in Jerusalem and it does not appear they had yet returned to Galilee. So the term, "back to their homes" most likely meant they went back to where they were staying, which was probably the home of a friend. The point made, is they went away from the tomb, they went back to where they were staying to discuss and to contemplate what they had seen.

\textit{But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb}. [v11].
Apparently, Mary Magdalene followed Peter and John back to the tomb. When they returned home, she was left there, by herself, crying. As she wept, she looked into the tomb (v11).

SIDENOTE: She had to stoop to look into the tomb. When you see illustrations of the tomb, with a stone ten feet tall, you can rest assured, the artist exaggerated the size of the tomb.

When Peter and John looked into the tomb, they saw linen. When Mary looked in, she saw two angels. The angels were dressed in white and "sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet." [v12].

The first time Mary came to the tomb, she saw the body of Christ was missing and presumed it had been stolen. The second time, she saw two angels as if to satisfy the question, "What happened to the body?" But she failed to understand the glory in what she saw. For when the angels asked her why she was crying, she replied, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." [v13]. This the same thing she told Peter and John. Her grief must have been intense.

She turned around and saw Jesus, but she did not know it was Him; she thought He was the gardener. When He asked her why she was crying and for whom was she looking, she did not answer His question, but she prevailed upon Him to disclose where He put the body (v14-15). She had a one-track mind. She was determined to recover Christ's body; she claimed she would bring the body back. Her grief was intense, indeed.

"Woman, why are you weeping?" [v13,15]. This was the question asked of her by the angels and by Jesus, whom she mistook for the gardener. Then Jesus called her by name. He said, "Mary." Her heart stirred and she recognized her Lord and in great excitement called Him, "Rabboni." Here is a picture where Christ was compassionate toward her, but He did not reveal Himself right away.

Evidently she was going to throw herself upon Him, because He stopped her, saying, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father." [v17]. Many wonder why Jesus told Mary not to cling to Him but told Thomas to touch Him (v27). Matthew gave an account similar to John's with Mary Magdalene and another Mary at
the tomb (Mat 28:9). They took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. But Matthew did not record Jesus' rebuke.

- The reason Christ did not want her to cling to Him, may have been similar typology to the Jewish high priest needing to remain undefiled before He entered the presence of the Lord in the Holy of Holies. Christ was soon to leave for the Father and enter His presence.

- When Christ told Mary not to cling to Him, it may have been a signal their relationship had changed. No longer could she cling to Him, as if to keep Him here; for He was going to the Father. No longer could she cling to Him to confirm His physical presence; she would soon have to cling to Him by faith and not by sight.

Old familiarities must now give place to new and more awful yet sweeter approaches; but for these the time has not come yet. This seems the spirit, at least, of these mysterious words. [JFB].

Jesus Christ had come in the flesh, He had come as a man, and His friends and disciples were familiar with Him in this context. But He was now risen and His flesh was no longer the same as His peers; His body was transformed. He was no longer their earthly companion; He was Lord and He was on His way to the Father.

Jesus told her to "go to My brothers and say to them, I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God." [v17]. Hebrews 2:11 says Christ is not ashamed to call those whom He is sanctifying "brothers." Before His death He called them friends (15:15) and after His death, He called them brothers.

Many professing Christians are casual in their reference toward Christ. They flippantly call Christ "brother" or call the Father "daddy" and such. But this was the purpose of Christ's warning to Mary: we cannot be casual toward Him as if He is one of us. Though He called the disciples friends, on one occasion, and brothers, on another, they never returned the casual reference or greeting. He was always their Lord and Master and they referred to themselves as bondservants or slaves. Though He call us brothers, we cannot bring
Him down to our level by calling Him the same. To us, He is Lord and Master; He is God.

Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty." [Luk 17:9-10].

Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. [1Pe 2:16].

Regarding "My Father and your Father, to My God and your God," Jesus made a glorious announcement: This same Father to whom He was ascending was now their Father, too; and the God whom He had revealed to them was now their God, too.

This is our hope: those who follow Christ are now part of God's family. The Apostle Paul wrote, "we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." [Rom 8:23]. Like Christ, we will have new bodies; bodies free from the bondage to corruption or decay (Rom 8:21).

Mary obeyed and told the disciples all the Lord had spoken to her (v18). John wrote she "announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord.'" [v18]. She told them everything the Lord had told her.

IN CLOSING

Christ arose from the grave on Sunday morning.

When Mary Magdalene discovered Christ's body missing, she was distraught. She told the disciples. Peter and John ran to the tomb.

When they saw the empty tomb, John believed. John and Peter went home, probably to talk this out and sort what happened, with the words which Christ had left them the night before He was crucified.

Mary looked in the tomb again. She saw the angels but her distress was so intent, she was not ready for the good news they had for her. She turned and saw Jesus; thinking He was the gardener, she wanted
to know where she could find the body; and she would bring it back, herself, if need be.

Then Jesus spoke her name and she saw Him.

He warned her not to cling to Him; His body. She was now going to have to cling to Him by faith.

She spread the news, telling the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord.'" [v18].

Jesus has called each of us by name. Our proper response is to cling to Him by faith and spread the news He has risen and conquered death.
John 20:19-29 Jesus Appeared To The Disciples On Sunday

Christ appeared to the disciples on the evening of the first day of the week; the same day He arose from the grave. This was Sunday.

Many people want to explain the change of the worship of the Lord to Sunday as come from conspiracies of many evil kinds. But it was the Lord who established Sunday worship; as He arose on a Sunday and the first two times He met with the disciples, were both on a Sunday; and when they met, the disciples worshiped Him. Furthermore, there is mention in Acts and in the writings of the Apostle Paul, indicating Sunday worship.

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." [v19].

John did not say Christ came through the locked doors; he did not describe Jesus as walking through the walls or the doors. He claimed the doors were locked, but Christ came and stood among them. In Luke's account (Luk 24:36-49) it is the same thing, "As they were talking about these things, Jesus Himself stood among them. . . " Luke also wrote the disciples were startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost. In both accounts, He did not mysteriously appear, as in fading into view. The apostles said, in essence, "there He was."

"Peace be with you." [v19]. The first thing He said to them after He arose was the same thing He said to them before He was crucified. And peace it is, for Christ has satisfied God's wrath, bringing peace to His own.

. . .we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. . .Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. [Rom 5:1,9].

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After appearing to them by such miraculously means, Christ did not need to give proof it was He. Nonetheless, so they could know He had done what He said, that He would die and would rise from the dead and on the day He said so, He showed them the scars in His hands and side. Christ wanted them to know, beyond all doubt, it was He and He was alive.

**When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. [v20].**

Luke described this gladness of the disciples like this:

. . .they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling. . .
. [Luk 24:41].

They were marveling, they could not believe what they saw. This was not a rebellious unbelief; this was a rejoicing, overwhelming belief; a belief in something which was too good to be true; too hard to understand, but they knew it to be true. Confronted with too much for their minds to sort out, they were in awe of Christ.

They had seen their Lord, their Messiah, crucified. He was dead and buried; they never expected to see Him again and their sorrow was very great. While they were mourning, feeling sorry for themselves and fearful the Jews would come for them, suddenly, He was there among them and He spoke to them.

**Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.' [v21]**

While they marveled and collected their thoughts, Christ gave them a commission. Just as He taught them in Sychar (ch4), "It is time to go to work." When Christ gave the great commission, He said, all authority had been given to Him, therefore or because of this, go teach all nations and disciple individuals (Mat 28:18-20). Christ brought peace, so we must go and proclaim this peace to others.

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses.
against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. [2Co 5:18-21].

We know He discussed more doctrine with them for how can they speak of what they do not understand? Luke wrote of this same meeting, "...He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." [Luk 24:45].

the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true. [1Jo 5:20].

Just as Christ found it important to impart sound doctrine to His disciples before His death, He made it a priority after He rose from the dead. Peace comes from understanding the Word, for the Scriptures give us sound doctrine and instruction for living. How can we serve the Lord, unless we know how to rest in His peace? We need to be constantly in the Word.

And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." [v22].

Just as God breathed life into the lungs of the first Adam (Gen 2:7), through the second Adam (Christ), God now breathes the life of the Holy Spirit into those who are His. This is the baptism of the Holy Spirit and all who follow Christ have the Holy Spirit within them.

"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." Now this He said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. [7:37-39].
The next verse has been misinterpreted by many and misunderstood by most:

If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld. [v23].

This verse was never interpreted literally by the apostles and it was never instructed in the New Testament epistles literally. Clearly, no man can intercede nor interfere between God and man. Instead, this is a charge to judge sound doctrine and exercise church discipline for the sake of sound doctrine (cf Mat 7:15-20; 1Co 5:5-7).

This verse does not give authority to Christians to forgive sin. Jesus was saying that the believer can boldly declare the certainty of a sinner's forgiveness by the Father because of the work of His Son if that sinner has repented and believed the gospel. The believer with certainty can also tell those who do not respond to the message of God's forgiveness through faith in Christ that their sins, as a result, are not forgiven. [The MacArthur Study Bible].

The appropriate interpretation of this Scripture is, we will know. Jesus said we will judge them by their fruit (Mat 7:16). We will discern between fruit which is an outward facade and fruit which is evidence of a soul anchored in Christ.

Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into His side, I will never believe." [v24-25].

Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus first appeared to them that Sunday evening (v24). Like the other disciples, he had spent his days and nights since the crucifixion pondering in fear and doubt. So, when the other disciples told him they had seen the Lord, his first reaction was to express his doubt (v25).
Only two other times in Scripture do we hear from Thomas and both times are in the Gospel of John.

1) When Jesus was going to Jerusalem to raise Lazarus, Thomas, knowing the Jews wanted to kill Him said, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." [11:16].

2) When Jesus said, "you know the way to where I am going." [14:4]. Thomas said, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?" [14:5].

We can see from these two incidents, Thomas had difficulties trusting what Jesus said. He was more of a negative or cynical thinker; he was resigned to doubt.

Now, after the disciples saw the Lord, they found Thomas and told him. They probably told him the marks of the crucifixion were still in His hands and His side, which caused Thomas to reply as he did.

Thomas did not say if he saw the marks he would believe. He spoke as if he was inclined NOT to believe: "unless. . .I will never believe." Nonetheless, though he may have been more resolute in expressing his doubt than the others, he was not alone. All the disciples had experienced difficulty believing.

[Christ] appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and He rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw Him after He had risen. [Mar 16:14].

Think about his experience and what formed the mindset of Thomas. He, along with the rest of the disciples, had been following Christ for three years. They believed He was the Messiah, which is true. But they believed, wrongly, He was going to establish His kingdom in Jerusalem and they believed they were going to be a part of this. After Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, they were probably euphoric with anticipation. But then, instead of setting up His kingdom, the Messiah was taken captive and crucified. Many of the disciples were gathered together, but they were gathered in fear. Thomas was not with them; he may have been trying to get on with his life or he may have been elsewhere simmering in his doubts.
Nonetheless, worry and doubt caused Thomas and the rest of the disciples to forget Christ's promise to rise again.

*Eight days later, His disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them.* [v26a].

Eight days later is one week. The Hebrew way of counting was to include the current day. So, Sunday to Sunday was eight days; just as Friday to Sunday was three days or "three days later." They included the current or first day in the count.

The following Sunday, Thomas was with the rest of the disciples when Christ appeared again. Just like the last time, the doors were locked: Christ did not come through the doors. Christ appeared and He greeted them again with "Peace be with you." [v26].

*Put your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand, and place it in My side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.* [v27].

Christ met Thomas on his terms. This is one of the few times in Scripture where God met man on the man's terms. Do not take from this passage we can make demands of God; that we can challenge Him to prove Himself. Usually these kinds of thoughts are brought about from our own self-pity or pride, which is sin. And Thomas was sinning but Christ met him for His own purposes.

Thomas' reaction to Christ's compassionate challenge was to be awed. He did not touch Jesus or examine the wounds, as he had said he must do. His pride and doubt were cast aside as He was overwhelmed with the presence of the Son of God. His response was to declare Christ to be his Lord and his God (v28). Once firmly entrenched in doubt, his doubt was now completely defeated by Christ's glory.

*Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.* [v29].

Although Thomas expressed belief and praise toward Christ, Jesus answered him with a rebuke. The rebuke was well deserved: Thomas' disbelief originated from not accepting the plans of God because he had plans of his own. So, he wanted tangible proof of
God's plan. How often we ask God to perform according to our plans rather than accept our lot as He provides. Christ's rebuke to Thomas extends toward us when we resist His plan or seek tangible evidence rather than trust God in faith.

Understand this another way: When Christ said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" it was a great promise to us, but it was also a warning. For, in His rebuke to Thomas, we are also rebuked. So often we, like Peter when walking on the water, become affected by what we feel and see and we begin to doubt. God is always in control and we are in His care. Cast aside all doubt and believe.

Though you have not seen Him, you love Him.
Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him
and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled
with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the
salvation of your souls. [1Pe 1:8-9].

. . . for we walk by faith, not by sight. [2Co 5:7].

Church tradition tells us Thomas so firmly believed, he went beyond the safety of the Roman Empire to proclaim God's Word to India and the Far East, establishing churches there. There, ironically, he was pierced with a spear and died in 72AD. This is demonstrative of the courage God had given him as a replacement for his fear and doubt.

SIDENOTE: Why did Jesus wait a week to confront Thomas? Or, even yet, why did Jesus wait a week before visiting the disciples the second time?

They probably met every day during the preceding week, but their Lord designedly reserved His second appearance among them till the recurrence of His resurrection day, that He might thus inaugurate the delightful sanctities of THE LORD'S DAY (Rev 1:10). [JFB].

In other words, Christ was getting the disciples used to the idea of worshiping Him on the first day of the week: the day He rose from the dead and brought life to the redeemed; "the Lord's Day." He did
this twice: remember, when Scripture calls out twice, such as "Verily, verily" or "Truly, truly," we are supposed to pay special attention.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. . . [Rev 1:10].

**IN CLOSING**

Christ arose. He did not rise for the world to see, because they could not see; they refused to see (1:10-11). So God hardened their hearts, lest they believe (12:40).

He appeared to the disciples the evening of the day He arose, but Thomas was not with them.

Having immersed himself in self-pity, Thomas hardened himself in doubt. However, he was not so hardened the Lord could not reach him. But "don't try this at home," so to speak. Thomas' doubt is not our model; neither is his challenge to God. We have his example to learn from his sinful mistake, as Christ said, "Blessed are those who believe though they do not see." The fruit of our faith is to believe, even when it seems the whole world declares we are fools to do so and the trials around us are overwhelming.

The following Sunday, Christ appeared to the disciples a second time. This time, Thomas was with them. When challenged by Christ, Thomas could only declare, "My Lord and my God!"

This passage confirms the resurrection of Christ. He did not declare it to the world but He did declare it to the disciples.

The first two times they met were both Sundays. Upon meeting, they engaged in worship. Christ did this to establish the day of worship: to leave behind the yoke of the Law and celebrate the risen Christ and the New Covenant. Many people want to assign the worship of the Lord on Sunday to conspiracies of many evil kind. But it was the Lord who established Sunday worship.

But our biggest take-away in this passage is we are to believe in Christ by faith and trust God regardless how we see the circumstances around us.
John 20:30-31 So You Believe Jesus Is The Christ

Most of Christ's teachings to the disciples were not recorded, but God has recorded what we need to know.

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. [v30-31].

John stated positively, "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." [20:31]. Thus refuting both claims of Cerinthus: 1) Jesus is not the Christ; and 2) God has not come in the flesh. This also stands in bold contrast to the claim of Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism and other cults who claim Jesus is not God; or against "Christian" sects which deny the Trinity.

Many have commented this appears to be where John planned to end His gospel account, but he later added the last chapter. Maybe, but most likely not. When reading verses 30 and 31, in view of the preceding verses, it seems to flow as an affirmative to the second clause of what Christ said to Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." [v29]. This account was written so we can believe, though we have not seen, "and that by believing you may have life in His name." Furthermore, the following and final chapter, where John described Christ reconciling with Peter and where John put rumors of his own immortality to bed, do not appear as an after thought. And, upon reading the first epistle of John, you can see how his style of writing was to appear to wrap up and then add more.

In this view, it does not appear the purpose of these two verses were ever intended to wrap up the Gospel of John. It appears these two verses are a logical wrap up to Christ revealing Himself to the disciples. He confronted their doubt and established their worship. John, then, brought this to a personal application, "so that you may believe. . . " John's desire was for those who believe, to believe and
not doubt: to KNOW this Christ whom they worshiped. We have examples of this in his First Epistle:

that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. . . if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. [1Jo 1:3,7].

And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. . . By this we may know that we are in Him: whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked. [1Jo 2:3].

I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. [1Jo 2:12-14].

Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He made to us; eternal life. [1Jo 2:24-25].

And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears we may have confidence and not shrink from Him in shame at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of Him. See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we
should be called children of God; and so we are. [1Jo 2:28-29,3:1].

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. [1Jo 3:14].

Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us. [1Jo 3:24].

By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. [1Jo 4:13].

So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment. [1Jo 4:16-17].

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. [1Jo 5:13].

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. [1Jo 5:20].

So here, the Apostle John said the purpose of the Gospel is so we may believe and by believing we may have eternal life. This leads us again to the question: What is believing?

Two key passages are John 3:36 and Hebrews 3:18-19. Both selections of Scripture equate disobedience with unbelief. John 3:36 does this by promising eternal life to the one who believes, then, condemning, as an opposite, the one who disobeys. Hebrews 3:18-19 says those who disobey, do so because of unbelief.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. [3:36].
And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. [Heb 3:18-19].

Most professing Christians are living disobedient lives. I don't say this in the context that we still have our sin nature. The Apostle Paul told us in Romans chapter 7, we will struggle with this sin nature; and the Apostle John told us if we confess our sin, God is faithful to forgive and to cleanse us (1Jo 1:9). What I am saying is most professing Christians have bought into the modern American gospel. They have this false belief God loves them in spite of their sin; they suppose God understands them and winks at their sin; they think God wants them to be happy; and their sin makes them happy.

They believe, with a simple head knowledge, as fact, Jesus is the Son of God and He came and died and rose again. The Apostle James told us the demons believe this and they cannot be saved (Jam 2:19). I remember being taught at a young age if you say the sinner's prayer and as long as you were sincere when you said it, you are saved and can never lose your salvation. But it bothered me when I read Jesus said I was to take up my cross daily and follow Him and it bothered me that Christians, whom I looked up to, told me this was for those who want to go to the next level; those who want to have a closer walk. They claimed we do not have to be a disciple to be saved.

There are many professing Christians who read their Bibles daily, even for decades, yet they have never gone beyond a general knowledge of what it says. They can quote the promises they cling to, which are most often taken out of context, but they cannot quote Scripture or point someone to Scripture which tells them how to walk with Christ or how to abide in Him. I have met many professing Christians who have been "saved" for years but they cannot clearly speak the Biblical Gospel message nor can they defend the Word when it is under attack. Worst of all, I have met so many Christians who are afraid to offend the world with the Gospel message; they believe the best way to win people to Christ is to be nice and affirming and speak only of God's love. They have no idea how to be a disciple of Christ.
My friend, do not be deceived. Jesus said to enter by the narrow gate and few there be who find it (Mat 7:13-14). And Jesus said there will be many who call Him "Lord" and many even did "great things" for God, but He will turn them away and declare He never knew them (Mat 7:21-23). This will be a horrible, terrible thing to hear these words of rejection from the Savior.

The Bible equates believing with obeying Christ. Jesus said if you love Him, you will keep His commands (14:15); He told us to abide in Him; He said if we are merely reading the Word, we will not produce fruit (15:1-6). We must dig in the Word (6:53-58); we must take up our cross daily and follow Him (Mat 16:24-26; Luk 9:23; 14:27).

Many people find comfort in reading the Bible, but they are not saved. They live moral lives and they go out of their way to be helpful and nice, but they have never taken up their cross and followed Christ. Their "faith" is nothing more than a head knowledge and they are on their way to Hell.

My friend, if you believe, truly believe, you will be in the Word, dig in it and obey it; you will take up your cross and follow Christ. John said this Scripture was given so we may believe. If you profess to believe but disobey, you are not saved.

He who has small thoughts of sin, cannot have great thoughts of God. [John Owen].

IN CLOSING

The Apostle John said he wrote this Gospel so we may believe. God has revealed Himself to man. The Bible is written so we may believe.

If we read it, we may have a head knowledge. If we study it, dig in it, it will become part of us and this will lead to obedience.

If we do not obey, we do not believe. Head knowledge is not believing. True believing is evidenced by obedience.

Eternal life is given to the believing.
After Christ arose from the dead, He did not meet with the disciples every day. Some became bored or discouraged.

*After this Jesus revealed Himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and He revealed Himself in this way.* [v1]

Jesus appeared to the disciples a third time and here is how it happened: Simon Peter had said, "I am going fishing." And several disciples said, "We will go with you." [v3]. The ones who went with Peter were Thomas, Nathaniel, James, John, and two others (v2). Seven in all. They went fishing all night and caught nothing (v3). Then Christ appeared.

Early in His ministry when Christ called them, Peter, James and John left their boats and everything they owned to follow Jesus. It was then Christ told Peter he would now be fishing for men (Luk 5:10-11). They left everything to seek a new life with Christ. But now, Peter got discouraged and went back to fishing and six of the eleven went with him.

Though Christ had risen from the dead, He was not with them everyday as He was before. Waiting is difficult and the disciples were growing restless. They were tired of waiting, they wanted something to happen. So, at Peter's lead, they went back to their old life and went fishing. Had Christ not intervened, they would have soon been back in business and would never have set out to proclaim the Gospel.

Sometimes our Christian walk seems to be a fruitless, with endless waiting. Some professing Christians will turn back to their old life. Some believe they need to branch out into something new. There are times for action, but often Jesus wants us to wait; to seek His will rather than seek to make something happen.

As the day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not recognize Him (v4). Calling them "children," He asked them if they had caught any fish. They answered they had none (v5).
Jesus then told them to cast the net on the right side of the boat. They did not yet recognize Jesus, but they were tired and acted upon the suggestion.

**So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. [v6].**

At the time Christ had first called Peter, James and John, He performed a similar miracle. Luke told the story: At this time, Peter, James and John had been fishing all night and were cleaning their nets when Jesus borrowed one of their boats to preach from. After Christ finished speaking to the crowd on the shore, He told Peter to row to deep water and cast his net. Peter answered they had fished all night and caught nothing, but he respected Jesus and did what He said. When they cast the net, they pulled in so many fish the nets were breaking. This miracle overwhelmed Peter and he realized he was a sinner standing in front of a Holy God and begged Christ to depart from him (Luk 5:1-11). Now, this miracle was happening again.

**John told Peter, "It is the Lord!" [v7].**

Peter was overwhelmed. He put on his outer garment and jumped into the sea to rush to shore. It is significant he put on his outer garment. He realized he was a sinner and he was unclothed or exposed and he was going to see the Lord.

Prior to the miracle in both events, the disciples had caught no fish. This was from God, it was not a coincidence. This would make the miracle of their overflowing catch to stand out remarkably against their own efforts. Though they worked hard, there was no profit. Then, when they obeyed Christ, there was great profit. The moral of these stories is not to obey Christ and receive great profit, this is a false gospel. The moral is all things are in the hands of God. We are called to work hard, we are called to obey Christ, but the outcome is in the hands of God. Therefore, we need to keep our eyes upon Him.

John Calvin wrote in his commentary on this portion of Scripture:

> In the same manner, also, God often tries believers, that He may lead them the more highly to value His blessing. If we were always prosperous whenever we
put our hand to labor, scarcely any man would attribute to the blessing of God the success of his exertions, all would boast of their industry and would kiss their hands. But when they sometimes labor and torment themselves without any advantage, if they happen afterwards to succeed better, they are constrained to acknowledge something out of the ordinary course; and the consequence is that they begin to ascribe to the goodness of God the praise of their prosperity and success. . . Now if we dislike our calling because the labor which we undertake appears to be unproductive, yet, when the Lord exhorts us to steadiness and perseverance, we ought to take courage; in the end we shall obtain a happy result, but it will be at the proper time. [John Calvin's Bible Commentaries on the Gospel of John, translated by John King, d.1907].

The other disciples came to shore in the boat, dragging the net full of fish (v8). They saw Jesus had been cooking some fish on a fire and had some bread laid out, too (v9). While they were fishing and catching nothing, Jesus already had fish.

Then Jesus told them to bring some of the fish they just caught (v10). John made note, Peter went to the boat and hauled the net with 153 fish ashore (v11). Likely Peter helped the other six disciples haul the net ashore as it would have been a heavy job for one man. The picture is, Peter was overwhelmed, he raced to shore to see Jesus and probably did not know what to say as he must have still felt awkward, having denied Christ a few days earlier and now having disobeyed Him to go fishing. So when Jesus made a request for more fish, Peter did not hesitate to make this happen. He desired to be right with Christ.

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. [v12-13].
The way John described this scene, it is clear all the disciples were awe struck. Christ had made Himself plainly known by the power of this miracle.

In Matthew's account of the Last Supper, Jesus told the disciples they would be scattered but He would meet them again in Galilee (Mat 26:31-32). When Jesus met Mary Magdalene at the tomb, He told her to tell the disciples to meet Him in Galilee (Mat 28:7). He said this even though He intended to see them in Jerusalem that night. When He saw them that night, they were still hiding in the upper room; they had not embarked to Galilee. When He saw them a week later, they were still hiding in the upper room. Finally, they went to Galilee, but when they arrived, they grew restless rather than wait for the Lord.

They became discouraged and went fishing; they were depending upon their own labors or activities to satisfy them. Since Christ was crucified, they had been in hiding, now they were more safely in Galilee, but their lives were amounting to nothing. They were trying to make something happen to legitimize their lives, once again. They did not wait on the Lord as He told them; and this encounter was very humbling.

Then Christ gave them some fish and bread to eat (v13). This was the third time Christ appeared to the disciples as a group (v14). Amidst their anxiety and distress, He called them to break from the life they were seeking to carve out and come and eat. He called them to spend time with Him.

**IN CLOSING**

Often times, to obey means to wait. Jesus told the disciples to meet Him in Galilee. Their obedience was delayed, and when they did go to Galilee, they grew restless for waiting and went back to their old life.

Sometimes, we grow restless. We want to see things happen; we want to "be used by God." Or, sometimes there is pain, injury or illness to overcome and God does not seem to be hearing our prayers. The wait can be discouraging and some go back to their old way of life.
Jesus met the disciples with a miracle and the disciples were humbled; they realized they were lacking in faith. Then Christ fed them.

Walking with the Lord, sometimes it means we wait. If we are in the Word, Christ will meet us. God speaks to us through His Word. Come, spend some time with Christ.
John 21:15-19 Jesus Reconciled Peter To Feed Christ's Lambs

So far, Peter has seen Christ three times and it does not seem he has brought up his denial or repented of it. But, we saw in the last passage, he was eager to please the Lord. It seems he wants to please Christ; he wants to be right with Him. He was likely in an awkward state.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." [v15].

Peter had such a strong confidence in his own abilities; he was impetuous and bullheaded. The night Jesus was crucified, Jesus declared the disciples would all be scattered, but Peter proclaimed, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away." [Mat 26:33]. Nonetheless, he denied Christ three times.

Before He died, Christ told the disciples to meet Him in Galilee but Peter hid with the others in the upper room. When they finally went to Galilee, he grew restless waiting and he encouraged the others to go fishing with him; to go back to their old life. Then Christ met him on the shore and Peter was humbled.

In this passage, we see Christ restore Peter three times. Three times Peter denied Christ and three times Christ restored him. But Christ did not just bring Peter back into the fold. Three times He restored Peter's authority to minister by telling him to "feed My sheep" and "feed My lambs." This was done in the presence of the disciples for their confirmation as well as for Peter's.

But there is more to this story: Peter had denied Christ and in his discouragement, he disobeyed Christ and led others to do so. When Christ called him from his boat to be His disciple, to be fishers of men, they were never to go back to their boats. Peter's sin had led to his discouragement and it was this state which led to more sin.
When we wallow in discouragement, we take our eyes off the Lord and go back to our old sin. Satan uses despair to embolden us to sin, to turn our backs on our commission. When we bathe in our depression or disappointment, we cannot speak the Gospel; we sin. Peter is our warning: do not let despair take hold; keep our eyes on the Lord; take them off ourselves. If we have sinned, confess our sin and God will forgive and cleanse us (1Jo 1:9).

When Peter saw Christ on the shore, his heart ached; he longed to be right with Christ. In the previous verses we saw how Peter did not wait for the boat to get him to shore, but he jumped into the water in his rush to see Christ. When Christ asked for the disciples to bring more fish, Peter was the first to bring the net full of fish to shore because he longed to be right with Christ. He would do anything to please Him.

The first question Jesus asked Peter was, "do you love Me more than these?" [v15]. "These" being the other disciples, his friends. "These" are the ones he sought companionship with; "these" are the ones he wanted to lead; "these" are the ones he led astray. He took them fishing; he took them back to the old life, rather than lead them to wait on Christ.

After this, Christ asked him two more times if he loved Him, then He told Peter how he was going to die. Peter may have followed Christ impetuously and denied Him in the same manner. Now Christ gave him the opportunity to count the cost. If we truly follow Christ, there is always a cost. This cost did not deter him; he wanted to be right with Christ.

During His ministry, Christ told the disciples, if they love their family more than Him or if they do not take up their cross to follow Him or if they find their life here, they are not worthy of Christ. He told them to count the cost.

Whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and
whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. [Mat 10:37-39]

If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? . . . So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be My disciple. [Luk 14:26-28,33].

Christ asked Peter three times if he loved Him and Peter was distressed by the third time. Many commentators find a progression in the conversation, as Jesus Christ answered each time, "feed My lambs," "tend My sheep" and "feed My sheep." They read too much into this passage as Christ's answers are the same. Peter had denied Christ and had led His sheep astray. For the rest of his life, Christ wanted Peter to keep one thing in mind: Feed My Sheep.

Christ restored Peter in the presence of the other disciples. To ask the question once, could have been considered casual conversation; to ask three times was to cement this restoration and the commitment to feed His sheep firmly in the minds of everyone.

Modern American Christianity says, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." But Christ told us to deny our life; to give it up and follow Him. Christ told Peter he now had one mission and an unpleasant death to look forward to.

Following Christ is not a flippant commitment. It is not something we do when we have time. If we are too busy to spend time with Christ, we are not following Him, we have not taken up our cross. If there are things we love more than Him, we are not saved. When we take up our cross and follow Christ, we deny our life. This is why Christ said in Luke chapter fourteen, "count the cost . . . and renounce all that you have." [Luk 14:28-33].

Though we have shepherds in the form of pastors and elders, every one of us is called to love Christ and minister to the body (Heb
10:24-25; Gal 6:2). If we do not love Christ more than we love our own lives, we cannot properly minister to Christ's sheep. Only those who truly love Christ can represent the Good Shepherd among His sheep.

How often have we heard of a minister washing out among his congregation due to some conflict between he and the members. We all know people who have left one church for another because of conflict with someone else. The Apostle James wrote conflicts arise when we let our desires control us rather than Christ (James 4). Our calling is to deny ourselves. The reason we don't have time for Christ, the reason we have conflicts with others is because we love the world. That is, we love to spend time in things of the world or we are looking for our fifteen minutes of fame in the world. Like Christ said, we are not worthy of Him if we love anything more than we love Him.

Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. [Jam 4:4].

Three times Christ told Peter to "feed My sheep" affirming his role within the body. This did not make him the head or a pope, as the Roman Catholic church claims. Christ singled out Peter because he had denied Him and he needed to be restored. Christ did this in the presence of the disciples so there would be no question Peter was restored in his relationship with Christ and in the body. Furthermore, the message Christ gave to Peter, applied to all the disciples. And it applies to us: we must deny ourselves, follow Christ and feed His sheep.

In denying ourselves, we release control. We release control how we live and how we die. Our natural desire is to live in comfort and die in peace. We know if we follow Christ, we must put the comforts of life behind us and we also leave to Christ how we die. In denying ourselves we put our faith and confidence in God, alone.

If we keep our faith hidden, there is a chance we die in peace or be proclaimed a good or great man, but if we fearlessly proclaim the authority of Christ, there is a better chance we will not. As we see the world building up their rebellion toward God, be assured, a hidden faith is no faith at all.
Christ told Peter how he was to die:

Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go. [v18].

Christ told Peter he was going to die for the faith; he was going to die at the hands of others; he was going to die against his will. His witness for Christ was going to raise the ire of many and they were going to lead him away to his death. John said Christ told Peter how he was to die to "show by what kind of death he was to glorify God." [v19]. This was not revenge for his denial nor was it punishment for allowing his discouragement to lead to disobedience. His death was to bring glory to God.

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints. [Psa 116:15].

We do not see the big picture nor the end of all things, but God is great and He works all things for His glory. We don't always see this glory. When we suffer for Christ at the hands of man it can be hard to see how God can be glorified. We do not always see how God uses this among man and we cannot understand what goes on in the heavens and among the principalities.

I am the Lord; that is my name; My glory I give to no other. . . [Isa 42:8].

For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities; all things were created through Him and for Him. [Col 1:16].

Then Jesus told Peter, "Follow Me." [v19].

If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. [Mat 16:24-25].
IN CLOSING

Before Christ went to the cross, He told the disciples to meet Him in Galilee (Mat 26:32; Mar 14:28). Mary Magdalene reminded the disciples of this (Mar 16:7-10). But Peter and the disciples did not go to Galilee until after the Lord had met with them twice, on two Sundays.

When the disciples went to Galilee, Peter grew restless waiting for the Lord and he convinced others to join him to return to the old life. When Christ met them on the shore, he was humbled.

He sought restoration: he ran to Christ; when Christ asked for more fish, he rushed to bring the fish to him. Then, Christ asked him if he loved Him. Peter pledged his love but was grieved the Lord asked him three times. But this is how Christ restored him and commissioned him to feed His sheep.

Christ also assured Peter he would die for his faith. To follow Christ was going to cost him everything. Peter never denied Christ again; even knowing death awaited.

Whom do we follow? What is our desire? Have we forsaken all to follow Christ? It is easy to say we love Christ and want to follow Him. Many say this, but do not follow Him. They love their sin, they love this world. Don't take this lightly; count the cost. If our desires are for this world, our family, our career, our homes, our investments, our cars, our toys and such, we cannot follow Christ and we are not worthy of Him.

Most professing Christians value the approval of man rather than the approval of God. Jesus asked the question, "If you value the approval of man rather than seek the glory of God, how can you believe?" [5:44].

The Apostle James wrote if we love the world, we are enemies of God (Jam 4:4). Therefore, most professing Christians are enemies of God. Examine yourself to see if you are in the faith (2Co 13:5).

Jesus had just reconciled Peter and given him the charge to feed His sheep. Christ told him his faith was going to lead to his death. Amidst this conversation, Peter became concerned for John and when he saw him, he asked Christ what will happen to him.

Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray You?"
When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" [v20-21].

Some commentators say Peter may have been disturbed when Jesus told him how he was to die and was now concerned for John. Others say he felt rebuked and wanted to know he was not alone. In either case, our human tendency is to concern ourselves with other people's walk with Christ. Christ told Peter, and the lesson is also for us, not to concern ourselves with what God is doing in the lives of others. Whether Peter's desire was to protect John or to alter his course, it was not in his power. Everything and everyone is in God's control.

Jesus replied,

If it is My will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!" [v22].

Our responsibility is to follow Christ. While we should be in prayer for our brothers and encourage them in their walk, it is not for us to understand their walk, but to focus on our own.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. [Php 2:12-13].
Because of Christ's reply, it seemed there was a rumor the Apostle John would live until Christ returned. John wrote this account, as he explained in verse 23, to quell this rumor.

At the time of the writing of the Gospel of John, John was the only disciple left alive; all the others had been martyred. John had survived the destruction of Jerusalem; he had survived his exile on the Island of Patmos; and church history also claims he had survived being boiled in oil. What Christ said about John had spread through the church as a prophecy and he was concerned for the Lord's honor should he pass away soon and others would view this as a failure of Christ's prophecy. John clarified what Christ had said was "IF it is My will" and the imperative "YOU follow Me!" to demonstrate this was not a prophecy, but a rebuke.

IN CLOSING

It was not wrong for Peter to be concerned with John's welfare but it was wrong to be distracted by it. God is in control. Christ has called us to follow Him: "YOU follow ME."
John 21:24-25 John's Authorship And What Was Left Unsaid

Whether this was the intended end or was the addendum, we have reached the end of the book.

This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true. [v24].

Until now, John had written about himself in the third person. Here he disclosed he was the author of this epistle, but even in this, he identified himself without saying his name.

He also affirmed he was an eyewitness to all the things written in this book and he made note his witness was true. Nothing he wrote was hyperbole. On the other hand, he did not write about everything Jesus Christ did or said. This is why he said he did not write about every detail which could be written.

Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. [v25].

Nonetheless, there is marvel in these words the Apostle John used to end this Gospel book. Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, once wrote, "Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh." [Ecc 12:12]. Yet one can never weary in the study of the Son of God. The words of John give testimony to this: if everything Christ did were ever written, "the world itself could not contain the books" to give testimony to the vastness of the work of God in Christ, not only in His life on earth, but also in His eternal plan.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand. [Psa 139:17-18].
IN CLOSING

The Gospel of John has given us the story of God becoming man, dwelling among men and dying for men, to redeem His people. When we consider the Word of God, all the Scripture, which is about the Son of God and God's plan to redeem mankind, how can we hold back our awe? Consider, before time began God conceived a plan to create man, who, though created in the image of God, would be in rebellion to Him, but God, Himself, would suffer to redeem those chosen in Christ before the creation of the world. The Son would be crushed by the Father and would die to satisfy His wrath. He nailed our sins to the cross and, through His blood, gave us His righteousness, so, though dead in our sins, the Holy Spirit would quicken His people to be made alive in Christ and God has adopted us into His family and we will reign with Him forever. Can we contain our praise? Could we not write forever of the glories of God? One day, we will give Him praise for ever.

God sits on His throne and the seraphim cry, "Holy, holy, holy."

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

[words by Meir Ben Isaac Nehoral, 1050; used in the song, "The Love of God" by Frederick M. Lehman, 1917].

My friend, be in the Word.
Christ's Gospel Versus The Modern American Gospel

We have studied the Gospel of John and we see it is very different than the modern American gospel. The modern American gospel says, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." If you are not saved, this is a lie, because the Bible tells us God is indignant with you everyday (Psa 7:11) and the wrath of God REMAINS on you (John 3:36).

NOTE THIS: if the wrath of God remains on you and God is indignant with you, God does not love you and you are without hope, so there is no wonderful plan for your life.

The modern American gospel emphasizes God's love, but the Bible tells us God is "holy, holy, holy." [Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8]. There is NO mention God is "love, love, love." Holiness is God's defining attribute; it is what sets the Creator apart from His creation. Every attribute of God is revealed through His holiness.

His love is not a gushy, feel good emotion. His love is a holy love and it begins with Himself. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit have loved each other with a holy love throughout eternity. As you read Scripture, it is clear the greatness and praise of each other is their first love. God praises Himself. He is worthy of praise. All creation praises Him, except the heart of man.

When man violates this greatness of God, what would His holiness demand? The Bible tells us, every single person is sinful and falls short of God's holiness (Rom 3:23). The Word also tells us our sins have separated us from God, so that, He will not hear us (Isa 59:2). Because of this, all men will die and stand before God in judgment (Heb 9:27). This is all bad news.

MAN FELL INTO SIN AND SIN BROUGHT DEATH

Sin began when God told Adam, while in the Garden of Eden, do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God told him if he disobeyed, he would die. But Adam disobeyed anyway. He sinned against God and sin brought death. Death to all mankind. The
Bible says, "...sin came into the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin. ...For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation. ..." [Rom 5:12,16].

You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die. [Gen 2:16-17].

But man did not die that very particular day. God showed His mercy; He gave man a covering: He made Adam and Eve clothings of animal skins. Their sins were covered at the cost of blood; it cost the lives of innocent animals to cover their nakedness. The Bible says, "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." [Heb 9:22].

But the blood of animals is powerless to save sinners. So, God promised He would send a Redeemer. Until that time, the blood of animals was merely a placeholder; a type and symbol of the blood which would come to redeem mankind. The Redeemer would come to undo death, which was brought about by sin. He would trample Satan's head (Gen 3:15). Jesus Christ is this Redeemer, who died for mans' sin and rose from the dead, conquering death and the grave (1Co 15:55-57).

As we already said, man did not die that very day. In fact, Adam lived 930 years (Gen 5:5). Until the Flood, most men lived almost 1000 years. Clearly, Adam lived a long time after he sinned and more men came to be born and more and more sinful natures were added to this earth.

We could go into a study of the words and the semantics to grasp more clearly what God meant when He said, "for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." But we won't in this discussion; suffice to say many of the principalities (demons and such) questioned God's judgment when He appeared to be slow or negligent to bring about the penalty for sin, which is death. "For the wages of sin is death. ..." [Rom 6:23].

But the Lord of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows Himself holy in righteousness. [Isa 5:16].
GOD MADE A WAY TO SAVE MAN

The Apostle Paul discussed this in Romans chapter three. He wrote God sent a Redeemer, whom He put forth as a propitiation for man's sin. Propitiation means to satisfy God's wrath. Most professing Christians do not want to talk about God's wrath. It makes them uncomfortable; it violates the god of love they worship.

But God's wrath had to be satisfied and there is nothing man could do to save himself. So, God made His Son to be our propitiation to demonstrate His righteousness and His justice.

Paul said, God, in His forbearance passed over former sins (Rom 3:25). This does not mean He ignored sin; this means He delayed the penalty. He delayed the penalty until the time the Redeemer would satisfy His wrath. Christ is this Redeemer and He was crushed for our sin (Isa 53:10). Now that the penalty is paid, God's righteousness and His justice have been revealed, proving He is Just; satisfying the complaint of the principalities (Rom 3:26).

When Paul was reasoning with the naysayers and philosophers at Mars Hill, he told them in the times of ignorance, God overlooked man's sin. This, again, did not mean God overlooked man's sin, it meant He delayed the penalty until the time of the Redeemer. Then Paul warned them, since the Redeemer has been revealed, God commands all men to repent. Furthermore, God has fixed a day of judgment and He assured us this will happen when He raised the Redeemer, Christ Jesus, from the dead (Act 17:30-31).

So we learn from these two Scriptures, though it appeared God's judgment was negligent by not requiring Adam's life the moment he sinned, God sent a Redeemer to pay the penalty for man's sin. The Bible says God sent Him at the right time (Rom 5:6). In this provision of grace, God's righteousness was demonstrated and soon His judgment is coming. And Jesus said if you do not believe, you are condemned already (3:18).

Now, you may say you believe, but the fruit of your life says you are still living to please the world. My friend, believing in Christ is not merely believing what the Bible says is true. It is to receive Christ and follow Him in obedience (3:36). The Apostle James said the demons believe, that is, they know the facts, and they tremble (Jam
2:19). The problem today with most professing Christians is they say they believe, but they don't even tremble. "There is no fear of God before their eyes." [Rom 3:18].

Let us look at Romans chapter three again. Look at verses 20 through 26. This passage begins by explaining we can do nothing to save ourselves. Paul was speaking to the Jew, who believed they were saved by keeping the Law.

Paul wrote the purpose of the Law was to give us the knowledge of sin. In Genesis we learn Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve was seduced by the idea man could be like God, knowing good from evil (Gen 3:5). After man had this knowledge, it seems he has looked for ways to shut his eyes to the knowledge of sin within himself. Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves to hide their nakedness; they knew they had sin, so they tried to cover it up.

In the course of time, man became more and more unrepentant in his sin. Even a flood of the entire world, did not change the heart of man. Then God chose to make a nation for Himself. He chose Israel, the offspring of Abraham. He gave them a Law to keep; this Law would contrast them from the nations around them. The Law was a picture of God's righteousness and this nation, with His Law, would be an example of His holiness to all the people upon the Earth.

But even His people, rather than repent and live in obedience, hardened themselves in their sin. Even when Christ was upon the earth, the professing believers rejected the Son of Man because they had made God in their own image. They added to the Law God had given, so they could have the false confidence they had done their part to be saved. Rather than confess they could not keep this Law, they hid their nakedness by adding rule upon rule and deceiving themselves they were righteous by their own efforts.

For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. [Rom 10:3-4].
OUR WORKS CANNOT SAVE US

Like the Jews of old, the modern American gospel has made God into an acceptable image. This way, the professing believer can feel confident they have done their part to be saved or have done their part in "turning their life around." They hide their nakedness by boasting in what they have done to earn their salvation: they said the sinner's prayer; they made a decision for Christ; they accepted Jesus as their Savior and such other man glorifying claims as these. But the Bible reminds them there is nothing they can do to save themselves or even assist God in this endeavor.

> We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a [dirty] garment. [Isa 64:6].

Ephesians 2:8-9 says we are saved by grace, through faith. Now we are told both this grace and this faith are a gift. We cannot be saved by anything we do, "lest any man should boast." But the modern American gospel has a lot of people boasting. They say things like, "I accepted Jesus into my heart," "I said the sinner's prayer," "I came forward in a meeting," "I made Jesus Lord of my life," "I made a decision for Christ," "I remember the date" and on and on it goes and none of these things are told us in the Bible. This boasting robs God of His glory and subordinates His sovereignty and His authority to man; to our will. In this, we have robbed God and brought Him down to our own level.

Let's continue looking at what Paul wrote in Romans, chapter three. Before the Redeemer was revealed, God's righteousness was manifested in the Law. But the Redeemer was foretold in the Law and in the Prophets and God's righteousness is now manifest in this Redeemer (Rom 3:21; cf Heb 1:1-3). We can have this righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer (2Co 5:21).

Some may argue they don't need this, because they think they have done enough to save themselves. But Paul argued "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." This means, the Jew who thinks he can keep the Law and the Gentile who thinks he has done more good than bad with his life; they have all sinned and they have failed to be righteous before God.
In fact, if we go back a few more verses in Romans chapter three, to verses 10 through 19, the Bible tells us:

1. No one is righteous. NO. Not one.
2. No one understands.
3. No one seeks after God. Period. Final.

Then Paul listed a whole bunch of sins we are guilty of, making it clear even the best of us are vile and worthless. We have turned aside from God's Law, we speak evil, we do evil and we do not fear God. The righteous requirements of the Law still stand and the purpose of the Law will shut our mouths from any claim of goodness in ourselves. Then we come to verse 23, "for ALL have sinned." Bad news.

But there is good news: the next verse says we can be justified by His grace as a gift (v24).

John 1:12 says to those who received Christ, God gave the right to become children of God. God gives the gift and we receive. However, don't think, like the modern American gospel proclaims, this gift is given to all and it is yours for the taking; as if you have the ability to receive this gift of your own freewill. John 1:13 says this receiving is not of our own freewill, it is of God's will. Jesus said no one comes to Him unless the Father draws him (6:44). So, the ability to receive this gift is based solely upon God's choosing. Salvation is a gift from God.

Another interesting subject this brings up is, a lot of people and most professing Christians believe all people are children of God. They base this upon the idea we are all created in the image of God or at least by God. But there is no place in Scripture which will support this claim that we are all children of God. We already talked about how God hates the sinner who remains under His wrath and John 1:12 tells us those who receive Christ are given the right to become children of God. Romans chapter eight tells us those who walk in the Spirit and not according to the flesh, this means they obey Christ, they will be adopted as sons into His kingdom. So, according to Scripture, the only children of God are those who receive Christ.
and follow Him. Those who are not His children, remain under His wrath (3:36).

Now this brings us, in Romans chapter three, to a part we already talked about. But let's skim over it one more time.

God put Christ forward as the propitiation for His wrath. You remember what this means, right? Yes. Jesus took God's wrath upon Himself, for our sin and Isaiah said it pleased the Father to crush His Son (Isa 53:10). The wrath of God had to be satisfied and the Son of God bore this wrath for us.

Many professing Christians claim God paid a ransom to Satan. That, somehow Satan now owned man when he caused man to sin and God had to ransom man or buy man back from the devil. Sorry. NO. This is blasphemy! God forbid He should offer a sacrifice to Satan and NEVER the sacrifice of His Son. From the time Satan chose to exalt himself above God, he has been destined for Hell. Therefore, God did not crush His Son to satisfy Satan. It was God's wrath which had to be satisfied and Christ alone could pay the price for our sin to redeem man back to God.

This is something which is hard to fathom. I marvel over this, over and over. Christ is God. He left His home willingly, He left His glory behind and He came to earth to die for man who could not save himself. This is a marvelous thing: God, Himself, saved man from God's wrath. God demanded a sacrifice, but there was no one whose blood could pay the price. Therefore He sacrificed Himself; He took the blood of His Son to satisfy His wrath. This is something awesome and unsearchable.

Worthy are You to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain, and by Your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and You have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth. [Rev 5:9-10].

Many professing Christians say Christ left His divinity when He became man, but this is a lie; another blasphemy. While He was on earth and even to this day and forever, Christ is both fully God and fully man. And, while Christ was on earth, He did things which only
deity could do, such as calm a storm on the sea, know the thoughts of man and a whole host of miracles of healing and feeding.

For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily [Col 2:9].

The "fullness of deity" is God. The "dwells bodily" is man. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man.

As we said before, Christ paid the penalty for our sin by allowing the Father to crush Him. And this is why Christ died: to redeem those who are His (Mat 1:21). He did this to show God's righteousness (Rom 3:25). He nailed our sins to the cross (Col 2:14) and gave us His righteousness (2Co 5:21). As Romans chapter three declares, no longer could the principalities, nor any other created being, accuse God for being hypocritical in His justice or in His righteousness. God demonstrated His righteousness, a standard we cannot meet, by crushing His own Son. By this, He proved Himself to be Just. Plus: He proved Himself to be the Justifier of those who come to Christ in faith. God is Just and He is the Justifier.

God does not justify the one who falsely believes he can do good works to save himself; nor the one who thinks he can save himself by making a decision for Christ. The false gospel says, "God helps those who help themselves." This is blasphemy. In Romans chapter five, we are told Christ died for us when we were powerless or unable to do anything for ourself (Rom 5:6).

The Apostle Paul wrote those who believe and are saved were chosen in Christ Jesus before the creation of the world and they were chosen for God's purposes (Eph 1:4-11). John 1:12-13 says those who received Christ, did not come to Him by their own freewill but by the will of God. Those who receive Christ are those whom God draws to Him and Jesus assured us, all those chosen in Him will come to Him (6:37).

Lest you think Ephesians 1:4 describes a foreknowing by God of those who would receive Christ, Jesus said we cannot come to Him unless the Father draw us (6:44) and, furthermore, we can only come to Christ if the Father authorizes us (6:65). There is no one who seeks after God (Rom 3:11), unless he is drawn and authorized by the Father.
As for freewill, those who are slaves to sin, cannot choose righteousness. Unless God regenerates a man's heart, the slave of sin will always choose sin.

For the mind set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. [Rom 8:7-8].

Jesus said we must be born again (3:3) and this is the work of God (3:7-8). Just as you were not able to determine anything about your birth, where you would be born, into which family, being born male or female, your looks and abilities, so too, you made no decision to be born again. If you are saved, God did this for you. The flesh, that is your effort to get saved, is no help at all (6:63); lest any man should boast (Eph 2:8-9).

By now you are thinking, "If salvation is fully the work of God and there is nothing I can do to be saved, then why concern myself with eternal things?" The answer is, we obey because we have a duty to God (Ecc 12:13) and God, "commands all people everywhere to repent." [Act 17:30]. There is a judgment coming upon those who refuse to repent (Heb 9:27).

There is a tension in Scripture between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. In the Bible, we find commands to do something, even though we are powerless to accomplish this task ourselves. For example, Christians are told to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, but, in the next verse, we are told it is God working in us. Both the desire to do the work and the ability to do it are from God (Php 2:12-13). God is sovereign, but we are responsible for our actions and how we choose to live our lives.

I know, O LORD, that a man’s way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps. Correct me, O LORD, but with justice; not with Your anger, or You will bring me to nothing. [Jer 10:23-24].

On the one hand, God says, "My counsel shall stand and I will accomplish all My purpose." [Isa 46:10]. And Scripture says man makes his plans, but God directs his steps (Pro 16:9). But on the
other hand, He says, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." [Rom 10:13]. Will you be saved? Will you escape condemnation? Jesus Christ said if you do not believe, you are condemned already (3:18).

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is truly good news. The news is Christ died for our sins while we were unable to help ourselves (Rom 5:6). According to Acts 17:30-31, God proclaimed satisfaction of the debt by raising Christ from the dead. But He also warned us; raising Christ from the dead proclaimed a coming judgment.

If we receive Christ, this is the work of God and we are saved and become children of God (1:12-13).

If you hear Christ calling, do not harden your heart (Heb 3:15). Repent of your sins and receive Christ today.

Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself. [Act 2:38-39].

HOW WE CAN KNOW WE ARE SAVED

If we are truly saved, we will desire the Word of God and will be in constant prayer. Many professing Christians fancy themselves to be prayer warriors, but they are not in the Word. When Jesus spoke of God giving us what we ask for, it was always in the context of being in the Word. If we are in the Word, we will know what God wants us to pray for and we will have a heart which is always repenting. A person who is not in the Word, can only pray for worldly desires.

Many people prefer to talk rather than listen. When we pray, we are talking; when we are in the Word, we are listening.

Those who are truly saved will abide in Christ; we will be in the Word, and Christ will produce His works in our lives (15:1-6). Even this is of God. He regenerates us so we will receive, we will desire and we will abide in Christ. Salvation is fully the work of God alone, by His grace, lest any man should boast (Eph 2:8-9).
This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent. [6:29].

So get out of your recovery groups. Jesus said you must be born again (3:3). To be born again is to be made new; to be born again is to abandon your sin, to desire it no more. The Apostle Paul wrote, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away." [2Co 5:17]. Being born again is not a process. When you are born, you have gone from darkness to light.

Some will argue that many people have prior addictions, which chain them and they need help overcoming. Jesus said to be in His Word and He will produce the fruit in your life (15:5). If you need more help, be more in the Word. To remain in recovery groups is to remain a slave to sin and it is to declare you have a weak god. If you are chained to your sin, you are not born again.

Seize the Word of God.

Many professing Christians seek an easy faith. They want to add God to their lives as one of their successful strategies. They do not seek Christ; they only seek themselves. When trouble comes, they may attest to faith in Christ, but when trouble persists, they leave the faith. As the Apostle John wrote, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. . ." [1Jo 2:19]. So beware of all man-centered religion. Seek a God-centered religion.

Many professing Christians want to please the world. They want the Gospel to be acceptable or relevant to the world. Jesus told us the world hates Him and, if we stand firm in our faith, it will hate us too (15:18-19). This desire to be acceptable to the world is why many preach God's love and promise God has a wonderful plan for their life, rather than preach His judgment and the need to repent. If the world loves the gospel you preach, know this: you are not preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Beware Christ's warning: if you care more for the glory of man than the glory of God, you cannot be saved (5:44).

God said, "Be holy, for I AM holy." [1Pe 1:16]. The sign of those who are saved is obedience; to be disobedient is unbelief.
Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. [3:36].

And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. [Heb 3:18-19].

By this we know we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. Whoever says “I know Him” but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps His word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in Him: whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked. [1Jo 2:3-6].

The sign of those who are saved is they leave their lifestyle of sin. They desire God and seek fellowship with Him. Many people profess to know Christ but they refuse to honor Him as their King, their Lord and their Master; they may give lip service but their hearts are far from Him (Luk 6:46). For they cling to their sin, which is rebellion to God (Heb 6:1-8; 1Jo 2:19).

. . .God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [1Jo 1:5-9].

If you are truly saved, you will seek sound doctrine and seek to fellowship with those who seek sound doctrine. Many professing Christians merely accept the doctrines they hear from the pulpit, but they are not in the Word, examining the Bible to find truth (Act
17:11). Jesus said we will only know the truth if we are in His Word (8:31-32).

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. [1Ti 4:16].

Many professing Christians declare their pastor "preaches the Word" because he has Scripture in his sermon. While he is merely preaching morality, positive motivation and psychology, using a verse or two to back up his points. This is pro-forma for most evangelical preachers. This is the modern American gospel. This is the itching ears the Apostle Paul warned about.

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound doctrine, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions. [2Ti 4:3].

Charles Spurgeon said discernment is not the ability to understand the difference between truth and falsehood; it is the ability to understand the difference between the truth and almost the truth. If you have received Christ. Get into the Word; stay in the Word and examine your life through the Word. This is your responsibility.

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. . . [2Co 13:5].

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world and not according to Christ. For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily. [Col 2:6-9].

As you see the fruit of Christ develop in your life, know this is the work of God in you. You cannot add to His work.

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine; you are
the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. [15:4-6].

. . .For You have done for us all our works. [Isa 26:12].

If you produce no fruit, know this: you are not saved.

Do not mistake an appearance of kindness for fruit. Do not mistake a career in ministry for fruit. Do not mistake long-term or short-term missions trips for fruit. Do not mistake volunteering at church for fruit. Do not mistake doing great things for God for fruit.

Many church-going people will be surprised when Christ tells them to depart from Him and that He never knew them.

Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?" And then will I declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness." [Mat 7:19-23].

Repent and follow Christ.