



PT Butler

Bible Study Notebooks

Study of the Gospel of John

prepared by P. T. Butler Th.D

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These Bible study notes are provided for your use in the preparation of teaching the holy scriptures. They were meticulously prepared over many years to serve the Kingdom of God and aid in the growth of Christians of any age. Please use them in combination with prayer and diligence to promote the clear and honest declaration of God's word.

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TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 1:1-51

Jesus was called the Word because that is what the Messiah is called in the Bible (e.g., Prov. 8:1ff; Isa. 31:19-22; 40:6-8; 50:4-6; 55:1-13). Our English word, “logos” is a transliteration (not a translation) of the Greek word logos. In the Bible it is translated “word, speaking, statement, reckoning, reason, even spiritual” (Rom. 12:1-2; I Pet. 2:2). Logos was used by Greek philosophers to explain that while the world as we observe it is in a constant state of change, it is not completely chaotic because there is “reason” and “mind” at work in “nature.” This “mind” was called “Logos.” Greek philosophy, although reasoning itself to an Uncaused, First Cause (Acts 17:22-31), was convinced that deity (absolute holiness) could not come into direct contact with matter (evil, transitory, futile and decaying). They thought of the Logos as a “shock absorber” between God and the universe. They called the Logos a “demiurge or demigod” (i.e., half-god). The philosopher’s Logos was a subordinate, inferior, non-absolute, deity who “emanated” (i.e., oozed, radiated) from the Absolutely “Wholly Other” Mind or Reason. This semi-god then was able to create the world of matter. (That’s logical??) For them the absolute God dwelt in the realm of pure idea and thought and could never touch or be touched with matter. Logos is found in post-Biblical Hebrew theology also (esp. in the Kabbalah, or, Zohar, developed according to the Jewish Encyclopedia in the Babylonian exile of Israel). Logos is designated by the Hebrew word, memrah and also means “word, thought, mind.” It comes from the Hebrew root word which means “to speak, to declare, command, think, and reason.” In Jewish thought a word was more than sound or symbol. A word actually did things; it acted! The very syntax of Hebrew language which places verbs before nouns in sentence structure, indicates the personification of words, as well as of actions. But Jewish rabbis insisted adamantly on the transcendence of Jehovah. Their dogmatism was a “knee-jerk” reaction from being taken into captivity for their polytheistic idolatry 721-536 B.C.). They avoided all anthropomorphisms (using human characteristics to speak of God—having eyes, ears, feet, etc.). They refused to even pronounce the divine name YHWH or later, with vowels, “Jehovah” so they substituted memra. In the Targums (Aramaic translations of the OT), Exodus 19:17 would read: “Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet Memra. (i.e., God), whereas in the Hebrew text itself the word for God is elohim. A great deal is said in the OT about the activity of the Word: (a) God creates by a “word” Gen. 1:3; Psa. 33:6-9; (b) God slays with words (Hosea 6:5); (c) God heals by a word (Psa. 107:20; 147:15,18); (d) God sends his word to produce his will (Isa. 55:10-11); (e) God’s wisdom (word, thought) is personified (Job 28:20-27; Prov. 8:1-35). But no Jew would ever allow himself or anyone else to think of God’s Word as taking human form—that would be blasphemy and idolatry to their way of thinking. By the end of the first century when John wrote his Gospel, the church was faced with the acute problem of having been cradled in a Judaism that was beginning to take on Greek philosophy’s view of absolute deity (transcendent and non-incarnate) and now facing a Gentile world which philosophized about Logos as demi-god or semi-god. John’s Gospel of the Logos is the solution to this problem. John’s Logos differs radically from both Jewish and

Greek concepts. John's Logos is HE not IT. John's Logos is not just God's agent—an inferior god, but is GOD HIMSELF, INCARNATED IN JESUS CHRIST (see also Col. 1:1; 2:9; 1 John 1:1-4). John knew when he wrote, "In the beginning was the Logos..." the idea he would arouse. He knew the term would be full of meaning to all men, regardless of background. All men would catch his essential meaning. Of course, most would not have the fulness of John's concept, but his use of the term Logos formed a bridge from the inadequate concepts of the Jews and Greeks to the full truth of Almighty God's nature who not only thinks and speaks, but becomes INCARNATE (in-the-flesh) in JESUS CHRIST. The Logos is not just principle or personification, but PERSON; and that Person was nothing less than God in the flesh. John's Logos was not found in philosophy but in HISTORY! John's Logos "tabernacled" among us. Jesus is not to be interpreted by the term "Logos"—rather the term Logos is to be interpreted intelligently only as we know and believe Jesus Christ the historical Person. Look at what John says about the Logos:

1. He was already there when everything else had its beginning.
2. He was with God.
3. HE WAS GOD.
4. All things were made by him— nothing exists without him.
5. In him was life and light (enlightenment).
6. He came into the world, but the world did not know him.
7. He gave some who received him power (authority) to become children of God.
8. He took upon himself FLESH and dwelt among men.
9. He brought grace and truth to mankind.
10. Look at what else is said of the Logos in the NT; all scripture references use the Greek word Logos:
11. Logos judges mankind, Jn. 12:48.
12. Logos purifies, Jn. 15:3; 1 Tim. 4:5.
13. Logos regenerates, 1 Pet. 1:23; Jas. 1:18.
14. Logos sums up the Law, Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:14.
15. Logos must be heard, Matt. 13:20; Acts 13:7,44.

16. Logos must be received, Lk. 8:13; Jas. 1:21.

17. Logos is where men are to abide, Jn. 8:31.

18. Logos is to be served, Acts 6:4.

19. Logos defeats the worldly “beasts” for his church, Rev. 19:11-21.

So what should all this about Logos mean to you and to me? First, while “things” were made by and through him, Life was in him. Apart from Jesus Christ there is no spiritual, eternal life—only death! Life does not exist in its own right but only because the Logos exists. Life is not its own source—there is SOMEONE HIGHER THAN LIFE—the Logos himself. He owns all life; he creates all life. When we believe and know this, we are enlightened with divine light (truth, wisdom, power). All of our existence, every circumstance, every “thing,” every relationship has meaning, purpose and satisfaction when we acknowledge Jesus Christ as Logos (the Word become flesh). Second, To all who receive Logos (Jesus Christ) believe and obey him, he gives authority (power) to become children of God. The Logos became flesh for that specific purpose (Heb. 2:14-15). He did not become an angel to redeem angels; he became a human being to redeem humans. And we, being God’s children, are his family, have his protection, share in his riches, revel in his love, enjoy imitating his character, and look forward to being in his immediate presence forever. Third, the Christian’s God condescended to become flesh and live among mankind, suffering and being tempted as human beings are. The Christian’s God is not the “wholly other” (non-human, absolutely transcendent) god of Soren Kierkegaard, and the Beatles generation—a theoretical, impotent god who is eternally consigned to the non-material world. We are not dealt with by unreal, inferior, subordinate, demi-gods, but by the Almighty God Himself as the Logos (Word) become flesh! There is nothing but grace and truth in the Logos. He is “full of” (saturated with, complete, rich) with grace and truth. We who receive him, receive from his fulness absolute grace and truth. It is imputed to us—we do not earn it, he gives it. This Logos become flesh—this Jesus of Nazareth, went around bringing dead people back to life, forgiving believers of all their sins, telling believers words that would give them regeneration if obeyed, and promising believers eternal bliss after this life is over. Furthermore, this Logos (Jesus Christ) accomplished all this for believers through his vicarious atonement—then validated it through his resurrection from the dead. OUR GOD IS NOT SOME SECOND-RATE, SEMI-GOD. HE IS NOT MERELY A WISE RELIGIOUS TEACHER, A GURU, WHO RECOMMENDS STOICISM, SUBLIMATION, TRANSCENDENTALISM, WORKS OF PENANCE, OR TRANSACTION ANALYSIS TO SWEEP OUR FRUSTRATIONS, FEARS AND FOIBLES UNDER THE RUG. The Logos is the Supreme God Himself, who lived in the flesh among men, saying and proving that any person who will trust him fully and faithfully will receive from him life, light, fatherhood, grace, truth, and glory. Jesus is NAMED “Logos” in one other place in the NT (Rev. 19:13)! God-the-Word became flesh (see Micah 5:2; Isa. 7:14; 54:13; Psa. 40:6-8; 110:1; Malachi 3:1ff; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:19; 2:9; Heb. 2:5-18; 10:5-10; 1 Jn. 1:1-4).

“Among those born of women there was no one greater” than John the Baptist (the Immersing One) (Matt. 11:11; Lk. 16:16). But as great as he was, he was not God’s Anointed (“Messiah, Christ”). The Jewish rulers wanted to know about this extra-ordinary, grasshopper-eating, highly-popular, God-sent, prophet (John) for more than one reason. They knew there would be political repercussions if he continued stirring up the multitudes; he was making moral demands they did not like; there had recently been many false “Messiahs” which troubled the Roman “over-lords” of the Jews. John had charisma; he had “image”; he could sway thousands; he was a leader—BUT HE WAS NOT GOD’S ANOINTED! Most of the world would prefer a human being as their Messiah. Jesus told the Jews, “...if another comes in his own name, him you will receive” (Jn. 5:43). There have been many great, good, wise, beneficent people in the history of the world—BUT NOT ONE OF THEM WAS GOD’S ANOINTED—ONLY JESUS WAS! There is great value in this event which took place 2000 years ago, however, in the fact that John the Immersing One ACKNOWLEDGED he was not God’s anointed! The sincere humility and self-denial of John here is almost incredible—unheard of among men of influence, popularity and power. If a man miraculously born, endowed with a miraculous revelation from God, with influence and popularity such as John had, can resist not only the temptation to assume position, exploit popularity and boast, but also turn followers away from himself to Jesus—THEN SURELY ALL THE REST OF US SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO SO! John the Baptist never thought of himself being anybody but a servant of God. He was merely “the voice of one crying” (Isa. 40:3-5). He was just an instrument for God’s use—a voice—nothing more! He counted himself not even worthy to be the lowliest, least recognized slave in comparison with God’s Anointed—not worthy even to untie the thongs of Jesus’ sandals. Where did John get this idea about his unworthiness in comparison to Jesus’ worth? Why didn’t other Jews have this attitude toward Jesus? THAT IS PRECISELY WHY JOHN THE IMMERSING ONE HAD TO COME TO TESTIFY ABOUT JESUS’ IDENTITY! But what had Jesus done to let John know about this difference between them? Nothing—so far as we know! John the Baptist was predicted by two OT prophets, (Isaiah 40:3-5; Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6)—he stands between the OT “dispensation” and the NT “dispensation” as a “get-ready-dispensation” all by himself (Lk. 16:16). John immersed people in water for the remission of their sins! (Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3). THAT WOULD BE THE MOST INNOVATIVE SIGNAL GOD COULD GIVE THE JEWISH PEOPLE THAT THEIR OLD TESTAMENT SYSTEM OF RECONCILIATION WITH GOD (animal sacrifices, et.al.) WAS INADEQUATE, INCOMPLETE AND “ON THE WAY OUT!” As Jesus said in John 5:31, “If I bear witness to myself, my testimony is not true...” Self-testimony would not be “true” because God had predicted that there would be other testimony as to the identity of the Messiah. It would not be “true” on the level of, and according to the rules of, human verification. Jesus never asked anyone to accept just “his” testimony as to his identity—he always solicited, even dared, people to evaluate the evidence (“testimony”) proving his claims to being God-in-the-flesh (John 5:19-46; 10:37-39; 20:26-29, etc.). But, tragically, for the most part, the Jews never believed John the Baptist’s testimony or Jesus’ works (all done right before their eyes). J.B. did no miracles! Spoke in no “tongues.” Yet was “filled with the Holy Spirit!”

The “we” who beheld his glory (1:14) are the apostles (1 John 1:1-4; Acts 9:1-9), and others who testified (to Luke, Lk. 1:1-4) of having seen his glory. The apostles beheld

the divine glory of Christ at the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-13; Mk. 9:2-13; Lk. 9:28-36; 2 Pet. 1:16-19) and in the many miracles he did (e.g., John 6:66-69), especially in his “resurrection appearances” (e.g., John 20:26-29; Acts 2:22-36; 1 Cor. 15:1-11; 1 John 1:1-4). The OT predicted a “perfect Lamb” would come to atone vicariously for man’s sin—in both type (symbol) and prophecy (a) Abel’s acceptable sacrifice (Gen. 4:1-7; Heb. 11:4-6) was a lamb, prefiguring The Lamb of God; (b) Abraham’s lamb for sacrifice (Gen. 22:7-8) in place of Isaac symbolized The Lamb of God; (c) the Passover lamb of the Hebrews in Egypt (Ex. 12:1-13) whose blood they wiped on their doorpost to mark them for deliverance was symbolic of The Lamb of God; (d) Isaiah’s prediction (Isa. 53:1-12) was that the Messiah would be The Lamb of God. The NT refers to Jesus Christ as that Lamb of God. John the Baptist twice designates Jesus as the Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29,36). Philip the evangelist designates Jesus as the fulfillment of Isaiah’s “Lamb” prophecy (Acts 8:32); Peter calls Jesus the “Lamb of God (1 Pet. 1:9); and there are 27 references to Jesus as the Lamb of God in the book of Revelation! BUT DO NOT MISS SEEING THAT JOHN THE BAPTIST ALSO SAYS JESUS IS LORD! John told the Pharisees that he, himself, was the “voice” crying “Make straight the way of the Lord.” John came to announce the coming of the Lord to earth. John says the ONE he immersed and upon whom the Holy Spirit descended as a dove, was the ONE who would, in turn, immerse the apostles in the Holy Spirit. John said, “I bear witness that this is the Son of God.” There was no guess work with John as to the identity of Jesus of Nazareth—God had told John what the evidence would be. Two fishermen from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter, who went out to hear John the Immersing One preach were interested enough in the concept “Lamb of God” to investigate Jesus of Nazareth. This indicates that people will not investigate Jesus unless they have some need to find the “Lamb” of God—One who atones for their sins. This indicates that those who are God’s “voices” (Christians) should put emphasis on Jesus as the “Lamb” of God—his substitutionary atoning death and resurrection for man’s sin. We should not expect people to become disciples of Jesus without enough personal investigation of him to form their own conclusions. It was more than one full year later that Peter and Andrew, James and John, “left their nets and followed him.” (Matt. 4:18-22; Mk. 1:16-20; Lk. 5:1-11). And that was only after a number of evidences had been presented to them to substantiate the claims John the Immersing One and Jesus were giving about Jesus’ identity.

The Greek sentence of John 1:16 is *hoti ek tou pleromatos autou hemeis pantes elabomen kai charin anti charitos*, “and from his fulness have we all received, grace upon grace.” The key phrase is *charin anti charitos*, “grace upon grace” in the RSV translation. Both KJV and ASV translate the phrase, “grace for grace.” NIV translates it, “one blessing after another.” I believe the KJV and ASV are the more accurate translations. Astute Greek expositors say the Greek word *anti* in John 1:16 means the same as it does in Matt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45; and Lk. 11:11, i.e., “one thing in place of another.” In other words, “From the fulness of Christ’s being God-incarnated and becoming the Perfect Lamb of God, we have received complete, final, perfect grace from God IN PLACE OF his grace in the OT dispensation of animal sacrifices.” So we may confidently enter into the presence of Almighty God, with consciences and hearts cleansed from evil and guilt, by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10:19-25). Because God demonstrated this and proved it historically, faith in this greatest of all acts of God generates in us the power to develop the virtues and mind-set

characterized by God as “beloved children,” and if “children, then heirs, joint heirs with Christ.” THINK OF IT—WE SHALL INHERIT ALL CHRIST INHERITED WHEN HE ACCOMPLISHED HIS WORK AS A HUMAN HERE ON EARTH! The total amount the heirs of the Rockefellers, Gettys, Vanderbilts, Morgans, Fords, Firestones, DuPonts, Gateses, Trumps, and all the royal houses of Europe and Asia have amassed or inherited, put together, would be a paltry, shameful handful of uselessness compared to what those who are joint heirs with Christ shall inherit! Such an unutterable, inestimable, incomparable gift as the Lamb of God, constrains us to lay everything we are, have, and hope for at his feet, under his direction, and at his disposal (2 Cor. 4:16-18; 5:14-15; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:7-11).

John called Jesus “The Lamb of God” because Jesus was God’s foreordained Perfect Sacrifice to appease God’s wrath upon human sinners and to atone for their sins (Isa. 53:1-12). There is not a civilization or culture in history that has not tried by some form of sacrifice or another to appease a higher being (or beings). Human beings have sacrificed parts of their crops, their animals, money, and a thousand other items hoping, in vain, to erase that feeling of guilt and judgment which hounds them. They have gone to great lengths to find the perfect sacrifice. The Astecs and Polynesians (and others) went so far as to slay virgin girls and boys as sacrifices—ripping their hearts out and rubbing it all over their bodies to cleanse themselves of guilt and then throwing the dead carcasses into volcanoes. BUT NONE OF THIS EVER CLEANSSED THEM. THEIR CONSCIENCES WERE NEVER CLEARED. GUILT AND FEAR OF JUDGMENT (Heb. 10:26-31) CONTINUED TO HAUNT THEM. God knew this. He states it plainly in Hebrews 10:1-39 (please read this). Jesus is the perfect sacrifice to appease the One, True, Almighty God. Any “come-of-age,” scientifically-sophisticated human being who has a problem with appeasing an Almighty, Absolutely Holy God for sins against his revealed will and word, is as ignorant, stupid, and rebellious as the Astecs and Polynesians were! God attested that he was satisfied (APPEASED) with Jesus as the Perfect Lamb by raising him from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is the validation of the acceptability of his vicarious death! (1 Cor. 15:1ff; 1 Pet. 1:18-21). There are no more sacrifices needed. There is no system of religious works or deeds, no rituals, no gifts, no sacrifices from any person by which atonement for human sin and guilt may be made. MAN FOUND NO SACRIFICE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD. GOD PROVIDED THE LAMB AND IT WAS NONE OTHER THAN GOD HIMSELF, SACRIFICING HIMSELF “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself...” (2 Cor. 5:19), and “God was both just and the justifier of them that believe” (Rom. 3:21-26).

God had REVEALED to John (John 1:29-34; 3:25-30) all he needed to know about “The Anointed (Messiah) of God.” John the Baptist was not sent to save anyone. He was sent to direct people to the Anointed Lamb of God Who alone saves! It had been revealed to John that some day he would be immersing people for the remission of their sins, and One would come to be immersed by him although he would not need to have any sins remitted and this One would be John’s Lord (John 1:24-28; Matt. 3:11-15; Mk. 7:7-8; Lk. 3:16-18). God also told (revealed to) John that when he was immersing this One, the Holy Spirit would descend upon this One, signaled by a dove descending and resting upon this One’s body

and that he would hear, with his ears, God's voice speak from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." John's testimony (revealed from God) is cited by Jesus as one of the ESSENTIAL proofs (John 1:29-34; Matt. 3:16; Mk. 1:10-11; Lk. 3:21-23) of his deity (John 5:31-36; see also Matt. 3:1-17; 11:2-19; Mk. 4:1-11; Lk. 3:1-23; 7:18-35). MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT—JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS WILLING TO "LAY HIS HEAD ON A PLATTER" TO BE FAITHFUL TO HIS TESTIMONY THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD WAS COMING AND THE KING WAS ALREADY THERE! He could have recanted it all—his own prophetic commission and his testimony about Jesus—when Herod put him in prison but he didn't.

All these people mentioned in this text were real people! Luke's frame-of-reference for John the Baptist's public ministry are the undeniable, unimpeachable, flawless 22 verses of his Gospel (Lk. 3:1-22). They are etched in and are unerasable from the chronicles OF HISTORY! They have stood the test of 2000 years of scrutiny by intemperate, implacable, irrational enemies of Christianity! Luke says that what John the Baptist did and said was witnessed in person during the "reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch....in the priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness...." etc. There were plenty of enemies of Christianity still living, from the day Luke's Gospel was first written (as well Matthew's and Mark's accounts), until probably 40 or 50 years later, who could have come forth and denied the historicity of Luke! That would have made Christianity the "laughing-stock" of the first century! That would have stopped the majestic sweep of Christianity through Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Italy, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and later all over the world. So why didn't they? Because they couldn't produce any evidence to contradict Luke's historical-frame-of-reference or his details. Flavius Josephus documents that John the Immersing One appeared on the scene at the time Luke says, calling for people to repent, immersing them, and was imprisoned at Macherus and executed by Herod Antipas (Antiquities of the Jews, XVIII.5.2.). MY DEAR FRIENDS, THE GOSPELS ARE HISTORY—NOT MYTH, NOT FAIRY-TALES, NOT PHILOSOPHY, NOT PSYCHOLOGY, NOT "RELIGIOUS" MAKE-BELIEVE LIKE "ISLAM, BUDDHISM, HINDUISM, NEW-AGE-CHANNELING," ETC., ETC., ETC.

John (1:42) sums up Andrew's intense excitement in one sentence, "He (Andrew) first found his brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which means Anointed One, i.e., Christ)." One has to know Jewish history, especially from the days of the prophets and the exile (captivity), to the birth of Jesus, and for the centuries since then, to "read between the lines" of what seems to be John's cavalier, nonchalant dismissal of Andrew's eagerness to find his brother Simon and tell him that he had "found" the "Messiah." The very word Messiah aroused a fierce, ecstatic complexity of images in the Jewish mind. The Messiah was expected every Sabbath—every devoted Jewish home set a place at the Sabbath (Seder) meal table, with an empty chair, and left the door ajar to the house so Elijah the prophet could come into their home, eat "Seder" with them, and announce to them the imminent appearance of the Messiah. In Jewish expectations, Messiah would be a second King David, only greater; a second Moses, only greater; a High Priest, the greatest yet;

perhaps, even an Angel! Messiah would deliver them from their oppressors, elevate them as a nation to world-domination, make all the Gentiles their slaves, miraculously make them more prosperous than the imagination can imagine! (see *Daily Life in The Time of Jesus*, by Henri Daniel Rops, 1962, Mentor-Omega, NY, pp. 408-412). There was a good deal of confusion among the Jews about when the Messiah would come and just how it would all take place (Jn. 1:19-28; 4:25; 6:30-31; 7:25-31; 10:22-39). Even Jesus' core-disciples (apostles) had secular, carnal concepts of the Messiah right through their despondency at his crucifixion, until his appearances after his resurrection. But you can get a "taste" of the fervency of the Jewish mind about their Messiah by reading of Peter's reactions when Jesus told them plainly that he had to go to Jerusalem and be crucified (Matt. 16:21-23; 17:22-23; 20:17-28; Mark 14:26-31, etc.). They were ready to die, physically, for his Messiahship, but not spiritually! Any time a Jew was mistreated, slandered, oppressed, cheated, or otherwise abused, the reply was always, "When Messiah comes.....!" Their idea was that maltreated Jews would be avenged, by Messiah, they would rule the world through Messiah, and every Jew would be exceedingly prosperous through Messiah. Now you know why Andrew was so eager to find Simon Peter, his brother, and tell him they "had found the Messiah."

Nathanael was introduced to a Person who was more than "psychic." He was supernatural in his ability to know certain things. This Jesus of Nazareth "divined" Nathanael's character—"...an Israelite in whom is no guile." Guilelessness is a rarity among any nationality or ethnicity! But this Jesus went even further, and "divined" where Nathanael had been sitting "under the fig tree" before Philip had found Nathanael to tell him he had found "him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote," and he was none other than Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Nathanael was skeptical at first about any "good thing" coming from Nazareth. But did he ever find out there was Someone "good" from Nazareth! Not only "good" but "God-in-the-flesh." Only Someone Divine, like God, could know and reveal the things Jesus told Nathanael that day. Nathanael was without artifice, subterfuge, or sophistry—he was honest, open, and sincere. He knew evidence of supernaturalness when he saw it, and had the courage and conscientiousness to respond candidly and obediently to its summons. So he confessed, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Nathanael was a "rare bird." Not many Jews were as guileless toward Jesus as he! But, then, such honesty and sincerity and courage are as rare today as it was in Nathanael's age when it comes to being introduced to Jesus!

In John 1:50-51, Jesus makes a symbolic, (a type) comparison of himself and the dream of Jacob (Gen. 28:10-17). In Jacob's dream, he saw a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; the angels of God were ascending and descending on it, and the Lord stood above it, reiterating the covenant promise he had made to Abraham. Jacob awoke and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place...How awesome is this place...This is none other than the house of God (in Hebrew, "Beth-el"), and this is the gate of heaven." Jesus calls himself in John 10:7, "the door (i.e., gate) of the sheep." He calls himself, "The Way, The Truth, and The Life." (Jn. 14:6). Paul says "through him (Jesus) we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand" (Rom. 5:2). Paul calls Jesus, the new and living way...opened for us..." (Heb. 10:20). In ancient times, the importance and strength of gates

and doors made them synonymous with power. Figuratively, gate or door stood for the place where government's power and justice were administered. So Jesus is speaking of himself here in John 1:50-51 as both the ladder to heaven (i.e., the Way), and as the gate of heaven (i.e., the Access). It is by his power alone that human beings are transported to heaven and through her gates! A ladder is a means by which we climb up to a place higher, a height unattainable without it. A gate is a means by which we enter a place for which there is no other access, an entrance unattainable without it. There simply is no way for man to reach God who dwells in unattainable heights of holiness, truth, justice and righteousness, without Jesus Christ being his ladder. There is no way for sinful man to enter the presence of the inaccessible God who dwells in light unapproachable, without Jesus being his gate. THE WORD OF GOD INCARNATE (JESUS CHRIST), AND THE WORD OF GOD BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE SCRIPTURES, TOGETHER, CONSTITUTE THE "LADDER FOR MAN INTO HEAVEN." Jesus and his commandments cannot be separated! If we love him we will keep his commandments (1 Jn. 5:3). To climb the ladder and enter through the gate to heaven we must

(a) come to where Jesus is—Nathanael "came" to Jesus to investigate when invited. He did not refuse Philip's suggestion; even though he was skeptical, he did not close his mind; he took an honest, active look at this Jesus;

(b) be without guile; we must be honest with ourselves, direct, candid, open, teachable;

(c) admit the evidence before our eyes and minds; that evidence of supernaturalness for Jesus is no less evidential to you and me simply because it was done 2000 years ago—it is still a fact and the passage of years cannot erase its factuality; (d) act upon the moral implications of the evidence; evidence demands a verdict; we must choose; we must confess Christ to be who he claims, or we must deny it; we cannot be neutral!

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prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 2:1-25

God created marriage as the first holy institution on earth! While Jesus was never married, he exalted the institution to its proper God-ordained place in the scheme of redemption (Matt. 5:27-32; 19:1-9). The Holy Spirit, through the apostles (esp. 1 Cor. 7:1-40; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Eph. 5:21-32; Heb. 13:4, etc.) sanctified marriage as a God-ordained establishment. God intended marriage to be practiced in holiness and according to his commandments. As Jesus indicated, only a minority of human adults will ever be able to sustain a holy life without marrying! So, by his attendance at this marriage in Cana, Jesus sanctioned human happiness and enjoyment, when done within the framework of God's word. Perhaps Jesus decided to use this event to mark his ministry immediately as different from that of John the Baptist. Jesus would not be an ascetic hermit (Matt. 11:16-19; Lk. 7:31-35). He would enter into the every-day affairs of those he came to save. John had a special task which required asceticism. Jesus' special mission was to transform men's hearts in the work-a-day world. First, we must understand the "wine" here is Greek, *oinou*, from the root word, *oinos*, and means fermented grape-juice. Arndt and Gingrich in their Greek Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, pp. 564-565, say *oinos* means, "normally the fermented juice of the grape...the word for unfermented grape juice is *trux*. Unger's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament, on the Hebrew word *yayin*, says, This is the usual Hebrew word for fermented grape. It is usually rendered 'wine.' Such 'wine' was commonly drunk for refreshment—(Gen. 14:18; 27:25; Ezek 27:18; Prov. 31:4-7; 2 Sam. 13:28)...*Yayin* clearly represents an intoxicating beverage. This is evident in its first biblical appearance...Gen. 9:20-21...the Hebrew word *tiros* is distinguished from *yayin* by referring only to new wine not fully fermented." For the most comprehensive study available on the matter of Jesus drinking wine, see, *The Gospel of Matthew, Vol., II*, by Harold Fowler, pub. College Press, pp. 526-533. Harold's study is in conjunction with the Matt. 11:16-19; Lk. 7:31-35 passage. Harold says, "Jesus affirmed that he normally drank wine; he affirmed that he habitually drank wine and said in a context where his meaning is clear, his practice being sharply contrasted with that of the abstainers on the one hand, and that of the drunkards on the other; he affirmed that he habitually drank wine, saying so to a people accustomed to think of wine as a blessing; so for Jesus to confess to eating bread and drinking wine to a Jewish audience, is no more than to confess to living a quite normal life...So the real question is not 'Should Jesus drink wine?'...for as a matter of fact, he did." We will treat the matter of modern Christians drinking wine in question 3.

Mary expected Jesus to solve the "tragedy" that this "marriage feast" had run out of wine. It would be a social faux pas of exceeding proportions! If you're going to have a large marriage feast, with many guests, you don't run out of wine! Whether Mary expected Jesus to work a miracle or not is conjectural. She certainly had plenty of private evidence (see Luke chs. 1 & 2) that Jesus was the "Anointed of God—the Messiah." There had already been numerous "miracles" surrounding his birth, and then there was that amazing event in

the temple when he was 12. But Jesus, himself, had worked no “signs” from birth to now, 30 years of age. HIS FIRST SIGN IS THIS ONE, CHANGING WATER INTO WINE (Jn. 2:11). There are those who want to dismiss this as no miracle. Some have suggested that this is not a historical event—it is merely a “myth” or “fable.” In this “myth” when the wine ran out, Jesus commanded water to be used. The “ruler of the feast,” entering into the spirit of the fun, made a merry quip about this being the best wine of all. Someone who did not understand, heard the remark and thus a “myth” of a miracle originated. Other unbelievers call it a “parable in action,” i.e., John is merely using an ordinary wedding feast to give us a story with a Christian “meaning.” Worse yet, some say it is “Christian adaptation” of pagan myths surrounding the idolatrous celebrations of the Greek god Dionysus (Roman, Bacchus). The Greek text written by an eyewitness, John, is to hydro oionon gegentmenon, literally, “the water, wine, having become.” The question is shall we trust an eyewitness, or speculators 2000 years removed from the event. THERE CAN BE NO RATIONAL DENIAL, WHATSOEVER, THAT A COPY OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN WAS EXTANT 50 YEARS AFTER THE ORIGINAL WOULD HAVE BEEN WRITTEN CA. A.D. 95-100 for we have the Bodmer Papyrus, and P52 scrap both of which date to about A.D. 150. Plainly John recorded this miracle because he believed that it happened—and happened just as he recorded it! No event in the Gospel bears stronger evidence of personal observation. It is incredible that the record of this miracle could have been a hoax, a trick, or a fake. Mary knew, the servants knew—the disciples believed. IT WAS NO JOKE, NO “SLEIGHT OF HAND.” IT WAS SUPERNATURAL! What men scoff at because it was instantaneous, they see happening before their eyes week by week, year by year. “He who each year prepares the wine in the grape, causing it to absorb, and swell, with the moisture of earth and heaven, to transmute this into nobler juices of its own, did now concentrate all those slower processes into a single moment, and accomplish in an instant what usually he takes many months to accomplish... he was working in the line of his more ordinary operations, the unnoticed miracles of everyday nature.” —R. C. Trench, Notes on The Miracles of Our Lord.

This was a sign! It was to signify Jesus’ glory. It was to be the basis (along with other signs) upon which those who trusted him (including his mother) would leave everything they held dear and accept Jesus as their LORD. This would involve toil, sacrifice, deprivation, persecution, slander, execution! He manifested his sovereignty over nature, in a supernatural power display. Jesus did this sign to prove his glory, his deity, and sovereignty over the every-day affairs of mankind. He manifested his sovereignty over every human being, NO MATTER HOW MUCH SPECIAL CONSIDERATION ANYONE MIGHT CLAIM (EVEN HIS OWN MOTHER)—ALL MUST OBEY HIM—SURRENDER TO HIS WILL AND HIS WAY. Mary presumptuously wanted to “use her son’s” powers—perhaps to “show him off,” perhaps to “show off herself.” She was NOT “immaculately conceived,” you know! Just as we are, Mary was a sinner—perhaps not in the same ways as we, but a sinner nevertheless! Evidently, here she overstepped the boundaries of the will of God for Jesus’ earthly raison d’etre (“reason for being”). He was not sent to be a “genie in a bottle”—not even for his “mother.” He was not sent primarily to work miracles. He was not sent to extricate people from the vagaries of life on earth and satisfy every human whim. He was sent to be a Perfect Sacrifice to atone for human sin! And accomplishing that, he was to promise eternal life to all who trust him as Savior and LORD! That was his raison d’etre. His

answer to his mother, Mary, loosely paraphrased, would be: “Woman, what do you think you have to do about directing my life’s-mission here on earth? I’m not here just to do what you want—I’m here to do what God wants, and when the final hour of my mission comes, you will realize you were never in charge of what I was sent to do!” And Jesus’ rebuke was done publicly! It was probably not done in a harsh tone of voice, but it was a rebuke nevertheless. You will never catch Jesus timorous with the truth! He would not spare his mother’s feelings by letting slip away this opportunity to tell her he was her Lord! Which is most important, a sinner’s “feelings” or the salvation of his soul?—even if it is your father or mother!

Here is Harold Fowler’s answer (bold print mine), about Jesus drinking wine—which I think is the only reasonable, scriptural answer: “Although the apostolic doctrine is replete with stern denunciations of ‘drunkenness where in is riot and excess,’ yet the Apostles do not enjoin unconditional and perpetual abstinence as the way around over-indulgence. Their’s too is the route of habitual moderation in all things (1 Cor. 9:25), since they are suspicious of any doctrine that promotes rigor of devotion, self-abasement and severity to the body through negative regulations that God did not give. Such prohibitions might have an appearance of wisdom, but are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh (Col. 2:16-23). Beyond his dispraising of drunkenness and other forms of excess connected with the attitudes and activities under the influence of alcohol, the Apostle Paul, for instance, can find no rational basis for abstaining either from meat or wine in normal practice, since he knows that all God’s gifts (the context is food) are to be received with thanksgiving (1 Tim. 4:1-5). However, under special circumstances Paul could conceivably dispense with ANY given food, for instance, if it caused a brother to stumble (Rom. 14:21). But contextually, it is obvious that the Apostle viewed this abstinence only as necessary in reference to the weaker Christian who had some scruple against that particular food (see Rom. 14:1–15:7; 1 Cor. 6:12-20; 1 Cor. 8:1-13; 10:12-33). This is a necessary conclusion, since Paul could delineate no objective or absolute principle whereby wine or any other food should be proscribed under any and all circumstances. Further, in seeking qualified personnel for the highest tasks in the Church, the Apostle demanded that no excessive drinkers be tolerated in the eldership or in the diaconate (1 Tim. 3:3,8; Titus 1:7). In giving directions for producing Christlike piety in the Church, he only urges Titus (2:3) to bid older women not to be slaves to drink. However, in neither case does he suggest abstinence as a necessary quality. Rather, when he felt called upon to give his advice to a young abstainer, Paul counseled Timothy specifically in favor of wine, as opposed to water (1 Tim. 5:23).” But Fowler does qualify the subject by saying, “He (Jesus) drank wine in an age that knew no automobiles racing along a narrow ribbon of concrete within cubits of oncoming traffic. He drank wine in a society not yet pressed for time, where the need for ready reflexes to operate fast-moving machinery was small. He lived in an age that moved in terms of the sun, not the time-clock. His was an era of walkers, not riders, to whom sedentary living was less a problem. But he also lived in a age as profligate as any other, an age that sought its amusements in the arms of Bacchus, an age when many a party devolved into revelry. Even so, Jesus could trace a clear line of godly conduct between asceticism and excess. In our own highly industrialized machine age, common sense considerations of safety may cause the Lord to counsel against alcohol in any situation where consideration for others and one’s own safety is compromised by slower reflexes. In light of Jesus’ practice, another interesting, if unsolvable, puzzle is the question

why the Lord did not concern himself greatly with the long-term effect of alcohol on the brain about which modern research has so much to say. Is it possible that Jesus' answer to this query might be 'Do not drink to excess, and you need not fear the adverse effects of alcohol on your brain'? After all, is not his practice somewhat indicative of the conclusion that a moderate use of alcohol by a God-oriented man need not fear long-range negative effect on any part of his body, presuming that this man eats, sleeps and exercises normally? Or to state the problem differently, would not Jesus, Revealer of God and Creator of man, surely have revealed something of the lethal danger of drinking what is held to be a poison? Is it too much to argue that his silence on the subject and his personal practice, taken together, argue that our body chemistry can absorb and profitably use a certain amount of alcohol?" That is Harold Fowler's argument, and I know Harold well enough to know he is a godly and righteous man and loves and respects the word of God—practicing it perhaps better than most! Think about this: Some of the medicines prescribed by doctors today contain alcohol; some of the "over-the-counter" remedies everyone buys in drug stores and grocery stores contain alcohol; cardiology specialists today often recommend a small glass of wine per day for heart-disease patients. As Paul writes in Romans 14: "Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him...Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind...Then let us no more pass judgment on one another, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother...it is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble...The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God; happy is he who has no reason to judge himself for what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned, if he eats, because he does not act from faith; for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin." And in Romans 15, "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him." EACH CHRISTIAN WILL HAVE TO DECIDE THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION FOR HIM/HER-SELF!

Jesus moved from Nazareth to Capernaum right after the Cana wedding feast, never to return to Nazareth as his home. Jesus really never had a home after he started his public ministry. He probably stayed in other people's homes for 3 ½ years. He went to Capernaum to be where the people were. This area was a very busy, commercial, military, and travel point. Nazareth rejected him (Lk. 4) because they could not believe a home-town boy could be the Messiah! But then, Capernaum rejected him also (Mt. 11), even after he walked in its streets, taught at its sea shores, dined in the homes of its people. He went where people were; people, for the most part, rejected him, but he still went! ZEAL FOR PEOPLE, FOR GOD'S HOUSE, CONSUMED HIM! Jesus left his home in heaven to walk through this ghetto we call, "world," BECAUSE ZEAL FOR GOD'S "HOUSE" CONSUMED HIM (Phil. 2:33-11; Heb. 10:5-10; Jn. 1:4-5). What have we left because we are consumed with zeal for God's kingdom (i.e., God's "house" and his "people"? But Jesus also often went from Capernaum to Jerusalem, because Jerusalem was the capital city of the Jews—that's where all the influential people could be found! Also, Jesus knew that this would be the spot on earth where he would fulfill his mission to atone for the sin of mankind! Twice, while in Jerusalem, Jesus cleansed the temple of God of its corrupt practices. The first "cleansing" is here in John 2:13-21. The second "cleansing" is recorded in Matthew 21:12-13 during his

last week of ministry. Jewish rulers and priests were literally making the temple of God a “department store” (Greek *oikon emporiou*, “an emporium”). They had the ordinary Jew at great disadvantage—especially the one who lived hundreds of miles away in a foreign land and who came to Jerusalem usually only on the great “Feast” days. If a Jew came to the temple and did not have a Jewish “shekel” to give as his offering, he had to change his foreign coin into shekels—and there was always a “gouge” for that service. If a Jew came from a long ways away and did not have a lamb, or the one he brought was not approved by the priest for sacrifice, he could always buy one from (at a “gouged price”) from the priests who had a large supply of animals “corralled” in pens on the temple grounds. So these “religious” rulers and priests were cheating, gouging, and “robbing” the people of what little they had brought to give to God. What these corrupt “leaders” were doing is not quite like certain sales in churches today where no one is exploited, and no personal fortunes are made. So, it is my humble opinion that it is not wrong to sell things in the church building or in the “name” of the church, so long as no person or persons are, for their own personal gain, cheating, exploiting, or corrupting the people of the church. (Of course some are using their religion for exploitation all the time—no doubt about it!) The scene of Jesus making a whip of cords and driving out the traders was so suddenly violent the disciples were fearing for Jesus’ safety. (See Psa. 69 to find the OT prophecy fulfilled here concerning the Son of David, the Messiah).

This was the beginning of a struggle, a magnificent obsession, by Jesus to clean up God’s house, that would culminate some 3 years later in his being murdered by these corrupt “leaders.” If they destroyed God’s dwelling of stone because of greed and carnality, they would try to destroy God’s dwelling of flesh. Jesus was talking about his body being the residence of God—he was claiming to BE GOD IN THE FLESH. They did not destroy him—he arose from the dead (Acts 2:22-36). Later, at his trial, they accused him (perjuring themselves as they did it) of saying he would do the very thing they did—destroy their earthly temple of stone. Church-buildings are merely wood and stone—they are not God’s “house” or God’s “temples.” Even unbelievers know that! They are determined today to destroy God’s dwelling, the church, by destroying Christians, and hoping in so doing they will destroy God in the process. God has only ONE temple now—the church universal. It is a world-encompassing “temple” each Christian being a “living stone” built into a “spiritual house” (John 4:23-26; Acts 7:48; 17:24-25; Eph. 2:11-22; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:5). **SINFUL MEN WILL NEVER DESTROY GOD’S DWELLING, FOR HE DOES NOT DWELL IN BUILDINGS MADE WITH HANDS—HE DWELLS IN MEN’S HEARTS, AND THEY DWELL IN HIM ETERNALLY!** The Lord is jealous for his dwelling (the church—you and me, Christians), that it be holy, pure, free of all worldly-mindedness, free of all greed, and exploiting of others. He wants it to be a dwelling where his glory is manifested! A dwelling where he reigns supreme in goodness, truthfulness and purity. Let us be obsessed with zeal for God’s house—our Lord was!

The Greek phrase is, *autos de iesous ouk episteuen auton autois dia to auton ginoskein pantas*. The focus in this question is *autos de iesous ouk episetuen auton*, literally, “But he, himself, Jesus, trusted not himself to them...” Jesus is not talking here about the

normal trust between human beings—he’s talking about his personal, divinely perceptive ability to read the hearts and minds of human beings. John 2:23 says that “when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs which he did...” Jesus knew that this belief of the “many” was only superficially motivated because of the “signs” they saw him do. Jesus had that difficulty all through his ministry (John 4:48; 6:2,14,30; Matt. 12:38-39; 16:1-4; 24:3; Mk. 8:11-12; 13:4; Lk. 11:16,29,30; 21:7). The multitudes nearly overwhelmed Jesus in his 2nd year of ministry, following him everywhere they could find him for a “sign.” The Pharisees were constantly demanding “signs” from him for the claims he made and the things he did. The Greek word *episteuen* is the same word from which we get “belief” or “faith.” In other words, Jesus did not believe their belief! The term “belief” is used rather flippantly even today. Many say they believe in God or in Christ but their belief does not compel them to any commitments or responsibilities to Christ’s commandments in the NT about their lives and possessions. Many people say they “believe” in America but they are unwilling to lay their lives on the line to carry out America’s commitments! Our text says they “believed because of the signs he did.” And that is exactly why he did the signs. So what’s wrong? Acknowledging his deity because of signs, and going on to make a moral commitment to his way of life are not always sequential in most people. In John 6:26, Jesus perceptively exposed the “unbelief” of those who pretended they believed when he said, “...you seek me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.” They “believed” the signs, alright, but their interpretation of what the signs signified was skewed to materialism! Even within modern Christendom, many “see the signs” Jesus did but do not see what the signs say. That is because they do not want to—they see what they want to see (John 3:18-21; 9:35-41). True “belief” in the signs Jesus did is seeing what God wants seen! Does God trust any man? Certainly! A number of Jesus’ parables talk about “a master or householder” who goes away after he has “entrusted” his servants with his “house” or his “goods.” “We have this (God’s) treasure in earthen vessels...” 1 Cor. 4:7; “We are ambassadors for Christ...” (2 Cor. 5:20); we are “stewards of God’s grace” (1 Pet. 4:10); Jesus trusts his followers enough to call them “friends” and reveal to them all he received from the Father (Jn. 15:12-17); and his followers are to trust one another (Eph. 4:25-32). GOD KNOWS THOSE HE MAY TRUST WITH THE BEST AND MOST—JESUS’ PARABLE OF THE TALENTS (MATT. 25:14-30) TEACHES US THAT. God entrusts us with what belongs to him in order to develop humility, gratitude, faithfulness, honesty, and responsibility. All those virtues are necessary to anyone who wants to live forever in God’s immediate presence.

Jesus manifested his glory by demonstrating he knows man’s soul, heart and mind. If The Living Word demonstrated his probing “X-ray” capability in the flesh, then his Word becomes the only authoritative book certified to reach into the inner most recesses of the human heart and mind (see Jer. 17:9-10; 23:29; Heb. 4:12-13). No psychology book ever written, no psychology method ever devised and used, can open up and lay bare the heart of a human being unless that human being wants it to happen! The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately corrupt—who can know it? Not even the human being himself knows his own heart completely, as he should! ONLY GOD’S WORD CAN! Jesus certainly proved his (and thus God’s) omniscience (knows everything). Jesus knew Peter like an open book. He knew all the disciples. He knew Nathanael was under the fig tree, and knew he was an

Israelite without guile. Jesus knew Judas all along was the traitor and that he was a thief. Jesus knew the thoughts of the rulers and priests. He knew that they would crucify him at Passover even when they were determined not to do so. Jesus knew the death of Lazarus before he was told. Jesus knew the minds of Herod and Pilate even when he was not in their presence. He knew everything God knew about his earthly destiny and knew it before it happened. WE KNOW HE KNOWS BECAUSE HE PROVED IT, TIME AFTER TIME, IN HISTORY, AT A PLACE, AT A TIME, SEEN BY THOSE AROUND HIM! We must glorify Jesus by acknowledging and acting upon the affirmation of our belief that he is omniscient. We must constantly remember that he knows our thoughts, feelings, intentions, motives and actions before we do, and much more precisely than we do. Let us look to his word (not Freud) for knowing ourselves, seeing our selves, and surrendering to God's will for us (James 1:22-25). JESUS MANIFESTED HIS GLORY; AND HIS DISCIPLES BELIEVED IN HIM. THAT'S THE MESSAGE OF JOHN, CH. 2. GLORY IN BOTH THE OT AND NT MEANS, "RANK, DISTINCTION, POSITION, HONOR." WHERE DOES JESUS "RANK" WITH YOU? HAS HE ESTABLISHED HIS RANK IN OUR MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL HIERARCHY? DO YOU BELIEVE IN HIM? WHAT DO YOU TRUST TO HIM?

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 3:1-36

Nicodemus, a “ruler of Israel,” acknowledged Jesus as “a teacher sent from God.” His mind was probably inwardly racing along with pictures of the coming Messianic kingdom of God on earth. He would immediately assume that he, being a “leader” of Israel would automatically have a place of influence and affluence in it! So Jesus bluntly said to this “ruler of Israel,” “UNLESS ONE IS BORN ANEW, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD!” What Nicodemus may have been visualizing in his subconscious mind (and we know this is the way Pharisees and scribes thought) was not at all what Jesus came to institute! Or, could it be, that this sensitive, courageous “ruler” had become unsatisfied and disgusted with the Pharisaic concept of the “kingdom of God,” and had secretly, but eagerly, listened to the preaching of John the Baptist, and heard about the miracles and preaching of Jesus some 8 months prior to this night, and was sincere in knowing what Jesus knew? There was more involved in membership in the kingdom of God Jesus came to establish than just being a Jew, even a “ruler” of the Jews (see Rom. 9:6-3). It involves primarily the “faith” that comes by hearing and obeying the word of Christ (Rom. 10:14-17). It involves a transformation of the mind (Rom. 12:1-2). It involves a NEW BIRTH, a new life under the direction and management of the Holy Spirit through the New Testament scriptures. Only those to whom “the world has been crucified and who have been crucified to the world,” and understand and live by the “rule” that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but a new creation, are the Israel of God (Gal. 6:14-16). Nicodemus needed to know that and there was only one way for Jesus to say it—bluntly, lovingly, truthfully! THE SAME TRUTH IS TRUE TODAY! GOD HAS NOT CHANGED IT! AND THERE’S STILL ONLY ONE WAY TO SAY IT—BLUNTLY, LOVINGLY, TRUTHFULLY. No one gets into the kingdom of God through genetic inheritance or through being self-righteous—only by A NEW BIRTH!

Nicodemus asked the obvious question of a fleshly-minded person: “How can a man be born when he is already born—does he enter his mother’s womb and become born again?” NO!, said Jesus, “unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” What did Jesus mean? Jesus meant that sinners cannot enter the kingdom of God unless they are regenerated, because sinners are “dead in their trespasses and sins” (John 8:31-38; Rom. 3:1-20; 5:6-21; 6:1-23; 7:1-25; Eph. 2:1-10). When one is dead there is only one way to come to life again, that is by a “resurrection or regeneration to a new life.” When sinners are “dead” they are “separated” from God, and “without hope” (Eph. 2:11-13). Even the Old Testament taught “the soul that sins shall die” (Ezek. 18:4). By itself, the law of God is absolute, and unmitigating, and, therefore, can only judge, and condemn, those who break it to suffer its absolute, unmitigated sentence of eternal damnation from the presence of God. But along with the law, God promised in the Old covenant, he would mitigate the absolute sentence of the law with divine mercy, through a regeneration provided by his Anointed One (“Messiah”) who would atone for all sins by a vicarious death. This “Anointed One” would come into the world, give evidence (signs) of his

“Anointing” but not like those the world would expect (e.g., Isa. 42:1-4; 53:1-12; Micah 5:2-3). Most people never consider themselves “dead” in their sins. They never think that God will really “separate” them from himself forever and ever and ever—eternally—because they made a mistake or two in their lives! So, they do not think of themselves as lost, only confused and lonely, and when they die, although they shunned God’s presence in their lives on earth, they believe God will overlook that and take away their confusion and loneliness and receive them into his holy presence—although they are not sure they want holiness even in the next life! It was the same in Nicodemus’ day as it is today!

Jesus used physical birth as a metaphor or “parable” of spiritual regeneration. Physical birth takes place this way—first the seed is planted and conception takes place, then after a period of gestation (Mk. 4:26-29) the water (or the earth) breaks, and the infant (or the plant) is born! So, we are CONCEIVED by the Spirit through the implanted word of God, the gospel of Christ (the “seed” Lk. 8:11) and BORN through immersion in water for the remission of sins (which John the Baptist had already begun to introduce as part of the message of the “coming” kingdom of God). This metaphor of “new birth, regeneration, new creature, born again,” is mentioned in veiled language in many places in the OT (e.g., Ezek. chs. 11:19; 18:31; 36:26-27; Zeph. 3:9-20, etc.) But it is plainly taught throughout the New Testament. See 1 Pet. 1:3; 1:22-23; Jas. 1:18; Titus 3:5; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:22-24; Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-6; Matt. 18:3. When the seed, which is the word of God, falls upon good and honest hearts, people will have their minds changed by faith and repentance and their status will be changed when they submit obediently to immersion in water as Jesus commanded (Matt. 18:18-20) and his apostles (Acts 2:38; 8:38; 10:47-48; 18:8; 22:16; Rom. 6:1-5; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 2:12-13; 1 Pet. 3:20-21, etc.). For any person today to refuse to believe in Christ and repent (change their minds about) of sin, and still claim to have been born anew would be mocking God. And, in like manner, to refuse the positive command of Christ and his apostles to be immersed in water and still claim to have been born anew is also mockery! That “baptism” means “immersion” is beyond question, because the Greek verb baptizo, can mean ONLY, “dip, submerge, immerse”. There are other Greek words for “pour”(cheo) and “sprinkle” (hrantizo) distinct from the word baptizo in the Greek language of the NT. Everywhere it is said people were “baptized” the original Greek text used the word baptizo. So, “baptism” is a “transliteration” (i.e., the letter of one language of similar shape transposed into another language by similar letters b-a-p-t-i-z-e). “Baptism” is NOT a true translation of Greek into English, otherwise it would always appear, “immerse, submerge, dip” in the NT. The Greek word baptizo used in the Septuagint (Greek version of the Old Testament) in 2 Kings 5:14 and is translated “dipped” as it should be in the English versions of 2 Kings 5:14. Only the bias of the English translators, especially of the KJV in A.D. 1611, who were paedo-baptists (child-sprinklers) could have caused them to transliterate the Greek word baptizo instead of translating it “dip, immerse.”

Jesus expected Nicodemus to understand and believe this because regeneration or new birth, as a requisite for citizenship in the coming Messianic kingdom was taught in the Old Testament, as we have noted in question 3. Furthermore, John the Immersing One (Ioannes ho Baptiste) came “preaching an immersion of repentance for the forgiveness of

sins” (Mark 1:4; Lk. 3:3) as a requisite for entrance into the “coming kingdom of God.” John’s message and ministry of “immersing” people in water for remission of sins was so defiantly innovative it caused the Jewish religious and political leaders to send their lackeys out to investigate him—to find out if he was claiming to be the Messiah, or Elijah, or the prophet! John was preaching a message and “method” that would completely erase the Old Testament law (and rabbinic traditions) of animal sacrifices, rituals of purification, and offerings. That, in turn, would erase the need for a temple, a priesthood, and all the other trappings of Judaism. It would bring about precisely what the book of Hebrews commands! Jewish religion practiced for 1500 years would be wiped out (any strict Jew would shudder at the thought). And along with annulling of their religion, most Jews would believe, their culture and customs would also be obliterated! Is it any wonder that Jesus spoke to his disciples rather harshly in Luke 24:25, “O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!” Nicodemus was “a teacher of Israel,” and did not understand that Jesus was saying the “new birth” was spiritual, not physical (John 3:10). But Nicodemus is not alone! Now, 2000 years later, people still think of their relationship to God in terms of ritual, human priesthood, and a matter of “good works” rather than being “reborn” from inside-out! They do not want to have “reborn” minds, and choices. They want to keep the “old” ways of thinking and choosing, and take care of relationship with God through ritual and ceremony and “being good” (when there is no one “good” but God alone, Lk. 18:19).

If Nicodemus cannot understand “earthly” things (i.e., the experience of the “new birth” by faith, repentance, and immersion in water, a renewal of mind and heart), how will he understand “heavenly” things such as vicarious atonement. How much more incredible would it be to Nicodemus that God would come to earth, incarnated in human flesh, and be “lifted up” (i.e., crucified) somewhat like when Moses put upon a pole a bronze serpent so that whoever looked on it would be saved from death. What Moses did should have been known and believed by Nicodemus. But the typical, symbolic nature of it seemed not to be understood by any Jew, anymore than the symbolism of putting their hands on the head of the lambs and goats they offered as “atonement” for their sins (e.g., Lev. 3:2,8; 4:4,24,29, etc.). They seemed unable to understand God was transferring their guilt to the animal, and sparing their lives from their sins. They appeared to think of God owing them forgiveness because they were his “chosen” and such good people to bring him offerings of their flocks (Isa. 1:12-20). Jesus used the “serpent” in the wilderness to illustrate that the new birth was something that God did for and to a person which the person appropriated by faithful obedience to God’s instructions about how to appropriate it! Just looking at a bronze serpent to be saved from death by disease appears to be absurd and preposterous—UNLESS ONE HAS COMPLETE TRUST IN GOD’S FAITHFULNESS TO KEEP HIS WORD, NO MATTER WHETHER ONE COULD “SEE” OR PHYSICALLY EXPERIENCE ITS OPERATING OR NOT! How many Christians have ever “seen” or physically experienced the “new birth?” The only part of the new birth that may be seen with the physical eye is immersion in water. Immersion in water seems to some people as “absurd” and “preposterous” as a “new birth.” But God has given immersion in water as a physical experience, in time, in space, at a place, at a time, by which we may say, “God has given me a new birth.” We need that! Just like we need the Lord’s Supper, to say, at a time, at a place, “The Lord himself has just communed with me and my Christian brethren.” And even after we’ve been immersed in water in order

to appropriate the vicarious death of Christ, there is still something invisible, mysterious, and miraculous about the new birth which we cannot comprehend. But we KNOW we are new creatures, BECAUSE GOD, THROUGH CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES, SAID SO —AND HE IS FAITHFUL TO KEEP HIS WORD IF WE ARE FAITHFUL TO KEEP OURS!

John 3:16. GOD IS LOVE (1 John 4:8). John 3:16-21 contains the heart of God's new will in Christ. Until we have experienced, in a measure, the same unselfish love, we cannot know God as we ought (1 John 4:7-12). John 3:16 expresses the crux of the gospel, that God is wooing mankind back into his glorious fellowship by making the initial advances. In other words, we love God only because he "first loved us" (1 John 4:19). That God loved us for his sake turns out to be for our sake. True love "seeks not its own" (1 Cor. 13:1-7). God's love is that of a Father who is happy only when his prodigal child has returned to his home (Lk. 15:11-24). Augustine said, "God loves each one of us as if there was only one of us to love." Love is the highest characteristic of God, the one attribute in which all others harmoniously blend. Although our finite minds cannot grasp the limitlessness of his love, we are informed of it in his revealed word, and believe it was expressed in the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, on the cross and through the empty tomb. So, God not only provides the necessary forgiveness by which we may become "new creatures," he also provides the MOTIVE which draws us to want to be born again—HIS INFINITE LOVE! (see 2 Cor. 5:14-21).

This text in John 3:16-21 outlines at least two things man has to do to be born again: (a) he has to believe— "believe" in the Bible consists of more than mere intellectual assent; "believe" in John 3:16,18, is a translation of the Greek word *pisteuon*, a derivative of the same root word from which the word *apeithon* comes and is translated "disobeys" in John 3:36. Thus, believe in the NT is, in essence, to obey. But that idiomatic way of using "believe" is no different than the Hebrew word *shema*, sometimes translated "hear" and sometimes translated "obey." Even English speaking people use the same idiom! My mother used to say to me, "Paul Thurman Butler, did you hear me?!" when she meant, did you do what I told you to do! Or, my father, when he occasionally used his razor strap on us, would say, "Next time, I'll make a believer out of you" meaning he would make an obedient child of us next time; (b) man has to do what is true and come to the light that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God—which inescapably means man has to "keep God's commandments" as he has given them in the (Greek, *monogenes*—only unique) Son through his apostles in the New Testament. That would include, of course, being immersed (baptized) for the remission of sins in the name of Christ (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38, etc.). The Greek word *pisteuon* ("believing") used in this text is a present tense verb which indicates a "continuing action." We have to continue to believe in Christ and continue to obey him. The apostle John wrote in his first epistle, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (1 Jn. 5:3). God loves us by doing for us what we can't do for ourselves. We love God back by keeping his commandments! The Greek verbs *poion* ("doing") and *erchetai* ("coming") in John 3:21 are both present tense meaning we have to continue doing the truth, and continue coming to the light. John 3:19-21 is one of the DIVINELY ASTUTE PASSAGES OF "PSYCHOLOGY" IN THE BIBLE (another is Hosea 9:10

—people become like that which they worship). In John 3:19-21 Jesus reveals the inner-workings of the human heart (which Jer. 17:9-10 says is deceitful above all things and desperately corrupt and only God can know it). John uses the Greek word for love--- agapae---to say that “men loved darkness.” In other words, loving darkness is an intellectual, deliberate, moral, choice. When the light of God comes and convicts some persons of their evil, they will purposely reject the light and deliberately love the darkness. The reason they do so is the light exposes the evilness of their deeds, and they don’t want them exposed—because they are evil. Such persons inevitably condemns themselves and receive a just punishment (2 Thess. 2:9-12). This sounds like those Jews whom Jesus accused of not being able to “bear to hear his word” and of not believing him because he told them the truth (John 8:43-47). Even Paul had this to contend with among Christians in Galatia whom he censured (Gal. 4:16), “Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?” It is very ironic that people hate the light when their deeds are exposed because they don’t want to know their deeds are evil! One would think that those who do evil would not be afraid to face up to the evil they are doing! God’s word is the number-one best psychology book ever written!

John changed his place of immersing (3:23). Prior to this time he was “beyond the Jordan” (3:26) (i.e., eastern side of the Jordan River). Now he is near Aenon, probably 8 miles south of Scythopolis on the western banks of the Jordan. As John writes his Gospel he is aware of Matthew’s sequence of events in the ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist. John would know that Matthew has John the Baptist cast into prison just after the temptation of Jesus (Matt. 4:12). John is here representing Jesus and John the Baptist as preaching and immersing simultaneously at least 6 months after the Lord’s temptation. To set the record straight, John interjects the phrase anachronistically, “for John (the Immersing One) was not yet cast into prison.” Thus v. 24 shows there was a considerable lapse of time between Matt. 4:11 and Matt. 4:12, and during this time Jesus and John the Baptist were both preaching and baptizing. The jealousy between the followers of Jesus and the followers of John the Baptist was not sanctioned by either “leader.” From v. 26 it appears the whole disputation was over the authority and cleansing efficacy of the two baptisms. That Jesus could baptize without getting permission from John the Baptist was unacceptable to J.B.’s disciples. They probably informed this “Jew” that he had not been properly “cleansed” having been baptized in Jesus’ baptism! So J.B.’s disciples came to him to set the matter straight. John the Baptist’s answer probably shocked his followers. He said, “In God’s eternal scheme of things everyone has a place. Authority and pre-eminence is divinely bestowed.” John the Baptist knew his place was to be a preparer, a forerunner. He uses a familiar OT figure to illustrate his secondary position to Christ. The “bride” (Israel, Isa. 54:5; Hosea 2:18; Psa. 45) belongs to the Bridegroom (Christ, Eph. 5:32; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 21:2,9; 22:17). In Jewish marriage ceremony, the “friend of the bridegroom” had to stand and wait for the approach of the groom. Upon hearing the groom’s voice the “friend or best-man” could make the announcement and rejoice in a task completed—and rejoice again when the groom voices his joy upon consummating the marriage with his bride. John then tells his followers, “Since you have come to me and told me that “all people” are flocking to him, the Bridegroom, my joy is made full.” This shows us that John the Baptizer was truly, among those born of women, the greatest (except for Jesus, of course). Any human being who could be that self-

effacing, humble, surrendered to God's word, when "all men were coming to hear him and be baptized by him," IS A "PROPHET OF GOD WITH HONOR" FOR ALL TIME AND ETERNITY! Few human beings ever seek to "go down the ladder of success and popularity."

The answer to this question is summed up concisely in the words, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests (present tense verb, "is continuing to rest) upon him." (John 3:36). Belief and obedience are the criteria of appropriating the eternal life Christ has provided for human kind. If "good religious people" believe and obey the commandments of Christ and the apostles, they will have eternal life. If they do not, they shall not have it! That sounds simple—but it is indeed profound. "Faith (belief) comes by hearing, and hearing the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). FEW "good religious people" today ever hear the word of Christ preached or taught, even if they attend their church's services. And MANY, MANY MORE, never darken the door of a church building so they might hear the word of Christ preached and taught! THEREFORE, IT IS UP TO THE CHURCH, (CHRISTIAN INDIVIDUALS) TO GET THE WORD OF CHRIST INTO "GOOD RELIGIOUS PEOPLE'S" HOMES, INTO THEIR WORK PLACES, INTO THEIR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES—EVERYWHERE— SO THOSE WHO AREN'T HEARING THE WORD OF CHRIST, MAY DO SO,—MAY BELIEVE AND OBEY, AND HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 4:1-54

In Jesus's divine mission a definite time had been appointed for the supreme crisis (and crucifixion) (Jn. 2:4; 7:8,30; 12:17; 13:1; 17:1 Matt. 26:18). He must avoid a premature crisis. So Jesus withdrew from his work of preaching and baptizing (actually, his apostles did the baptizing—Jesus baptized no one! 4:2!) in the Jordan river somewhere near Jericho, and traveled toward Galilee. The most obvious way to Galilee from Jericho (Judea) would seem to be to go from Jericho toward the west, to Jerusalem and then to north alongside the “spine” of the mountain range that runs through the middle of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee where the great Roman road ran. However, due to an age-old hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans (see Nehemiah, Ezra, 1 & 2 Maccabees & Josephus), the usual route traveled by Jews between Judea and Galilee was not through Samaria! The Jew going north from Judea usually crossed to the eastern side of the Jordan river, probably at the Jericho ford, and went up the Jordan Valley, over in Perea, to avoid Samaria, and re-crossed the river into Galilee probably at Bethabara at the south end of the Sea of Galilee. The same route was almost always used by Jews coming from Galilee to Judea. This is the route Jesus used in his last trip from Galilee to Judea (Matt. 19:1; Mk. 10:1; Lk. 9:51-56). Two possibilities why Jesus “had” to go through Samaria: (a) it was the shortest route to Galilee, and he was not restricted by the prejudices of the Jews; (b) or, he purposely passed through there to “break down barriers” and plant the seed of the gospel that Philip might later reap (Acts 8:5-6). Traveling the Roman road that leads through Samaria, Jesus would come to a fork in the road. At this fork, there was a well called “Jacob’s Well.” About one-half mile northwest was the village of Sychar. About the same distance to the west were Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. Sychar was between these two mountains, in a natural amphitheater where Joshua stood and shouted the blessings and curses of the Law of Moses to the nation assembled on the slopes of these two mountains (Deut. 27:12-13; Josh. 8:33-35). This location is of great significance in Jewish history. Nearly all archaeologists and scholars of the geography of Palestine agree that Jacob’s Well is one place to which we may point with certainty and say, “Jesus sat on these stones,” Grooves are worn deep into the stones around the opening of the well where ropes have, for centuries, been let down and pulled up, drawing water for thirsty Palestinians. As late as A.D. 1926, Samaritans (“half-breed-Jews”) were celebrating the Passover on Mt. Gerizim (ref. National Geographic). It was an archetypal place for Jesus to confront the Samaritans (“half-Jewish”) with the good news of the Messiah.

Jesus was tired and thirsty. He asked a woman at the well for a drink. That was a natural request! Why would that create any friction or consternation from the woman? The woman was more shocked than afraid or aggravated. Jesus’s disciples had gone away into the town to buy some food for supper or they would probably have provided him a drink. Jews did NOT use the same vessels as Samaritans—for anything! **ESPECIALLY VESSELS FROM WHICH TO EAT OR DRINK!** It would make a Jew “unclean” (according to Rabbinical

tradition) to do so. Jews and Samaritans had engaged in a deep-rooted conflict ever since the return of the Jews from Babylonian exile in 536 B.C. You can read about its beginnings in Nehemiah and Ezra. Jews called Samaritans dogs and Samaritans reciprocated in kind! They had fought and killed one another for 5 centuries before the birth of Jesus. This woman, some way or another, recognized Jesus to be a Jewish “rabbi.” Her first reaction was, “My gosh, what kind of a Jew is this that would lower himself to speak to a Samaritan?!” Secondly, she was a woman. It was against the culture and custom of Jewish rabbis to speak to women in public. Some Pharisees carried this foolish tradition to such an extreme they would close their eyes when they saw a woman on the city streets. As a result they often bumped into walls and trees and other obstacles until they came to be known as “the bruised and bleeding Pharisees.” The woman was astonished that this Jewish rabbi would have such disregard for social custom he would dare to speak to a woman in public! He could get her and himself both into much trouble for doing so! The same misogynistic (defamation) of women is enforced in most of the Islamic world today. Now, in America, discussion of the Bible and Jesus Christ is almost totally taboo at social functions and is illegal in public-government functions, i.e., prayer in school, the mention of the name of Jesus at commencement exercises, etc. (except for prayer in Congress each day, the mention of our Creator in fundamental government documents, and the Biblical words engraved on public monuments in the nation’s capital!—how hypocritical can the Supreme Court get?). It’s getting more and more difficult to talk to anyone about Jesus Christ and the New Testament in the work place—people are getting “fired” for doing so! SO WHAT’S A “REAL” CHRISTIAN GOING TO DO TODAY? Just sit down “beside the well” and “clam-up?” What Would Jesus Do?

In Palestine there were two kinds of drinkable water—(e.g. the spring & oasis of Engedi, Ezek. 47:10; the well of Jacob, and other wells) and non-drinkable (e.g. the Dead Sea). And both kinds were very scarce. People fought family feuds and wars over wells and other sources of water. To stay alive, “living-drinkable” water is an absolute necessity. The Old Testament is permeated with the prophetic metaphor of God supplying his “future people” with living water. Jesus was not uttering a new idea! Jesus was claiming to be the fulfillment of these messianic prophecies concerning the “living water” (Psa. 36:9; 42:1; Isa. 12:3; 35:7; 4:3; 49:10; 55:1; Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Ezek. 47:1-2; Zech. 13:1; 14:8, etal.). Of course, the Jews rejected the idea that Jesus of Nazareth could be the “living water,” just as they rejected anything connecting him with the Messiah. In John 7:37-39, Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as the “living water,” and adds, “this life-source shall flow out from the believer.” Neither passage, 4:13-14 or 7:37-39, is contradictory of the other. Both were fulfilled in the vicarious atonement when the work of Christ was completed in his crucifixion and resurrection from the dead (connect Zech. 12:10 with Zech. 13:1). See also 1 Pet. 3:20-21; 1 Jn. 5:6-8; Rev. 21:6; 22:1,17. I think this woman may instantly have had, deep down in her soul, some inkling of what Jesus was talking about (see Amos 8:11). There was indeed, a “famine” in the world of that day for “hearing the words of the Lord.” People all over the world were “hungering and thirsting for righteousness” because what they were feeding their souls could never satisfy! Even the Greek and Roman philosophers and poets had been writing about the hunger of the human soul for a “living” God (see Acts 17:16-34)—a living sustenance for the soul. That same thirst persists throughout civilization today— in AT

LEAST FIVE BILLION SOULS. That's granting there are 1 billion Christians who already have their "thirst" quenched—which is probably incorrect. CAN YOU VISUALIZE THAT! In actuality there are 6,000,000,000 souls hungering and thirsting for righteousness! And the only source for that MUST flow through the Bible and the church before it ever gets it into those thirsty souls! The "living water" cannot be accessed in any other way!

It is clear to Jesus that the woman is EVADING the burning issue of her personal relationship to God—SIN! First, she fakes that she does not know what he is talking about when he said, "living water." Second, she is evading the issue of the identity of just WHO this Jewish rabbi is, talking to her about HIMSELF being the source of the living water. So, Jesus must "cut to the quick" of her subliminalized-sin which is blocking any facing up to the truth of her denial of thirst and need for soul-sustaining-living-water. JESUS MUST FIRST GET HER TO ACKNOWLEDGE SHE IS "DRINKING FROM THE WRONG WELL." What she thinks is her source of "life" and "happiness"—illicit human relationships—can never satisfy her thirst (need) for being right with her Creator! So Jesus must get her to admit she is substituting sin for the real need of her soul which is being right (righteous) with her Creator. The Creator has placed a "thirst-mechanism" for righteousness in every human being—it is called CONSCIENCE! Until that "thirst" is brought to the consciousness (i.e., to the immediacy of the thinking mind), no human being is aware they are dying of spiritual thirstiness! In other words, every human being must be confronted with the real truth that without Jesus Christ they are lost and dying (with the wrath of God already abiding on them, Jn. 3:18,36) individuals crawling through a completely arid desert of estrangement (sin) from God! The only oasis in the death-dealing, scorching "far country" of sin is Jesus Christ. All other promises of "life-saving" are mirages—dreams, phantasies, non-realities. And the soul that trusts in mirages dies!

No one likes to be confronted with their sins (see John 3:18-21; 2 Thess. 2:9-12; Heb. 3:7-19; 2 Pet. 3:3-5). The flesh is in constant conflict with the spirit (John 8:42-48; Rom.6:12-23; 8:3-8; 13:14; Gal. 5:16-17; 1 Pet. 2:11). Even Christians (even apostles Rom. 7:8-24;) experience the reluctance of the fleshly-mentality to surrender to the spiritual-mentality! So this woman, at first tried to slip out of the corner where Jesus had her by "spinning the truth," saying, "I have no husband." Kinda like the infamous statement from the White House in 1999, "It depends on what is, is!" But she couldn't get away from the "living word of God" (see Heb. 4:12-13)! Jesus let her know that he knew she was living with a man who was not her husband. Second, she tried flattery, "Sir (a term of respect and superiority, also translated, "Lord") I perceive that you are a prophet." Third once she was forced to admit he knew of her illicit relationship, she tried to "sweep-it-under-the-rug" by diverting the conversation to something more public than private. Kinda like the infamous statement that from the White House in 1999 "What I do in my private life has nothing to do with my public life." She brought up the turbulent, always seething conflict between the Samaritans and the Jews about where God ought to be worshiped. Almost 2 millennia before this woman, Jacob built altars at Shechem, practically on the slopes of Gerizim (Gen. 33:20). Nearly 400 years before this woman, after the Jews returning from Babylon refused to let the mixed races of Samaritans help rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra 4:1-4; Neh. 2:19-20; 13:28), the Samaritans built a

temple of their own on Mount Gerizim (2 Kings 17:24-34). Although that “temple” has long since been destroyed the small Samaritan community of Nablus still celebrates the Passover, out in the open, on Mt. Gerizim. Samaritan tradition maintains that Abraham attempted to sacrifice Isaac on this mountain; that at nearby Salem he met Melchizedek; and that Jacob’s dream occurred at Khirbet Lanzah on Mt. Gerizim. The Nablus Samaritan people of today possess an important manuscript of the Pentateuch. Samaritans believe only the Pentateuch. So the woman evidently considered herself to be quite capable of carrying on a theological argument with a Jewish rabbi—unusual! She would throw out the “hook” of a good theological argument before this Jewish rabbi and he would “snap at it the bait” and once “hooked” would forget about her personal sinfulness. Her conscience was increasingly stabbing her soul.

Jesus took the “bait” but without the “hook.” Ever happen to you when fishing (literally or figuratively or both)? He said the time was coming when it would not be a question of the proper place to worship God. God would “break down all the middle walls of hostility and alienation” (Eph. 2:14-22). But he reminded this woman that, presently, Samaritans were worshiping in ignorance. Not that they shouldn’t have known better for even the Pentateuch legislated that there was to be just ONE acceptable altar at which to worship God (Deut. 12:1-14; Josh. 22). Still later, in the time of Hezekiah, Judah is reminded of the ONE place to worship God (2 Kings 18:22; 2 Chron. 32:12; Isa. 36:7). Samaritan ignorance was deliberate. The Jews worshiped within the covenant requirements of God (not that all the Jews worshiped in a way that would please God) but even hypocritical Jews (Pharisees) were to be heeded when they proclaimed the true Law of Moses (Malachi 2:7-8; Matt. 23:2-3). Jesus “predicts the present” when he says, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth..” He is saying, in effect, “The Messiah has arrived. This very hour, God’s presence is standing before you in human flesh—he is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. This very hour those who are ‘true worshipers’ will see that God’s ‘temple’ is not one made with hands, but is built in human hearts where the truth of God and faith in Me (Jesus Christ) resides.” What Jesus means by “spirit” is EITHER, the inner person versus outward, superficial ritualism (not that rituals in worship are wrong, but trusting in the rituals themselves is), OR, worshiping according to the dictates of the Holy Spirit which are found only in the Bible. Since Jesus also says, “according to truth,” “spirit” probably means “inner person” as opposed to the Pharisees (and Samaritans who were trusting in “place” rather than “person”). What Jesus means by “truth” is unquestionably, the Scriptures! The NT scriptures never command a particular place for worshiping God and Christ. Even the OT states God dwells in believer’s hearts and not in a “house” built by humans (cf. Isa. 66:1-2). The “church” in the NT is always speaking of people (i.e., Christians), NOT buildings or places. Of course, many first century “congregations” of Christians used buildings in which to worship—homes, school buildings, even the Jewish temple, perhaps, though it would be extremely rare, in a few instances a Jewish synagogue. But Christian church buildings, per se, are not archaeologically known before the 2nd century (A.D. 200-300). William Barclay makes some incisive remarks on this passage “(1) A false worship selects what it wishes to know and understand about God, and omits what it does not wish; (2) A false worship is an ignorant worship...In the last analysis religion is never safe until a man can tell, not only what he

believes, but why he believes it; (3) A false worship is a superstitious worship. It is a worship given, not out of a sense of need nor out of any real desire, but basically because a man feels that it might be dangerous not to give it...If God is Spirit, God is not confined to things...if God is Spirit, God is not confined to places...if God is Spirit, a man's gift to God must be gifts of the human spirit...True worship is when the human spirit, the immortal and invisible part of man, speaks to and meets with God, who is immortal and invisible Spirit." This kind of worship took place in a MINORITY ("a remnant") of the OT people (e.g., Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel, et al and their "disciples" Isa. 8:16). Even then, it was in shadow and type. But it could only take place IN ITS FULNESS, AND REALITY (see the book of Hebrews) after the redemptive work of Christ was completed (i.e., the crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and establishment of the church of Christ on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2).

Josephus, the Jewish historian, indicates there was a vague Messianic "tumult" among the Samaritans in the reign of Tiberius Caesar a short while after the crucifixion of Jesus (Antiquities of the Jews, 18:4:1) which caused Pilate to send soldiers who slew many of them. The Samaritans were not so far removed from the Jewish nation that they could not be well aware of the general teaching of the prophets through what little intercourse they had between themselves. John the Immersing One, Jesus, and his disciples had certainly aroused a Messianic fervor in the provinces north and south, in Galilee & Judea (Matt. 16:13-16; Jn. 7:14-52), that could hardly escape being spread by word of mouth among the people in between—in Samaria. Even the Pentateuch (if that was all of the OT the Samaritans honored) has Messianic passages (e.g., the prophet, Deut. 18:15-19; Jn. 1:21,25; Acts 3:22-23; 7:37). Suetonius in his Lives of the Twelve Caesars, in his chapter on Vespasian (A.D. 69-79), says "An ancient superstition was current in the East, that out of Judaea would come the rulers of the world...the rebellious Jews, who read it as referring to themselves, murdered their Procurator, routed the Governor-general of Syria when he came down to restore order, and captured an Eagle (a Roman army standard)." So, "Messiah is coming and will show us all things" was widely anticipated among those of Jewish descent (even if they were Samaritans).

Jesus' disciples return from the town with "groceries" for supper. The woman left, rushing back into the town, forgetting all about the water from the well she had come to get and left her "jar" there at the well, crying "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Messiah?" Many people (4:39) were coming out to where Jesus was at the well of Jacob. The disciples had supper prepared and were ready to eat, but Jesus sat, transfixed, as it were, watching the huge crowds coming out to him—he was anticipating a great spiritual feast when they arrived. The disciples called him to supper, "Rabbi, eat!" Jesus enigmatic reply, "I have food to eat of which you do not know" puzzled the disciples who were thinking according to the flesh. So they said, "Has any one brought him food?" Jesus replied, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work....lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest." If there were still four months until harvest, this would be sometime in late April or early May when Jesus was at Jacob's well. Jesus often reminded his disciples of the urgency of evangelism (e.g., Matt.

4:18-19; 9:35-38; 10:1-42; 12:49-50; 13:1-53; Lk. 4:42-43; John 9:4-5; 11:9-10, etc.). His “Great Commission” was a command not a suggestion (Matt. 28:18-20). YES! JESUS WAS MORE INTERESTED IN WINNING SOULS THAN IN EATING! ARE WE? He was the greatest missionary the world has ever known—trying to evangelize his own when his own would not receive him (John 1:11). He was sent to do what no other human “missionary” could do, atone for all the sins of the world. All the rest of us are merely “ambassadors” for Christ (2 Cor. 5:14-21).

Isn't it interesting that Jesus knows beforehand how jealousy will arise among the disciples?! They will, more than once, vie with one another for “special places” in his “kingdom” (as they think of the “kingdom”). See Matt. 20:20-28; Mk. 10:35-45; Lk. 22:14-29; Jn. 13:1-17. They are about to reap a harvest of souls here in Samaria where they had not sown. Others had sown even before Jesus went there, i.e., the OT prophets and John the Baptist. Both sower and reaper receive rewards. But what are the rewards? The rewards of the spiritual laborer (either sower or reaper) are the souls harvested. HAVE YOU EVER KNOWN THE SPIRITUAL REWARD HERE ON EARTH FROM BRINGING A LOST SINNER TO CHRIST? IF YOU HAVEN'T—YOU ARE MISSING ONE OF LIFE'S GREATEST EXPERIENCES! Paul's crown and glory were to consist of his converts at the Lord's coming (Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 2:19-20). But even Paul reaped at times where others had sown. And, vice-versa, he sowed where others later reaped. In the spiritual “field” both sower and reaper rejoice together at the harvest, for both shared in bringing it to fruition. John the Baptist understood this when he spoke about the coming of the Bridegroom (Jn. 2:29-30); Paul understood this in his statement, “Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase” (1 Cor. 3:6-9). The crux of the Lord's statement here is to instruct the reaper not to exalt himself as the one solely responsible for the harvest of souls. Every preacher is more of a reaper than a “sower” (although preachers do “sow”). He reaps from the “seeds” which are sown (or planted) and watered and long ago by parents, Sunday School teachers, elders, deacons, and “callers” from among the congregation. Of course, every preacher's most important function (along with the Sunday School teacher) is to nourish and cultivate the “crop” so that it will grow until “harvest time.” The Sunday School is doubly important because it both “sows” and “cultivates”. Let there be no jealousy among God's people—every member of his “kingdom” is only a SERVANT! There is only ONE KING—JESUS—EVERYONE ELSE IS A SERVANT! At the end of time there will be no asking by Christ whether we were sowers or reapers—only whether we labored or not and used whatever talents he gave us.

WHAT A TREMENDOUS CONTRAST BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF SYCHAR AND THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM IN THEIR REACTIONS TO JESUS CHRIST! The Samaritans had, so far as we know, only the testimony of the woman and Christ's reasoning with them for the ground of their faith. On the other hand the citizens of Jerusalem had many miracles and signs (Jn. 2:23) upon which to ground their reaction (mostly a superficial discipleship) which turned to “Crucify him, crucify him, his blood be upon us and upon our children” when they saw him with the crown of thorns! At first “many” came out from the city to see and talk with him, and “believed in him” (4:39). Jesus was invited to stay there and did

so for two days and “many more” believed because of his word. They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world!” Isn’t that the trouble with our world today?—too many people take “second-hand” information about Jesus Christ and his word. They don’t really read the Bible for themselves—if they did, “many more” might become believers than are doing so because of all the “false” and “shameful” information they accept from “false and shameful” alleged representatives of Christ today! Perhaps the most crucial and decisive act of evangelism in any age is to get the “word of God” directly and immediately into the hands of non-believers and to arouse a thirst in them to READ IT FOR THEMSELVES! If only we could get today’s non-believers to be like the “noble Bereans” who didn’t even take the words of Paul & Silas about Christ until they “examined the scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” (Acts 17:11). Can you pass out Bibles to those who don’t have them? Can you give money to an organization like LATM (connected to College Press in Joplin) who is printing Bibles and other Christian literature for foreign lands? SURE YOU CAN! That’s evangelism! Try it—you’ll like it!

When Jesus met the “nobleman” who was coming out from the town of Cana, Jesus was, what some people today would call, “testy.” The Lord’s reply to the nobleman’s “begging” was, “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.” Didn’t the nobleman already believe? After all he was “begging” Jesus to come down and heal his son! And even when Jesus healed his son by “remote control” the nobleman believed Jesus (i.e., Jesus didn’t go to the nobleman’s house and lay hands on the dying son—he just told the nobleman “Go; your son will live.”). Jesus was probably being “testy” with a crowd of people from Galilee who were following him and a crowd following the nobleman as he approached Cana. Jesus used brusqueness more than once with people he met and those who came to him from everywhere he went for their unbelief and their obsession with “signs” (e.g., John 6:25-34; Matt. 11:1-24; 12:38-45; 15:21-28; 16:1-4; Lk. 4:23; Mk. 6:1-6, etc.). Jesus had no time for what we would call “pleasantries” in conversation. HE WAS ALWAYS PRECISE, TO THE POINT, PENETRATING AND IMPERATIVE. Of course, Jesus was never rude, crude or abusive, but he never hedged on the truth no matter who might be offended at the truth he had to say! The following principles were found written next to 1 Kings 22 in the Bible of former Georgia State Senator Edwin Gochenour (1953-1999): “(1) It is better to be united in truth than to be united in error; (2) It is better to tell the truth that hurts then heals than to tell a lie that heals then kills; (3) It is better to be hated for telling the truth than to be loved for telling a lie; (4) It is better to stand alone with the truth than to be wrong with the multitudes; (5) It is better to ultimately win with the truth than to temporarily succeed with a lie.” Jesus was brusque with the Galileans (including the nobleman) to test the sincerity of their claims to “believe in him.” Why do you think so many people today are “offended,” or “hurt,” by the demands of the Bible on their lives? BECAUSE IT PENETRATES, AND “DISCERNS THE THOUGHTS AND INTENTIONS OF THE HEART” AND EXPOSES THEIR SIN AND THEIR OBSTINACY ABOUT REPENTING! (e.g., Rom. 16:17-20; 1 Cor. 3:1-4; Gal. 4:16; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Titus 3:10; Heb. 3:12-10; 4:11-13, etc.). But there are 4 exemplary traits in this nobleman which all people would do well to copy: (a) He did not let position, pride or effort prevent him from coming to seek Christ’s aid; (b) He stood the test of his faith without going away in a “huff,” (c) He showed the desperate (not ignorant) kind of faith which Jesus desires

—the only way to receive the full benefit of the promises of God’s word is to believe in Jesus unreservedly; (d) He became a witness for the Lord, especially to his own “household.” There are at least five facts which make this a notable miracle: (a) it was a cure performed at a distance from the sick child; (b) it was performed for a distinguished officer of the king’s court; (c) Jesus said no peculiar “healing formula”; (d) the child plainly couldn’t have had any faith in Jesus; (e) the child was at the point of death. Modern faith-healers are not known for any such miracles. Today’s “faith healers” insist that faith is an established condition for healing. Search the Gospels as you will, and you will find only 1 time in 31 instances of healing where the Lord required faith (in Matt. 9:28). In 9 cases of healing by Jesus there is no evidence at all of faith; in 4 instances faith is very unlikely; and in 4 other healings by Jesus there is no faith possible on the part of the person healed (Lk. 7:11-17; Jn. 5:2-13; 11:1-46; Matt. 9:18-26). Christ is the perfect “template” of a “PERSONAL EVANGELIST” in this chapter: (1) he loved the souls of people with a passion that put them before everything else in his life—even eating; (2) he was prepared—knew his “prospect”—knew his message; (3) he was unselfish in his vision of the harvesting—he would gladly sow where others would reap. EVERY CHRISTIAN CAN DO THIS!

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 5:1-47

Jesus was in Jerusalem probably at Passover time. He went to the “pool by the Sheep Gate, called in Hebrew Bethzatha or Bethesda” which had 5 porticoes. Two modern “pools” have been designated Bethesda by archaeologists: (a) modern “Pool of Lady Mary” to the north of the temple complex; (b) or, modern “Virgin’s Pool” to the south of the temple complex. All the best and most ancient Greek mss. (including the best Codex of all, Bodmer II) omit 5:3b-4 “...waiting for the moving of the water; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water: whoever stepped in first after the troubling of the water was healed of whatever disease he had.” Knowing the way water flowed into those ancient pools from aqueducts coming into the city 15-20 ft. above ground, down into aqueducts underground and into the pool, it is possible that most of them would have a natural syphon effect that would make them bubble like a modern “sauna.” Whatever the case, there were throngs of people in the pool and throngs at the side of the pool, invalids, blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been an invalid for 38 years. He could not even crawl down to the pool and throw himself into it—nor could he get anyone else to throw him into it! So, with Jesus having to step over and around scores of people lying there sick, probably pleading with him to help them, WHY DID HE HEAL ONLY ONE MAN?! First, Jesus did not come the first time to “heal” every sick person on earth. If he had, he certainly missed lots of opportunities to do so. So, he made choices that only he could explain—and he chose not to explain this choice. Second, Jesus healed primarily to substantiate his claims to deity and to reinforce his demands for discipleship. The best way to do that would be to choose the most severe, helpless, and hopeless cases of human misery he could find to heal. This poor helpless, hopeless man, 38 years an invalid, certainly qualified. In doing so, no one could rationally question the legitimacy of the miraculousness of his healing powers. When his enemies couldn’t prove that his healing miracles were factual, they irrationally accused him of using satanic power to do it (e.g., Matt. 12:22-37; also Acts 4:16-17). If you can’t defeat a fact, go crazy and slander (i.e., argue from an ad hominem perspective). Who could have argued against Jesus’ divine powers here? As we shall find out, “the Jews” (probably Jewish authorities) certainly did—but only by ad hominem!

Surely Jesus knew about the absurdly strict (non-Biblical “traditions”) of the rabbis about the Sabbath! If he didn’t the Gospel record is a hoax! HE KNEW! Our only conclusion as to why he healed on a Sabbath, and John specifically notes it, is that Jesus deliberately chose to violate the traditions of the rabbis! Was Jesus was a trouble-maker? Was his ministry one round after another of protesting, rebelling, and agitating society? Seth Wilson, Dean Emeritus of Ozark Christian College, has an essay in his book, Learning From Jesus, pub. by College Press, entitled, “Controversies and Objections in Jesus’ Ministry.” I counted 41 specific controversial confrontations between Jesus and those who opposed him and objected to his ministry. In a 3 ½ year ministry, that’s a lot of “controversial confrontations”—it’s about one a month! Any modern preacher would either leave his pulpit

or be removed from it by his elders long before 41 controversies! 5 of those controversies were specifically over healing on the Sabbath. The Pharisees and scribes had deified (made into a god) their “traditions” (Matt. 15:1-9; Mk. 7:1-13). They had a list of 39 things prohibited on the Sabbath and not one that was permitted (except that scribes and Pharisees could get one of their animals out of a ditch if necessary to save it). They were worshiping an “idol” of their own making. The OT law never prohibited doing good on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:9-14; Mk. 3:1-6; Lk. 6:6-11). In fact, the law of Moses provided that people should do acts of holiness and mercy because the Sabbath was God’s way to give a spiritually immature people: (a) an opportunity to exercise complete trust in God (Ex. 16:22-29); (b) an opportunity for humans to experience a “sanctified” life (Ex. 20:8ff; Lev. 16:31); (c) an opportunity to turn away from selfishness and learn to “give” to God (Num. 28:9ff); (d) an opportunity for humans to do good to fellow human beings (Ex. 23:12ff; Deut. 5:12-15). JESUS NEVER “STIRRED UP TROUBLE.” HE ALWAYS CHOSE DELIBERATELY TO TEACH AND DO THE TRUTH! In a fallen world that kind of intense commitment and action will attract controversy and opposition! If ever he was to reach the calloused, carnal, hell-bound hearts of the Jewish rulers he would have been an iconoclast (a destroyer of idols), focusing on the idolatrous nature of their anti-Scriptural “traditions.” SO HE “BEARDED THE LIONS IN THEIR DEN.”

Jews were commanded in the OT to execute the death penalty on those who blasphemed (“cursed”) God; blasphemy was a capital crime in Israel (Lev. 24:10-16). Jesus warned the Pharisees they were in danger of “cursing—blaspheming” God by attributing to the devil the very evident work of the Holy Spirit of God when he cast out demons (Matt. 12:31-32). What Jesus said about himself WOULD have been blasphemy were it not true — he was blaspheming God (in the eyes of the Jews) by making a “man” equal with God! Perhaps Paul in calling himself “the foremost of sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15) is saying that at one time he “blasphemed” God by “cursing” Christ and Christians! These Jews were priding themselves in setting out to do God a service (Jn. 16:2). Of course, when Jesus claimed to be “equal with God” what he said was TRUE! Therefore, the Jews were WRONG in accusing him of blasphemy, and thus very wrong in seeking to kill him. They were planning on killing GOD and refusing to acknowledge their wicked blindness! Indeed, people do get that angry and blind today when Christians say (especially in Islamic countries) Jesus is God! Modern Jews would consider it blasphemy to call Jesus, God, and in modern Israel, Christians are subtly and slyly persecuted. Many Hindi sects will kill Christians today because they believe Jesus to be God. It has been happening in America as well!! Jews were constantly haranguing Jesus demanding “authority” for his words and actions (Matt. 21:23) and demanding that he show “signs” of his Messiahship. If the Gospel records are accurate (and all honest historical judgment insists they are) Jesus gave more than adequate “signs” of his “authority” to validate his claims! He was NOT a blasphemer.

Jesus claims for himself the honor anyone would give to Almighty God, the Creator. He claims to have authority to raise the dead and give life to whom he will and not give life to whom he will not; he claims to have authority to make all judgment; he claims equal honor (“weightiness”) with God—which, in effect, is a claim to BE GOD! No human being, in their

right mind, should ever dare to make such a claim, UNLESS THEY CAN PROVE THE CLAIM WITH SUPERNATURAL, DIVINE, “SIGNS!” This is what Jesus did! There’s no middle ground here—either Jesus IS WHO HE CLAIMED TO BE—GOD INCARNATE—OR HE IS A RAVING MANIAC! The ISSUE is, therefore, are the records written in what we call “The New Testament” acceptably authentic, historical, accurate, and transmitted to us, 2000 years after the originals were written by, God’s-Holy-Spirit-directed-human-hands!!! As we would say today, “Is the New Testament inspired from God and inerrant—or is it mythological misrepresentation????!!! John’s vision of heaven’s THRONE (Rev. 5:13-14) concludes, “And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all therein saying, ‘To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb (Jesus Christ) be blessing and honor and glory and might for ever and ever!’ And the four living creatures said, ‘Amen!’ and the elders fell down and worshiped.” Paul wrote, “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, 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.” (Phil. 2:9-11). There are so many paeans of praise and honor and glory to Jesus Christ in the NT that we can’t reference them all here! Human language is inadequate to express the honor which rightfully belongs to and should be accorded to Jesus Christ by all human beings. Nowhere in the OT or NT are we told to “worship the Holy Spirit.”

Notice, Jesus qualified the “dead” who would hear his voice in both 5:25 and 5:28. In 5:25 the Greek phrase, *erchetai hora kai nun estin hote oi nekroi akousousin tes phones tou huiou tou theou kai oi akousantes zesousin*, literally translated would be somewhat like this—“it is coming, an hour, and now it is here, when the dead will hear the voice of the son of the God and those having heard will live.” I have emphasized, “now it is here” to show that Jesus does not mean in this phrase the day of judgment. Before Jesus said this, his disciples were immersing for remission of sins more penitent believers than John the Baptist (Jn. 3:25-30; 4:1-3). I am personally persuaded that those who immersed followers of both Jesus and John the Baptist who remained alive on the Day of Pentecost and thereafter would need to be immersed again, under the authority of Jesus’s death and resurrection Great Commission, i.e., “all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth...” (some were, you know, Acts 19:1-7). But, anyone who heard the message of Jesus, or John the Baptist, and was immersed by one of their disciples, and died before the Day of Pentecost, was forgiven, saved, and sanctified, and went to heaven. After all, Jesus promised the believing, penitent, thief on the cross he would wake up in Paradise because of his faith and repentance and we do not know whether or not (he may have been) he had been immersed by either John or Jesus’s disciples. The “dead” Jesus refers to here are those who are “dead and dying in their sins” (see John 8:24-31). There are billions yet today who are “dead and dying in their sins” (Lk. 15:24; Rom. 6:20-23; 7:9-13; Gal. 3:10-14; Eph. 2:1,5; Col. 2:13; 1 Tim. 5:6; 1 Pet. 4:6). Those “dead in sin” who heard Jesus’s message as he preached it, and were immersed for the remission of their sins, were “made alive or accounted as righteous” in anticipation of Jesus’s completed atonement—just as Abraham was (Gen. 15:6)—Abraham’s going to be in heaven, you know! Remember Lk. 16:16—John the Immerser’s mandate from God was the pre-emptory abrogation of the OT law as atonement for sin. After John, any Jew who wanted to be righteous before God for had to be immersed for

remission of sins!

In 5:28-29, the Greek phrase is, *erchetai hora en he pantes oi en tois mnemeiois akousousin tes phones autou kai ekporeusontai oi ta agatha poiesantes eis anastasin zoes, oi de ta phaula praxantes eis anastasin kriseos*. That's quite a long sentence, but it is very important. Literally it would be something like this: "It is coming, an hour, (Note: Jesus did not say here, "and now is") when all those in the tombs will hear the voice of him (the Son of God), those who righteously have done unto a resurrection of life, and those who wickedness have practiced unto a resurrection of judgment." THIS IS THE "SECOND RESURRECTION" AND THE "SECOND DEATH." People who read Revelation 20:5-6; 20:13-15 always want to know "If there is a first resurrection, where's the second; and if there's a second death, where's the first." WELL, THIS PASSAGE (and Rom. 6:1-5; Eph. 2:1-5; Col. 2:13) IN JOHN 5:19-28 CLEARS ALL THAT UP! The first resurrection is when a person believes, repents and is immersed for the forgiveness of sins and becomes a new creation (is born anew); the second resurrection will be the resurrection of the body at the one and only judgment day (cf. 1 Cor. 15). The second death is being eternally separated from God in hell; the first is the death in sin (see scrip. ref. in previous question). LET THE BIBLE INTERPRET THE BIBLE! FORGET ALL THOSE WILD AND ERRONEOUS HUMAN BOOKS ABOUT REVELATION AND THE SECOND COMING, AND LET JESUS TELL YOU WHAT THE NT MEANS! In this passage in John 5:19-28 Jesus clearly mentions TWO DIFFERENT resurrections to life, WHICH OCCUR AT DIFFERENT "TIMES." In John 8 Jesus talks about the "second death" as "dying in your sins." All those who "take part in the first resurrection, over such, the second death has no power."

To claim to be equal with God is either lunacy or extra-ordinarily incredible. A person who has always acted sanely and rationally in the past has to present some verifiable testimony to substantiate such claim, or be carted off to "the funny farm." I used to visit the State Hospital for the Insane at Camarillo, CA, with a friend of mine who worked there, and there was one fellow there who walked around claiming he was "God." But, of course, he was "out of his mind" and never offered any visible, corroborating testimony. Jesus was NEVER untrue when speaking of himself—because he never spoke of himself without backing his testimony with evidence! THAT IS WHAT HE IS SAYING HERE WHEN HE SAYS, "If I bear witness to myself, my testimony is not true...."—he means, "I have not exclusively borne witness to myself—I have lots of witnesses to corroborate my claims." Had Jesus gone about just claiming to be God in the flesh, or equal with God, the Jewish priesthood would have had a de facto case for blasphemy against him. Both OT and NT demands that every alleged crime or accusation against God and his "elect" be established at the "mouth of two or more witnesses" (Deut. 17:2-7; Num. 35:30; Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19) No one person could expect to prove a case on his testimony alone! Jesus would not violate that law! IF JESUS WAS TO CARRY OUT HIS PURPOSE AS A HUMAN BEING, HE HAD TO HAVE CORROBORATING TESTIMONY FOR HIS CLAIMS! HE COULD NOT (AND DID NOT) EXPECT ANY HUMAN BEING TO ACCEPT HIS CLAIMS ON HIS TESTIMONY ALONE (see Jn. 10:37-38)—IT WOULD NOT BE TRUE—VERIFIABLY TRUE!

Jesus' first** undeniable witness was John the Immerser (5:33-35). The Jewish religious rulers sent emissaries to John, who their people had declared "a prophet from God." John not only testified that he, John, was not the Messiah, but that one would come after him was the Messiah. And John didn't only testify, he made a prophecy about what would happen to signify who the Messiah was! John's prophecy came to pass, in the presence of many eyewitnesses, at the baptism of Jesus! Many hundreds of people saw the "dove" (Holy Spirit) descend and alight upon Jesus at his baptism and the same hundreds heard God speak from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The second** undeniable witness was "the works (miracles) the Father...granted him ("me") to accomplish (Greek phrase *gar erga ha dedoken moi ho pater hina teleioso*, lit. "for the works to do having been sent and are continuing to be sent me, by the father, in order to complete..."). Jesus simply makes reference to the miracles he had been sent to do, AND WAS DOING, "bear him witness that the Father had sent him." Nicodemus, one "ruler" of the Jews was convinced! So were the 12 apostles, Joseph of Arimathea, Mary, Martha and Lazarus, the thief on the cross, and lots of other Jews contemporary with Jesus. Rudolf Bultmann (I call him the "red-nosed theologian") once wrote, "It is impossible to use electric light and the wireless and to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time believe in the New Testament world of spirits and miracles." But, Dallas Willard, in his book, *Divine Discovery—Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*, (EVERY CHRISTIAN OUGHT TO READ THIS BOOK) replies: "The multitudes of theories, facts, and techniques that have emerged in recent centuries have not the least logical bearing upon the ultimate issues of existence and life....Quite simply...the main path of historical Christianity that sprang from him (Jesus), is essentially based upon the substantial reality of the spirit and of the spiritual world. They cannot be separated from it....Jesus knew how to transform the molecular structure of water to make it wine...to take a few pieces of bread and some little fish and feed thousands of people...create matter from the energy he knew how to access from 'the havens, right where he was...Surely one who could play on the energy/matter equation like that could do anything. Turn gravel into gold and pay off the national debt! Do you think he could get elected president or prime minister today?...He knew how to transform the tissues of the human body from sickness to health and from death to life. He knew how to suspend gravity, interrupt weather patterns, and eliminate unfruitful trees without saw or ax. He only needed a word. Surely he must be amused at what Nobel prizes are awarded for today....All these things show Jesus' cognitive and practical mastery of every phase of reality: physical, moral, and spiritual. He is Master only because he is Maestro. 'Jesus is Lord' can mean little in practice for anyone who has to hesitate before saying, 'Jesus is smart....He is not just nice, he is brilliant. He is the smartest man who ever lived. He is now supervising the entire course of world history (Rev. 1:5)." Our church should get two or three copies of Willard's book in its library so members can check it out and read it! The third** undeniable witness was the voice of God (the Father) which they had heard bearing witness to Jesus from heaven (Matt. 3:17; Mk. 1:11; Lk. 3:22—and later in Matt. 17:5-6; Mk. 9:7; Lk. 9:35; Jn. 12:28). John and Peter will both testify later in their preaching and writing that they "heard" God's voice bear witness to Jesus (2 Pet. 1:17-18; 1 Jn. 1:1-4). It wasn't just the apostles who heard God speak from heaven—some of the multitudes heard also. The fourth** undeniable witness to Jesus was the Scriptures ("Moses") i.e., the O.T. All the PROPHECIES fulfilled in Jesus (at his birth, his wisdom in the temple, his baptism, his

miracles) were witnesses that he was the MESSIAH promised in the O.T. His ultimate fulfillment of the O.T. was yet to occur, but enough fulfillment had already been seen by eyewitnesses to convince any honest, rational, sincere seeker for the truth. INDEED! JESUS HAD NO NEED, HIMSELF, TO “BEAR WITNESS TO HIMSELF!” FOUR UNDENIABLE, PHYSICAL, HISTORICAL AVAILABLE-TO-BE-EYE-BALL-WITNESSES ARE ENOUGH TO ESTABLISH ANY FACT, BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT IN ANY HUMAN COURT THEN OR NOW!!! And, anyone who had such testimony before them, sitting on any jury, would be guilty of dishonesty, perjury, lying, and ulterior motives to go against such evidence!

Anyone to have the love of God in them must “hear the truth (word), understand it, accept it, hold it fast, in an honest and good heart, and let it bring forth fruit with patience” (a combination of the gospel accounts of Jesus’s conclusion to the great Parable of the Sower, Matt. 13:23; Mk. 4:20; Lk. 8:15). John uses the negative particle with a present tense, active, verb, *ou pisteuete*, lit. “not now believing” to transmit Jesus’s accusation for the reason he said his Jewish adversaries did not have the love of God in them. In spite of all the undeniable witnesses (testimonies) to verify Jesus’s claims, his enemies were not believing him. To the contrary, it was well known by multitudes of Jews that these Jewish rulers would receive others who came to them with only their own testimony, (i.e., Herod, Caesar, Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate). What else is Jesus to conclude from such hypocrisy? AND WHAT ARE WE TO CONCLUDE ABOUT PEOPLE TODAY WHO DO THE VERY SAME THING? I quote again from Dallas Willard: “Our civilization is at present in the advanced stages of what Max Picard described as ‘the flight from God.’...There is, for example, no field of expertise in human affairs where interaction with God is a part of the subject matter or practice that must be mastered in order to be judged competent. This is true of chemistry and public administration, but it is also true of education, nursing, police work, and often, astonishingly, Christian ministry itself. It is true of marriage and parenting. Just observe how people are taught and certified or judged competent in any of these fields, and you will be staring the flight from God straight in the face....The ‘real’ world has little room for a God of sparrows and children. To it, Jesus can only seem ‘otherworldly’—a good-hearted person out of touch with reality...When this cheerleading approach to the ‘real world’ triumphs among those who profess Christ, they may then have faith in faith but will have little faith in God.” PEOPLE WHO CERTIFY EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN AND DISAVOW JESUS CHRIST AND THE BIBLE, DO NOT HAVE THE LOVE OF GOD AND HEAVEN (TRUTH) IN THEIR HEARTS! The conclusion is inevitably logical!

Jesus candidly said, “...you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God.” THEY DID NOT, WOULD NOT, BELIEVE IN JESUS’S CLAIMS BECAUSE DOING SO WOULD DE-GLORIFY THEM! They were more jealous of the “glory” they accorded one another than seeking to have God glorify them! They were guilty of “not having it altogether” (being stupid, unable to comprehend) just like the Corinthians (2 Cor. 10:12) who “measured themselves by themselves, and compared themselves with themselves.” Any human being whose craving is the glory of other human beings opposed to wanting God to glorify him, CAN ALWAYS FIND ANOTHER HUMAN

BEING BY WHICH TO COMPARE HIMSELF THAT WILL TEMPORARILY SATISFY THE CRAVING!—but human glorification, not being the ultimate glorification, soon loses its sheen and OTHER LESS GLORIOUS HUMANS HAVE TO BE FOUND FOR COMPARISON. What a miserable existence that must be! Envy and jealousy destroys the soul like cancer kills the body—any person who must always find his identity in being glorified by other human beings has no identity. Those who seek human applause as their goal will have it, but they won't have the ultimate applause of God—their identity will never be acknowledged in eternity by God!

If the Jews had believed Moses, they would have believed Jesus Christ—BUT THEY DIDN'T EVEN BELIEVE MOSES! (see Luke 16:29-31). They believed their rabbinical traditions RATHER THAN God's word from Moses! If they had believed Moses, they wouldn't have needed rabbinical traditions! That's precisely the problem with Roman Catholic papal tradition and Protestant denominational creeds today—they believe their "traditions and creeds" supercede the Bible if the two should ever seem contradictory! Our Restoration Movement (Christian Church) forefathers knew about this kind of resistance to the word of God ONLY as a rule of faith and practice. Mrs. Helen Johns loaned me a little autobiography of Rev. James B. Finley, entitled, Pioneer Life in The West, 1853, in which may be clearly seen the love of human creeds over the Bible-only by Protestant denominationalism. Rev. Finley was born a Presbyterian Calvinist migrating to Maysville (Mason Co.) KY with his parents, then to Burbon Co., KY, and later to Ohio. My Thurman ancestors, back to my gr.gr.gr.gr. grandfather William "Thoroughman" lived in Mason Co., KY, and became "New Lights" (i.e., members of the Barton W. Stone movement), later moving to Putnam, Co., IN, and then to Dallas Co., MO, and have been members of the "Christian Church" since Stone's "Cane Ridge revival." Finley says he renounced his faith in God and Christ because of the Calvinistic doctrine of irresistible election and irresistible damnation, until he attended the Cane Ridge Revival of 1801(Barton W. Stone, etal) and was "converted" He joined the Methodist Episcopal Church and was a circuit-riding preacher for many years on the American frontier. He says in his book, pp. 370-371: "Not long after the revival (Cane Ridge) commenced, several of the Presbyterian ministers renounced Calvinism, and being persecuted by their brethren, they left the Church and organized a new Presbytery, which was called the Springfield Presbytery (Barton W. Stone was the leader of this "revolt"). As is often the case with those who separate from the church because they judge it needs reformation in doctrine or discipline...they ran into gross errors and heresies, as was seen in their apology (argument) for renouncing the jurisdiction of the Synod...Methodists and Presbyterians both saw that an enemy had come in, and was sowing tares broadcast over the field, and they retired to their own stands (churches) and defended their own doctrines...The part which had separated were styled Newlights, but they have subsequently taken the name of Christian. In June, 1804, these preachers dissolved their Presbytery, and drew up a very curious paper, which they signed, entitled 'The last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery.'...Of the six ministers who signed this paper, two went back to the Presbyterian Church, three joined the Shakers, and one the Campbellites...They published to the world, in the paper...their belief; or, in other words, their non-belief...and started out on a crusade against all the Churches...This heresy spread and prevailed...It may seem strange that all grades of Arians and Socinians (under which the

Rev. Finley classified Stone's "Newlights") have adopted immersion as the only mode of baptism, and regard it as constituting a title to heaven." Barton W. Stone, when asked by the Presbytery (Synod) of Transylvania (Kentucky, Ohio and West Virginia frontier) whether he accepted the Westminster Confession, answered: "As far as I see it consistent with the word of God," and later withdrew from the Presbyterian Church, determined to be known by no other name than Christian, and to acknowledge no creed but the Bible. Stone later (1832) joined with Thomas and Alexander Campbell's Christian Association (to be called from then on—Disciples of Christ) which declared that "nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith, nor required of them as terms of communion, but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the Word of God...Where the Scriptures speak we speak, and where the Scriptures are silent we are silent." In an old book I have in my own library, The Pageant of America, Vol. Ten, American Idealism, by Luther

A Weigle, 1928, Yale Univ. Press, pp. 154-155, biographical vignettes of Barton W. Stone, and Thomas and Alexander Campbell appear, in which the author states, "The elder Campbell and Stone were the inevitable products of a time in which very great emphasis was placed upon denominational differences. They hoped to lead their fellow countrymen away from sectarian disputes and toward a spirit more nearly in harmony with that of the disciples whom Jesus gathered about him...There is a tragic irony in the fact that Stone and Campbell, seeking to rid Christendom of sects and divisive creeds, should have succeeded only in establishing additional denominations." I have put several adverse, hostile words in bold print to show how miscalculating and acrimonious denominationalists can be toward people like the God-loving, Christ-loving, people-loving, Bible-loving, Christian-unity loving Stone and Campbells (and James O'Kelly, Abner Jones, Elias Smith, "Raccoon" John Smith). Neither Stone nor the Campbells, et al., ever preached heresy, renounced their belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, taught that immersion (or any other Christian practice) constituted a title to heaven, or were against the other churches, or were enemies of Christ, or ever sowed tares, or ever intended to establish additional denominations! As for renouncing the jurisdiction of Synods, creeds, bishoprics, OR OTHER HUMAN INSTITUTIONS WHICH WOULD USURP THE RULE OF CHRIST AND HIS WORD, etc.—YES, GUILTY! If the denominationalists had believed Jesus, they would have believed Stone and the Campbells, et al. "He (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him all the fulness 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." Colossians 1:15-20

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 6:1-71

This is the beginning of the second year of Jesus Christ's public ministry on earth. It begins at Passover time. His first year and a half of ministry both in Galilee and Judea was extremely popular with the multitudes, and great crowds of "disciples" surrounded him wherever he traveled. A WHOLE YEAR OF MINISTRY (mainly in Galilee) intervenes between John chapter 5 and chapter 6—including controversies about the Sabbath (Matt. 12; Lk. 6); Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-6-7); raising a widow's dead son (Lk. 7); healing the demoniac at Gergesa (Matt. 8; Mk. 5; Lk. 8); Jesus' second visit to Nazareth (Matt. 13; Mk. 6); the twelve apostles sent out in pairs to preach (Matt. 10; Mk. 6; Lk. 9); and Herod's desire to have Jesus visit him (Matt. 14; Mk. 6; Lk. 9). The popularity of Jesus' ministry reached its climactic point at the feeding of the 5000! Jesus foresaw the crucial confrontation with the Jewish religious and political leaders would come about a year later at the "last Passover" he would spend with his chosen 12. He wanted time alone with the 12 to prepare them and himself for this imminent, traumatic climax to his earthly mission to try to steel the 12 against what they would consider "the collapse" of his mission and his frightening rejection and crucifixion. He hints about this in John 6:60-71. BUT HE COULDN'T GET AWAY FROM THE MULTITUDES. They saw the SIGNS (miracles) which he did (especially raising the dead and casting out demons)—they heard the great Sermon on "blessedness" for members of the "kingdom of heaven"—so they followed him (5000 men plus women and children—probably 10,000 people) up into the hills around the north-eastern corner of the Sea of Galilee. As your teacher I strongly encourage you to read thoroughly the parallels to this event in Matt. 14:13-21; Mk. 6:31-44; Lk. 9:11-17). Try to imagine what kind of disposition a crowd of people would be in who've walked at least 10 miles (probably more) up and down hills and valleys, without having eaten since breakfast, following a "certified" miracle-worker!! Most of them had probably forgotten about being hungry in their eagerness to see what other amazing "miracles" this Galilean rabbi might do! And did he ever amaze them with one!!! When it became late in the day, the 12 came to Jesus and said, "This is a lonely, uninhabited (no inns or grocery shops there) place, and the hour is late; send the crowds away to go into the villages to lodge and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to the disciples—looking directly at Philip—and asked how they (his disciples) were going to buy loaves, Mk. 6:38 (Gr. artous, the "loaf" at the Lord's Supper, Matt. 26:26; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23) so that those 10,000 people might eat. Philip (and all the 12 together), answered, "It would take 200 day's wages (200 denarii—about \$6000 U.S.—before taxes at minimum wage today) just to buy bread, and even then each one would have just a little!" Then Jesus said to the 12, "They need not go away; you twelve give them something to eat—how many loaves have you found?" They probably all thought to themselves, "This is preposterous!" They had found a young boy (who evidently was willing to share what he had) with 5 barley loaves and two fish—BUT WHAT WOULD THAT BE AMONG 10,000 PEOPLE?! This was a TEST, not just for Philip, but all the 12, as to their comprehension of, and faith in, the SOVEREIGNTY of Jesus over every realm of reality—physical and spiritual! Today, long-time Christians so

familiar with this text, register amazement that not one of the disciples could remember Jesus' previous demonstrations of his SOVEREIGNTY—even over demons and death! Why didn't they just say, "But Jesus, you have all power, YOU ARE SOVEREIGN LORD, you have the answer—feed them miraculously." But, pause for a moment and put yourself in their "sandals." Our first reaction would probably be one, like theirs, of "common sense" more than "faith."! Jesus' order, "You give them something to eat," was IRRATIONAL, IMPOSSIBLE, NON-SENSE in light of the circumstances! We are all much, much too prone to let physical mentality, or human finitude, rather than faith dictate our reactions to our circumstances. If you think the 12 were "foolish men and slow of heart to believe" here, remember, just a few weeks later (Matt. 15:32-39; Mk. 8:1-10), in the region of Decapolis, the 12 asked Jesus where they could get bread to feed 4000 men (besides women and children)! AND, just a week or so even later than this (Matt. 16:4-12; Mk. 8:13-21), they found themselves with only one loaf of bread left among them, while Jesus wanted them to listen to his warnings about the "leaven of the Pharisees & Sadducees"---but all they could think about was the physical bread. JESUS SAID TO THEM, "O MEN OF LITTLE FAITH...ARE YOUR HEARTS SO HARDENED...DO YOU NOT REMEMBER...DO YOU NOT YET UNDERSTAND?" HOW MANY TESTINGS FROM JESUS DOES IT TAKE TO GET US TO "PUT ALL OUR HUNGERING IN JESUS' BASKET?"

Well, it is physically impossible to feed 10,000 people with five small round loaves of bread and 2 fish! SO, IT'S EITHER A MIRACLE, OR THE APOSTLE JOHN IS A LIAR! Add up the evidence for and against the authenticity, historicity and the credibility of this Biblical text, and take your choice—a lie or the truth! As we've often said before, the Gospel of John is the most prolifically substantiated book of the Bible! It has the Bodmer II Papyrus (designated P66) (Greek) which dates back to A.D. 150-200 which is nearly a complete copy just as we have it in English—that's only 50-100 years after John wrote the original! NO OTHER WORK OF ANTIQUITY CAN MAKE THAT CLAIM. Then there's P52, a papyrus scrap of the Gospel of John even earlier than Bodmer II, which documents the existence of a copy to within a decade or two of when John wrote it. AND, there's all the testimony of Christian scholars (e.g., Polycarp A.D. 69-156, Ignatius 67-110, and Papias 70-115, all three pupils of the Apostle John, who testify to the historicity and authenticity of the apostle John's writings. Just try to find that kind of extant, scientific, in-the-hand, manuscript evidence for the authenticity of the works of Plato, Socrates, Julius Caesar, etc., etc., etc. IT CAN'T BE FOUND! But hardly anyone questions the historicity of those ancient writers! The bottom line is this: It is not WHETHER such a miracle could occur—it's DID IT OCCUR! A Sunday School teacher was trying to convince her class of children that there was no actual miracle performed by Jesus here at the sea of Galilee. "Children," she said, "you must realize that Jesus didn't actually provide bread and fish for the people to eat. They were really just filled by his teaching!" One bright lad revealed heaven-sought faith when he said, "But what about the twelve baskets left over, Teacher?" Actually they were 12 large baskets (Greek, kophinous, the word from which we get "coffin"). Any writer who had any "smarts" at all, who was writing about people "being filled with teaching," would not write that they "took up 12 large baskets full" left over! "Filled with teaching" is a beautiful theory murdered by the brutal facts! BREAD AND FISH FOR 10,000 PEOPLE HAPPENED— IT WAS A MIRACLE LIKE NO ONE OTHER THAN GOD HIMSELF COULD ACCOMPLISH!

Jesus proved himself able instantaneously, MIRACULOUSLY, without any hocus-pocus, to feed 10,000 hungry people. Could he be elected President of the U.S.? Think what Jesus could do for the Social Security program for the “Baby-boomers” with just a word! No taxes, no new government bureau, no politic-speak (promises, promises), no coercion, no sleight-of-hand—HE JUST LOOKED UP TO HEAVEN, GAVE THANKS, BLESSED THE 5 LOAVES AND 2 FISH, AND DID IT! No magical words were said, no offerings taken, and no going from door-to-door to get others to take in the hungry and feed them. They ate right there, on the mountain side, and they ate as much as they wanted and were all filled to satisfaction! AND STILL THEY HAD A HUGE SURPLUS! Each apostle picked up a “coffin” full of “left-overs.” Why should we wonder that the multitudes wanted to “seize” (Greek, harpazein, “snatch, capture, take by force”) him and force him to be their king? They followed him back the 10-15 miles from the sea-side hills to the city of Capernaum and flocked into a synagogue to find him. FEW HUMAN BEINGS WOULD BE ABLE TO RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO “SURRENDER TO THE WISHES OF THE ELECTORATE” WITH 10,000 VOTERS THIS EAGER! But the question is: What KIND of king did they intend to make of him? It is clear that they wanted to enthrone him as some sort of “automatic dispenser of bread and fish” (John 6:26)—and that’s ALL they wanted from him. They certainly did not want any sermons from him about the spiritual “BREAD OF LIFE” (i.e., his word) having to be ingested into their souls! They were after the bread you eat with your teeth! Jesus later said tenderly in his sermon at Capernaum (6:24ff), “I offer you the ‘bread’ of God for your souls.” But these multitudes (most probably poor and often hungry) could only think or relate to physical needs! They proved later (at the end of this impromptu picnic) that they DID NOT WANT HIM TO BE “KING” OF THEIR ENTIRE EXISTENCE—SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL!

Jesus escaped from this materialistic, clamoring multitude by going off alone into the hills. The disciples got into a boat and started for Capernaum. A mighty storm came up, the disciples could hardly row against the wind and waves; they had about 8-10 miles yet to row to get to Capernaum. Suddenly they saw Jesus coming, walking on the sea toward them. They were scared! He told them not to be afraid and walked up, got into the boat, and the boat was immediately at the seashore at Capernaum. Another miracle! The next morning the people looking for Jesus realized he had gone toward Capernaum without his 12 disciples and got into the boats left there and headed for where Jesus was. When they found him he said, “Verily, verily, I say to you, you seek me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.” The Greek word translated “fill” is echortasthete, means literally, “to give fodder to animals.” They could not think of their souls for thinking of their stomachs (almost like the gluttonous Cretans, Titus 1:12). They didn’t even care about the miraculousness of what Jesus had done—all they could think of was stuffing their bellies! You see, it’s not just rich people who are carnally-minded—some poor people are that way, too. Jesus said, “Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food that endures unto eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you; for on him has God the Father set his seal!” In other words, “Can’t you see from the signs I’ve done right before your eyes that I am able to give you much more than bread and fish? If I can provide from nothing everything you need for your physical life, I can also provide for your eternal life! God has set his seal on ME!” Did Jesus mean that people should not work to provide food for their tables? NO! THAT WOULD CONTRADICT THE REST OF WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD HAS

SAID IN THE BIBLE (Gen. 3:19; Proverbs, 1 Thess. 4:10-12; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:8). The Holy Spirit of God does not contradict himself. What did Jesus mean, then—isn't salvation by grace and not by works? How can "faith" or "believing" be a work? William Barclay said, "Faith means a certain relationship with God...a relationship in which we give God the trust and the obedience and the submission which naturally arise from this new relationship." Believing is a matter of thinking and choosing (willing). "Faith comes by hearing and hearing (obeying) by the word of God." **GOD DOES NOT USURP THE AWESOME POWER OF FREE-WILL WITH WHICH HE CREATED MAN.** In the realm of cognition (thinking) and ethics (morality) man is free to choose, to decide, to will, and to act as he wishes! So, thinking, choosing (willing) and believing are works. Belief becomes a work (in every facet of life) when man submits his will to what he knows and thinks because he will inevitably act accordingly. Faith in Christ becomes a work when people submit their wills to what they know of the revealed will of God and act in accord with the commandments of the will of God. No better explanation can be found in the relationship between faith and works than that of James 2:14-26—trust in Christ must be manifested by obedience to the commands of Christ! Disobedience to what one knows about the commands of Christ is unbelief. Dallas Willard commenting on Jesus' statements in Matt. 5:17-20, says in his book, *The Divine Conspiracy*, "God's law is important because the law is good. It is right for human life. And the presence of the kingdom brings us all that is right for human life... Remarkably, almost one sixth of the entire Discourse (i.e., Sermon on the Mount fifteen of ninety-two verses) is devoted to emphasizing the importance of actually doing what it says. Doing and not just hearing and talking about it is how we know the reality of the kingdom and integrate our life into it...If people in our Christian fellowships today were to announce that they had decided to keep God's law, we would probably be skeptical and alarmed. We probably would take them aside for counseling...we would be sure nothing good would come of it. We know that one is not saved by keeping the law and can think of no other reason why one should try to do it...How to combine faith with obedience is surely the essential task of the church as it enters the twenty-first century." op.cit., pp. 136,137,140. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said of the Gospels, "The only proper response to this word which Jesus brings with him from eternity is simply to do it." **WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS COMPELLED BY WHOLE-HEARTED FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST ARE NOT INIMICAL OR OPPOSED TO ONE ANOTHER!** (2 Cor. 5:14-21). Therefore, grace and works are not antithetical! Jesus will say it even more plainly in John chapters 14-16—"If we love him, we will keep his commandments."

"Bread" was a metaphor (i.e., symbol) for "food, nourishment, source of life" in ancient times—both Biblical and non-Biblical. **IT STILL IS A METAPHOR TODAY FOR "LIFE."** In 6:51ff Jesus was saying, "I have been sent down from heaven into a fleshly body to become "LIFE" (ETERNAL LIFE) for the whole world." He is pre-figuring or pre-metaphoring, his **VICARIOUS ATONEMENT FOR THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD** (2 COR. 5:21). This should not have been as figuratively indistinct to the mind of Jesus' audience as it appears to be. God had already said, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Deut. 8:3). It should not have been foreign to their thinking that God would send the Messiah in human flesh to atone for sin (Isa. 53:1-12) and become the "life-giving manna from heaven" (Isa. 55:1-3 compare with Acts

13:13:34). But, as we've pointed out before in 6:26, they were more dumb than oxen; oxen do know where to get properly feed (Isa. 1:2-3). This multitude was like a herd of cows or sheep clamoring for physical "fodder." It was all they could think about. They had no idea that it was "spiritual" food they really needed. Jesus wanted to focus their minds of the spiritual life which lasts forever and offer them heaven's Manna!

With "dumb animals" one has to proceed with something shocking and sometimes even hurtful just to get their attention. Do human beings ever sink to the level of animalistic behavior? Just read Luke 15:11-16; Romans 1;22-32; 2 Pet. 2:12,22! David had written many verses in the Psalms about God's word being spiritual sustenance (e.g., Psa. 19:7-10; 119:57,103,131, etc.). Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found, and I ate them, and thy words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart;" (Jer. 15:16). Ezekiel was told to "eat" God's word (Ezek. 3:1). It should not have been bizarre to the Jewish way of thinking! Even today, we talk about "eating our own words," or in admonishing someone else we say, "chew on that for a while." When Jesus said "flesh" (Greek, sarx, "body, flesh") he meant he was offering his life as a perfect, sinless human, working out God's plan, for the atonement of human sin, and the redemption of human life for eternal presence with God! All of that is prophesied in the Old Testament. Jesus expected his disciples to know and believe that! (Lk. 24:25-27)! SO, WHAT DOES JESUS EXPECT OF PEOPLE IN THE 20th- & 21st CENTURIES WHICH NOW HAVE THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES FROM WHICH TO KNOW ABOUT THE "BREAD" GIVEN FOR ETERNAL LIFE???? The culminating works of Jesus to become the Bread of Life, were his incarnate life on earth, his atoning death upon the cross and his resurrection from the dead (see all the sermons in Acts plus Rom. 3:21-26; 1 Cor. 1:18-25; 15:1-58; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; Gal. 2:20-21; Eph. 1:2-10; 5:2; Phil. 2:1-11; Col. 1:13-14, etc., etc.). To believe (i.e., trust and obey) is the procedure by which WE eat the Bread of Life. Immersion in water (baptism) is the definitive act where human beings appropriate the blood ("flesh") of Christ—his vicarious atonement—for sin.

John 6:63 is the KEY to this entire discourse on the Bread of Life! Albert Barnes, in his commentary on the Gospel of John, paraphrased this verse: "My doctrine is spiritual; it is fitted to quicken (make alive) and nourish the soul. It is from heaven. Your doctrine or your views are earthly, and may be called flesh, or fleshly, as pertaining only to the support of the body. You place a great value on the doctrine that Moses fed the body; yet that did not permanently profit, for your fathers are dead. You seek also food from me, but your views are gross and earthly." William Hendricksen paraphrased: "My flesh as such cannot benefit you; stop thinking that I was asking you literally to eat my body or literally to drink my blood. It is my spirit, my person, in the act of giving my body to be broken and my blood to be shed, that bestows and sustains life, even everlasting life." JESUS IS NOT TALKING ABOUT THE COMMUNION SERVICE HERE. The Roman Catholic Church has taken this text and twisted it into the absurdity of the "mass" and the doctrine called "transubstantiation" when, allegedly, the wafer and the wine, at the "elevation of the host," (when the priest prays) miraculously becomes literally the "body and blood" so that Jesus is sacrificed all over again at every "mass" (see Roman Catholicism, Loraine Boettner, 1962, Presbyterian & Reformed Pub. Co., Philadelphia, pp. 168-195, chapter entitled, "The Mass."). This flies in the face of Scripture

(e.g., Heb. 9:26-28; 10:10,12,14,18, etc.).

The Greek verb in 6:66 is *apelthon*, aorist, indicative active, and may mean, they not only ceased “following” Jesus, but they “gave up what they had gained with him, and ...went back to their fleshly-oriented way of living.” It certainly means that they did more than quit following him—they went backward, away from him! Before many of this multitude had called him “Rabbi” (6:25,34), but now they disclaimed him, as unfit to be heard! They had attached themselves to his “bread-wagon”—they had put their hands to the plow with out first counting the cost! Having rejected the “Manna from heaven” they judged themselves unfit for the kingdom of heaven (Lk. 6:62). THE SAME ATTITUDE PREVAILS ON A LARGE SCALE TODAY. The Lookout, 12-5-1999, in an article by Craig Thompson, we were informed: “...the United States...is an island of wealth in a world where three billion people, over half the entire population, live on less than two dollars a day—and 1.3 billion of them live on less than one dollar a day. As disciples of Jesus, we must let go of what he has put into our hands for others...The richest 20% of the world’s population consumes 86% of the world’s goods and services; 8.8 million people die each year from hunger or malnutrition; 27% of the total food supply in the United States is wasted; North Americans consume 393 times as much energy per person as the average Ethiopian; Americans and Europeans spend 17 billion dollars on pet food annually, more than the additional funds needed to provide basic health care and nutrition for all people in developing countries for one year; 125 million children in the world do not have access to primary schools; on average, Americans who attend church each week give 3.3% of their income to churches and other charitable causes; 70% of Americans believe that their financial status is a reflection of what God thinks of them.” The shocking one is that almost 1/3 of the total food supply in the United States is wasted each year! In the Galilean hills Jesus fed 10,000 hungry people miraculously, but didn’t want a crumb wasted and instructed his disciples to go around and pick up the “left-overs.” The above statistics clearly show that many Americans (and Canadians, Europeans, Asians, Africans—actually, the vast majority of the whole world) is in hot pursuit of the “fodder” of the physical life and TURNING THEIR BACKS on the “Bread from Heaven.”

What were the thinking and choosing processes going on in the minds (hearts) of the 12 disciples? Were they also on the verge of deserting the Lord? Indeed not! Peter, probably because of his age and personality, speaks for the 12 and it is a classic confession full of faith and devotion to Jesus. Although probably puzzled and distressed by the mysterious words of Jesus and the wholesale renunciation of the multitudes—those ingrates!—Peter is convinced that Jesus alone has the words leading unto eternal life. The Greek verbs *pepisteukamen* and *engokamen* are both perfect, indicative, active. Perfect tense in Greek means something has been done and is continuing to be done. The 12 had believed and were continuing to believe, and had come to know and were continuing to come to know THAT JESUS WAS THE “HOLY ONE OF GOD”—THE ONLY ONE WHO HAD THE “WORDS” FOR ETERNAL LIFE! We must “know” the Lord before we can believe in him. Faith is not born of “feelings.” We must have knowledge of his life, his claims, and the evidence by which he establishes the validity of his claims. We must then weigh this

evidence and make a decision as to whether we shall trust him or reject him. This does not mean, however, that we are to reject Jesus and his words when we cannot understand every thing he says. R. C. Foster wrote, "When we meet things in Scripture irreconcilable with our reason, what should be our conclusion? Peter has summed up the true attitude of the Christian. God has not promised to satisfy our curiosity or all our intellectual problems, but he rather demands that we walk by faith when we cannot see the way. We should use our reason and all intellectual gifts in endeavoring to understand, but we should not desert Christ because we find difficulties. If we cast aside the Bible just where is the Book of God to be found that will lead us to eternal life?" NOWHERE!

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 7:1-52

The “Feast of Tabernacles was to be celebrated, in Jerusalem, by every grown Israelite male on the 15th day of the 7th month (our September-October). The feast lasted 8 days and the people dwelt in “booths” made entirely of fresh branches of fruit and palm trees. In Hebrew it is called, Soukoth, “booths” and in Greek it is skenopegia,, “tents.” For the Israelite it was a more joyous festival than Passover or Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). It was to commemorate the dwelling of the ancient Israelites (in “booths”) after their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. It was to remind them of the fatherly care of God in the wilderness journey of their forefathers. It was also the festival at which they celebrated the ingathering of the labor of their fields. So, it was sometimes called, “The Feast of Tents, The Feast of Ingathering, the Festival of Jehovah, or simply, “The Festival” (cf. Ex. 23:16; Lev. 23:33-44; Num. 29). Trumpets were blown each day; on a certain day of the feast there was a ceremony of the outpouring of water drawn from the pool of Siloam to commemorate the miraculous water from the rock at Meribah and to look forward to the outpouring of God’s Spirit upon Israel; the great candelabra (four of them so large that ladders were used to light them) were lighted and the light from these lamps illuminated the whole city at night. There is no doubt that Jesus was referring to some of these rituals as he taught during the feast concerning the Holy Spirit, the Water of Life, and the Light of the World. For the spiritually-minded Jew, “Tabernacles” should have been a typical, prophetic foreshadowing of the Messianic age—Zechariah 14:16-21, taken in the context of Zechariah, chapters 9 through 14, leaves no doubt about this!

THE PREJUDICE OF JESUS’ FAMILY WAS WORLDLY-MINDEDNESS! Jesus was in Galilee, staying clear of Judea, because the Jewish rulers in Judea were plotting to kill him (John 5). But Jesus’ brothers “threw down the gauntlet” challenging him,(I’m paraphrasing here) “Leave Galilee and go to Judea in order that your ‘followers’ may see the deeds you are doing. What man tries to hide his deeds in secret if his desire is to be known everywhere?” The challenge of Jesus’ (half) brothers was filled with sarcasm because they didn’t believe in him. They had prejudicially decided that Jesus wasn’t smart enough to be the Messiah or he wouldn’t be hanging out in Galilee, scared to go to Jerusalem! Now that’s a startling statement! Here were young men (Jesus was Mary’s first born) born and reared for 30 years in the same home places with Jesus in Nazareth & Capernaum, and they didn’t believe in him! WHY? The clue to answer that is in 7:6-7. Jesus replied to his half-brothers, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify of it that its works are evil.” Jesus is saying, “My time to make my public condemnation of carnal Judaism has not yet arrived. You boys go ahead to the feast—you are of the same mind-set as the Jews who will be there—fleshly. The worldly-minded people who go to celebrate the coming Messianic age will not hate you—you will fit right in with the rest of the crowds. If I were to go and publicly castigate the corrupt Jewish religion, the worldly-minded would react violently toward me and it is not yet time for that to happen!”

In other words, his brothers were just like the multitudes he had fed bread and fish—they were looking for a PHYSICALLY-ORIENTED KING (MESSIAH). Jesus' words here are filled with pathos, not malice, for his brothers. It must have hurt Jesus deeply that his own family did not understand and believe. They had plenty of evidence (miracles they undoubtedly witnessed)—which would include the testimony of their mother about Jesus' miraculous birth! Of course, Jesus did go to this "Tabernacles" and that visit is recorded in John chapters 7,8,9 and one-half of 10. SO, IS JESUS CONTRADICTING HIMSELF? Only in the RSV and ASV. Both the KJV and the NIV have Jesus saying in 7:8, "I am not yet going up to this Feast..." While some ancient mss. omit "yet" the best and most ancient mss. we have of John's Gospel, Bodmer II (P66) as well as P75 (both of which date ca. A.D. 200), has the Greek preposition indicating "time" *ouk hupo* "not yet" in place of merely *ouk* "not" in verse 8. "Yet" is the best reading, also, because it fits the context best since Jesus did go up to "this" feast of Tabernacles. One liberal German theologian, apparently unaware of the reading in P66, said of this passage in John, "Jesus Christ did of set purpose utter a falsehood." But now the ancient manuscripts verify what the context demands! JESUS DIDN'T LIE! He was going to the feast, but not "yet." After the resurrection of Jesus, at least one of his brothers, James, repented and became an apostle (Gal. 1:19) as well as the (traditional) author of the book of James, and probably a "leader" of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 15:13ff). We hope more of them did!

FEAR OF OSTRACIZATION WAS THE PREJUDICE OF THE MULTITUDES.

Jesus waited until his brothers had departed for Jerusalem, then, beckoning his 12 apostles, he set out for the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, going through Samaria again (see Lk. 9:51ff). This time he ran into some hostile Samaritans. Jesus went to Jerusalem, *ouphaneros alla hos en krupto*, lit. "not openly and publicly, but privately—secretly." The Greek word *krupto* is the word from which we get, "crypt, cryptographic, cryptic," and means "hidden." Jesus "slipped up on the crowds" who were "looking for him at the feast, saying, 'Where is he?'" Remember, now, we are well into the third year of Jesus' public ministry. Those Galilean people who had seen and benefitted from so much of his ministry, and probably some of the Judeans who had also seen some of his miraculous ministry, had been talking to one another over citrus, matzoh, latkes (i.e., fried sweet-potato-patties) and goat's milk, were wondering why the fabulous, spectacular rabbi from Nazareth-Capernaum hadn't shown up at this most joyous of all Jewish festivals! Their opinions of Jesus clashed. Some said, "He is a good man!" He had healed lepers, cast out demons, fed the hungry, raised the dead, made the lame to walk, so he is a good man. Others said, "No! He is leading the people astray!" But he had also expelled from the temple the exploiting merchandisers, been friendly with a Samaritan woman, touched unclean lepers, said he could forgive sins, healed at least twice on the Sabbath day; healed a Roman centurion's servant, condemned the impenitence of major Jewish cities, ran 2000 hogs into the sea of Galilee and drowned them, and tongue-lashed the Pharisees and Sadducees and challenged their authority. THERE HAD BEEN "FALSE MESSIAHS" IN PAST JEWISH HISTORY (Theudas and Judas, Acts 5:36-37). The Jewish people were very jittery about "latching onto" those who went around claiming to be their "Messiah." It was a subject no Roman procurator of Judea wanted his emperor back in Rome to hear. When the occupation troops became nervous, the Jewish rulers became nervous—and their misgivings would naturally

circulate among the masses! “YET FOR FEAR OF THE JEWS NO ONE SPOKE OPENLY OF HIM.” (7:13). The Jewish multitudes had prejudged Jesus as a “taboo” subject! Fear prejudged their minds and morals. They had not the courage to speak their convictions openly! They were afraid they would be ex-communicated from their synagogues (Jn. 9) and that would make them community-outcasts!

Jesus went up (geographical elevation) to Jerusalem about the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles (sometime in late September or very early October). He went to the temple and taught with such wisdom it made the crowds “marvel” and ask one another, “How is it that this man has learning (Greek, grammata, Latin, grammatica; French, gramaire, literally, i.e., “letters,”). As when he was 12 years of age, Jesus exhibited an awesome (supra-natural) knowledge and wisdom! This was an open invitation to Jesus to make his claim to be equal with God and he took advantage of it by replying, “My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me; if any man’s will is to do his will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority” (7:16-17). There is a MORAL element to truth as well as a cognitive element. Jesus is not talking about a pragmatic approach to truth here. To learn the truth, a person must WANT THE TRUTH! To learn God’s will, a person must WANT GOD’S WILL! We’ve already been told in Jn. 3:18-21 there are some so perverse they do NOT WANT the truth (Rom. 1:18-32; 2 Thess. 2:10-12; 2 Pet. 3:5). There must be a desire or disposition to do truth and goodness. The person who “wills to do God’s will” is the person of the “good and honest heart” (Lk. 8:15). Hendriksen in his New Testament Commentary, Gospel of John, says, “The fundamental relationship...is therefore, (a) knowledge, (b) love, (c) obedience.” Whoever loves truth, will search for the truth, and finding it, recognize it and obey (live according to) it. NEITHER THE THINGS OF THE WORLD NOR FEAR OF ANY THING OR PERSON WILL DETER THE ONE WHO “WILLS TO DO GOD’S WILL.” There is NO POSSIBILITY that a person who DOES NOT WANT TO DO GOD’S WORD SHALL EVER FIND GOD’S WILL! Such a person could read the Bible through 100 times and never find God’s will if he doesn’t want to do so! THEREFORE, OUR FUNDAMENTAL, CRUCIAL, CONCERN IN EVANGELISM IS TO GET PEOPLE TO WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH! And much of that will necessarily focus on convincing people they are LOST without Jesus Christ. That was Jesus’ focus at this Feast (Jn. 7:24; 7:32-36; 7:37; 8:31-35; 8:34-36; 8:41-47; 8:51; 9:35-41; 10:-1-18).

The Greek word dikaian, is translated “righteous” in KJV and ASV, and translated “right” in RSV and NIV. Both “righteous” and “right” mean the same thing in a moral or legal sense. The same Greek word is used in 1 Tim. 1:9 where Paul says the “law” is not for the “right” (or “just”) or law-abiding, but for the “non-law-abiding.” The Greek word dikaian was used by the Greeks as a legal term meaning “justice” in Greek law. John is telling us Jesus used the word in the context of his discussion about the “righteous will (law) of God.” These Jews were pre-judging Jesus according to their traditions rather than what the law of Moses really said about the Sabbath. IT WAS “RIGHT” AND LAWFUL TO DO GOOD ON THE SABBATH. These very same Jews who wanted to kill Jesus for healing on the Sabbath were very orthodox about circumcising a Jewish male if the 8th day of his birth fell on a Sabbath day in order to “keep the Sabbath.” Even these Jews, by their actions, admitted there were

deeds and doctrines HIGHER than the Sabbath itself! But when it came to what Jesus did, they BETRAYED THEIR PREJUDICE, by wanting to kill him for healing a man on the Sabbath. It was not just that their reasoning was illogical—THEIR MOTIVES WERE PERVERSE AND “UN-RIGHT.” Despite the irrationality of their thinking and the immorality of their own deeds, they had simply WILLED to pronounce Jesus demon-possessed and a law-breaker. Prejudice is a matter of biased-preference! Those who are ignorantly biased or prejudiced should, and can, repent once they are informed of the right—those who are informed, knowledgeable, and have been given evidence of the right but choose to remain prejudiced, are unforgivable! This was the crucial difference between King Saul and King David!

There seems to have been a popular theory in vogue then that the Messiah, when he came, would appear suddenly and no one would know where he came from. We have cited the excerpt from Suetonius' Lives of the Twelve Caesars about the “great world leader who was to come from the east.” And there are passages in Jewish apocryphal (spurious) books and rabbinical writings such as this extract: “A roe (deer) appears and then is hid; so the Redeemer shall first appear and then be concealed, and then again be concealed and then again appear. So the Redeemer shall first appear and then be hid, and then, at the end of forty-five days, shall reappear, and cause manna to descend”—Notes on the New Testament, Luke and John, by Barnes, 1956, Baker, p. 258. The prophets, other than Micah, (Isa. 53:2,8; Dan. 7:13; Mal. 3:1) were somewhat obscure about WHERE the Messiah would originate! Perhaps the populace got their “theory” that “no one would know” Messiah's origin from these prophets! It is difficult to know whether Jesus was using irony by asking a question, as the RSV punctuates 7:28-29, or whether he was making a declarative sentence, as KJV, ASV, and NIV put it—“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.” Either way, Jesus is declaring that these crowds of people, including their religious leaders, SHOULD know that he was sent from God. Jesus was not averse to using irony (Lk. 13:31-32; Mk. 7:9). Jesus accused some standing there that “they did not know God.” That was a serious charge! Weren't they all there to worship God at the Feast of Tabernacles? Jesus had said the same thing of them at Passover (Jn. 5:37-44) and will say it again and again (Jn. 8:19,55, etc.). They did not know God for the same reason the Gentiles of Rom. 1:25,28, did not know God—THEY DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW GOD(i.e., HAVE GOD MESSING AROUND IN THEIR LIVES)! And if they didn't want God messing with their lives, they didn't want Jesus messing with them! Human nature changes not—unless it WANTS TO!

Yes! The Holy Spirit was given in the Old Testament. DAVID SAID HE HAD THE SPIRIT OF GOD...he prayed that God would not take his Spirit from him (Psa. 51:11). Isaiah said God had put “in the midst” of Israel “his holy Spirit” (Isa. 63:10-11). The Hebrew word in Isa. 63:11 is beqirebo, distinctively means, WITHIN, INSIDE. “There is a popular cliché, based upon a misunderstanding of these verses (Jn. 7:37-39), to the effect that the Holy Spirit since the day of Pentecost dwells in believers, whereas in the Old Testament times he dwelt only with or upon them. The facts give no support to such a view. The Spirit dwelt in

Joshua (Num. 27:18, Hebrew *bo*, a prepositional prefix meaning, “in”).” see—A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion, by James Oliver Buswell, 1962, pp. 114-119. Haggai 2:5, “My Spirit remaineth “in”(the same preposition, *bo*) you; fear ye not.” The saints of the OT could thus be qualified for resurrection from their death (Rom. 8:9-11) thousands of years before the Incarnate Spirit in Christ since God’s Spirit dwelt “in” them through faith (Gen. 15:6; Heb. 11:1-40) in both Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations! The streams of living water flowing forth from the hearts of believers (John 7:37-39) signifies the power of the Holy Spirit in the missionary program for the age of the NT whereas the Holy Spirit living in the OT believers was NOT in a “missionary” dispensation. That seems to be the difference being cited by Jesus. In fact, Jesus may not be talking about the new-birth-indwelling of the Spirit of God at all here in John 7:37-39. He may instead be talking about what the apostles were to receive (the baptism of the Spirit) on Pentecost which, of course, was not given for the WORLD until given through the apostles beginning on the Day of Pentecost—cf. Jn. 20:22; Lk. 24:44-49; Acts 1:1-8; 2:1-24, etal.. LOOK AT THE CONTEXT OF JOHN 7:37-39. Jesus is at the Feast of “Booths” trying to convince the Jews that HE is the Messiah, and that HE, not Judaism, is the perfected, ultimate, spiritual fulfillment of both the typical Feast and the OT prophecies of “Living water unto the world.” Jesus’ words DO NOT mean the Holy Spirit was never previously dwelling in OT believers, but he does mean the Holy Spirit WILL dwell in the NT believers in a new, more-convincing manifestation because HE is the Messiah come to bring that! It fits both OT prophecy (Joel 2:28ff; Isa. 32:15; 44:3; 59:21; Ezek. 39:29, etal. It also fits perfectly with the symbolism and typical import of the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. 14:8,16,19). Israelites who believed and were loyal to God in the OT era, had God’s Spirit dwelling in them, but he did not “flow out of them like rivers of living water” until the Messiah came and completed his work and established his church. The Jews were not evangelistic. If, after you read Romans 4:1-25; Galatians 3:1-29; Hebrews 11:8-22 and James 2:18-26, you can contend that Abraham did not have the Spirit of God dwelling in him, “you’re a better man than I am, Gunga Din!”

It is true, some Jewish scholars knew that the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:5; Jn. 7:42)—but many of the populace evidently were unaware of Jesus’ birthplace and thought he came from “Galilee” because that is where he grew up from childhood to manhood. Mary evidently didn’t spread around the account of her journey to Bethlehem, Egypt, and back to Nazareth with her “first-born.” Furthermore, he did his most outstanding evangelistic and healing work in Galilee. There is a passage in Isaiah 9:1-3 that was fulfilled (Matthew 4:12-17) by Jesus when he moved his “home” from Nazareth to Capernaum. Perhaps the Jewish multitudes had heard this text from Isaiah more often applied to the Messiah than other OT texts. Jesus was an “unknown” to the general Jewish public until he began his public ministry (except for that brief moment in the temple as a boy of 12). And he had his “coming-out” in the ministry at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee! IT IS A TRAGIC SHAME, BUT THE JEWISH GENERAL POPULACE OF JESUS’ DAY HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT THE SCRIPTURES ACTUALLY SAID. THEY WERE TOTALLY DEPENDENT UPON THE PRIESTS AND RABBIS AND SCRIBES TO TELL THEM—AND WE KNOW WHAT THEY TOLD THE PEOPLE!---TRA—DITION! as Tevye sings in “Fiddler on the Roof.”

Some of the worshipping pilgrims appear to have been actually hostile. Perhaps they were angered by Jesus' interruption of the ceremonies—perhaps they took his silence as a denial to be the Christ. How could a lowly Galilean be the Christ—he was alleged to be guilty of blasphemy. Some wanted him arrested. There were temple officers already there, sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest him. But the temple police returned empty handed. Their superiors demanded an explanation for their failure. When the policemen explained, “No man ever spoke like this man!”—the chief priests were beside themselves! The officer's reply would seem ludicrous were it not for other instances where people were overawed by the words, countenance, or mere presence of Jesus (Matt. 7:28-29; Lk. 5:8; Jn. 18:6, etc.). What restrained these hardened temple police—was it the eloquence of Jesus? His personality? Or the authority with which he spoke and carried himself? Perhaps all three! The chief priests and Pharisees were not impressed by such a report. Their attitude was, those ignorant police and the ignorant masses (i.e., “...this crowd, who do not know the law, are accursed.”) might think the Galilean to be eloquent, persuasive and speaking with authority, but the Pharisees and priests knew him to be a sinister character, seeking to lead the masses astray! And they had never given him any authority!

The Pharisees and scribes and priests believed themselves to be the only learned, erudite, and knowledgeable people on the face of the earth! They believed themselves to have the “key of knowledge” to dispense at their own whims—they could give it or take it away as they pleased (Lk. 11:59). They sat themselves down on “Moses seat” (the seat of authority in Jewish synagogues) and “preached but did not practice” (Matt. 23:2-3). The chief priests and elders believed the Jewish temple was theirs to do with as they wished—no one had any authority there unless they granted it (Matt. 21:23). The Pharisees believed themselves to be the only righteous people in the world! The Pharisees said, “Are you (policemen) led astray, you also? Have any of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him?” What they meant was, “We will tell you what to believe!” That is the modus operandi of “authorities.” THEY tell every one subordinate to them WHAT to think and to believe. The words of the American Declaration of Independence and the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution should be kept ringing in the ears of our citizenry—especially our children—“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” NO HUMAN AUTHORITY HAS ANY RIGHT TO TELL (ORDER, COERCE) ANY OTHER HUMAN BEING ABOUT WHAT TO THINK OR BELIEVE! All humans are endowed by their Creator with the right to think and believe what they wish and, by the freedom of speech, to try to persuade others to think and believe as they do—but no one has the right to demand or coerce (by any means) what another person must think or believe.

The Pharisees boasted that none of their number believed in this Galilean, but then one of their own number, NICODEMUS, spoke up in defense of Jesus! One of their colleagues had to point out to them that they were violating the Law which they thought they alone knew! This incident shows that Nicodemus was not the craven coward some hold him to be simply because he “came to Jesus at night” at the Passover in John 3. It took courage for Nicodemus to speak up for Jesus in the midst of his colleagues who had vowed to kill

Jesus! His fellow Pharisees and rulers were not at all reticent about expressing their contempt and hatred of Jesus and his followers. Lawyers, violating the law of Moses—indeed they were! The law required that justice be done, and done impartially. Every man was to have the right to fair, and legal trial upon being accused. Every accusation had to be established at the mouth of two or more witnesses (Ex. 23:1-2; Lev. 19:15-18; Deut. 1:16; 19:15-18). Nicodemus quoted the relevant maxims of the Law but when his brow-beating colleagues intimidated him, accusing him of having a connection with the Galilean rabble, he said no more. Later, Nicodemus helped Joseph of Arimathea bury the dead body of Jesus (Jn. 19:38-42). We would like to chide Nicodemus for not being bolder here at the Feast of Tabernacles—but we have to do some soul-searching of our own. **HOW BOLD AND COURAGEOUS ARE WE ABOUT OUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST? ARE WE EASILY INTIMIDATED BY THOSE “IN AUTHORITY?”—OR EVEN BY OUR PEERS?** Look at the difference between the intimidated 12 apostles **BEFORE** the resurrection of Jesus and the Day of Pentecost and **THEIR BOLDNESS AFTERWARD!**

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 8:1-59

Our earliest and best Greek mss. do not contain John 8:1-11: Codex Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Washingtonianus—3 of the most important mss—do not give the slightest indication that the story of the woman taken in adultery is part of the original text which John wrote. No Greek mss. prior to A.D. 800 (except Codex Bezae) has the story. None of the church fathers who wrote in Greek commented on this passage until the 12th century A.D., although many of them made reference to the passages which immediately precede and follow it. A Coptic (Egyptian Christian) version of the Bible in Bohairic dialect, contains the Gospel of John, dated by its editor in the 4th century (A.D. 300-400). BUT, passages which textual scholars have previously recognized as critically suspect (John 5:3b-4, etc.) and the passage here (John 7:53—8:11) are not in this mss. The most crucial evidence against this spurious passage is the Bodmer II (P66) papyrus. It is highly significant that this earliest nearly-complete text of John's Gospel does not have the account of the adulterous woman. There is no mark or hint at either 7:53 or 8:12 of this mss. that its scribe knew anything additional belonging here. Some of the later Greek mss. have the story but the mss. are marked to inform the reader that it is an insertion. The manuscripts which do have the story vary so much from one another in wording that there are at least 60 different readings! This is an average of 5 variants for each verse of the 12-verse unit of the story—a larger average than the rest of the entire NT! The story occurs in other locations in the NT. Some have it after John 7:36; others after John 21:24; still others after Luke 21:38. The style and vocabulary of the story in Greek are quite different from that which John employs in the rest of his Gospel. It does not in any way contribute to John's account, but to the contrary, disrupts the context. How meaningful the two declarations of Jesus become—the "Water of Life" and the "Light of the World"—when we understand their setting coincident with the last day of the great Feast of Tabernacles. But, if the unit 7:53—8:11 remains in the text, then both the incident of the adulterous woman and the discourse on "light" occur at the temple on the day after the feast has closed, for 8:2 reads, "Early in the morning he came again to the temple." We therefore should not accept the text of John 7:53—8:11 as part of John's Gospel and we start our questions with John 8:12 which ties together 7:1-52 and 8:12 as a reasonable context.

The Old Testament prophets predicted that God would send HIS "ANOINTED" (MESSIAH) INTO THE WORLD

TO BECOME "THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD." Isa. 9:1-4 predicts that after Israel had walked for some time "in gloom, anguish, contempt and deep darkness" as a consequence of her exile because of idolatry, she would then "see a great light, and this light would shine upon her." Matt. 4:15-16 and Lk. 1:79 confirm that this "great light" was none

other than Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the “Anointed” of God. In three contexts, the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 42:6, 49:6 and 60:3; predicted that the Messiah (the Servant of God) would become a “light to the nations.” goyim is the Hebrew word for “nations” and almost always means, “Gentiles.” This was the “gospel preached beforehand” (Acts 3:17-26; Gal. 3:6-9; 1 Pet. 1:10-12). So, God’s “Anointed” Savior (Messiah) would be THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD not just for Israel, but for all the Gentiles, too! See Luke 2:32 where God had revealed to Simeon that Jesus was the light to the goyim “nations.” Malachi 4:2 is more figurative, when he predicts, “But for you who fear my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings.” In our fallen world where physical darkness, on the average, occurs longer than BRILLIANCE, LIGHT is a necessity! Without LIGHT, on this planet earth as we know it, nothing would grow—everything living would die. Without light, we would stumble around in blackness crashing into things and falling over precipices to our death. THE EARTH MUST HAVE ITS SUN TO MAKE IT INHABITABLE BY HUMAN, ANIMAL, AND VEGETABLE LIFE! Many religions, past and present, worship earth’s sun as the ultimate source of energy and life. BUT THERE ARE MILLIONS OF “SUNS” IN THE KNOWN COSMOS—SO EARTH’S SUN IS NOT THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF ENERGY! The Bible tells us that Almighty God, Elohim, created the “heavens and the earth” which includes all the “suns” in the cosmos. GOD IS THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF ENERGY AND LIGHT AND LIFE. But, our fallen world needs SUPERNATURAL, SPIRITUAL, AND MORAL LIGHT WORSE THAN IT NEEDS PHYSICAL LIGHT. JESUS IS THE WORLD’S SUPERNATURAL, SPIRITUAL, MORAL LIGHT! Remember John 1:4,9—“In him (Jesus, the Logos-Word) was life, and the life was the light of men...The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world.” Light illuminates the darkness and guides us through it—light reveals. If you want to see “Light” in the OT used in a spiritual meaning read through the Psalms (Psa. 18:16; 27:1; 36:9; 37:6; 44:3; 56:13; 89:15; 97:11; 112:4; 118:27; 119:105,130; 139:11,12). SO THESE JEWS AT “TABERNACLES” KNEW (OR SHOULD HAVE KNOWN) WHAT JESUS WAS TALKING ABOUT! “Light” is often used as a metaphor in Western thought for something other than physical light.

Judging according to the flesh (Greek, John 8:15 is sarka) is the same as “seeing or knowing or judging from a human point of view” (cf. 2 Cor. 5:16 where the Greek word sarka is translated “human” in RSV and “worldly” in NIV). Judging according to the flesh is to analyze or evaluate everything from a materialistic point of view. It is a frame-of-mind that refuses to acknowledge even the possibility that there may be some essence or quality, or substance, beyond what is sensed with the corporeal senses (touch, sight, taste, smell, hearing, etc.). Those who judge according to the flesh reject even words that try to describe that which is non-material. In the science of philosophy they are called “logical positivists.” That school of philosophy (Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, et al) contend that if any word cannot describe something that can be sensed, it is a word that has no meaning! There is no room in the logical-positivists vocabulary for anything that is an “idea” or a “feeling” or an “axiom” or something “spiritual” UNLESS it is a word describing something material. “Love” then becomes something totally fleshly. “Thinking” becomes something totally done by the physical brain and its electrodes, etc., etc., etc. Jesus meant that these Pharisees who were claiming that Jesus’ testimony was not true because he was bearing witness to himself, were making their judgments about him from a totally materialistic mind-

set. Just like Russell and Wittgenstein, the Pharisees had no room in their thinking or vocabulary for the slightest possibility that God could come to earth as a man! Yet Pharisees believed in angels and in the resurrection of the just. BUT THE PHARISAIC CONCEPT OF OLAM (THE NEXT WORLD) WAS QUITE PHYSICAL! Even some of the Gentiles had a better grasp of spiritual reality than the Pharisees. Plato (429-347 B.C.) and Plutarch (A.D. 46-120) both saw the world beyond this one as spiritual rather than material. (All Greeks did not “believe” in their mythical “gods”—except for political and economic contingencies—see Acts 17:27-28). Like Madalyn Murray, since there’s never going to be any evidence to prove otherwise, then no one will ever believe otherwise! If a person shuts his mind off to all possibility of any substance other than matter, then he can never accept any evidence that there IS evidence beyond a reasonable doubt for a substance beyond matter! That is why Paul said in 2 Cor. 5:14-16: “For the love of Christ controls us because we are convinced that one has died for all, therefore all have died. And he died for all that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human (fleshly) point of view; even though we once regarded Christ (Messiah) from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer.” THESE JEWS HAD MADE UP THEIR MINDS THAT GOD COULD NOT BECOME A MAN, THEREFORE, “DON’T CONFUSE THEM WITH THE FACTS!”

Jesus says if people do not believe in him they will die IN their sins. I think Jesus means, they will be “separated from their earth-bodies, and go to a place (Hell) where they will be eternally separated from God, and live forever in a different body in a condition or state of SIN (Rev. 22:10-11). Since this same apostle John defined “sin” as “LAWLESSNESS” (1 Jn. 3:4-10) that will be their environment for eternity—along with the devil and everyone else who die “IN” SIN—LAWLESSNESS. Lawlessness means chaos, disorder, rebellion, war, immorality, fragmentation, and all the other WICKED passions one can imagine! Dying in one’s sins means an eternal existence with a guilty conscience. Those who believe in Jesus and keep his commandments, not only have their sins forgiven, they have their consciences cleansed of any and all guilt forevermore (1 Pet. 3:21; Heb.9:14; 10:1-18). Dying IN one’s sins means the sinner must be eternally punished for his sins. The substitutionary death of Jesus was acceptable to Almighty God as punishment (verified by his resurrection from the dead) to atone for the believer’s sin—thus, the believer’s sin is “paid for once for all—forever” (Heb. 10). But the impenitent, untrusting, sinner will have to “pay” himself, for his sins forever! WHAT KIND OF “PUNISHMENT” WILL GOD EXACT FROM THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO “DIE IN THEIR SINS?” We do not fully know—and, personally, I don’t want to fully know. We do know what the Bible says—it will be a “just” retribution (Heb. 2:2)—it will be “torments or anguish” (Lk. 16:24-28); it will be “outer darkness ” away from The Light (Matt. 25:30; Rev. 22:15); it will be a “lake of fire and brimstone” (Matt. 13:42,50; Rev. 14:10-11; 19:20; 20:10,14,15; 21:8); and people there will “weep and grind their teeth” (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; Lk. 13:28). WHATEVER GOD’S WRATHFUL PUNISHMENT UPON SIN SHALL BE—WE KNOW IT SHALL BE PERFECT AND COMPLETELY IN KEEPING WITH HIS ALMIGHTINESS AND ABSOLUTE HOLINESS! AND THAT SHOULD TERRIFY SINNERS!

Three “freedoms” by knowing the truth and continuing in Christ’s word: (a) freedom from ignorance about all that exists—the creation, human nature and its destiny, the nature of God and his Son and God’s will; (b) freedom from slavery of sin, guilt, and fear of punishment to come; (c) freedom TO become transformed into the image of Jesus Christ, and become children of God, joint heirs with Christ. TRUTH THAT IS LOCATED IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY TRUTH THAT SETS PEOPLE FREE FROM ANY STATE OF BONDAGE WHETHER PHYSICAL OR SPIRITUAL! THERE JUST ISN’T ANY OTHER TRUTH, PHILOSOPHICAL, POLITICAL, SUBJECTIVE OR OBJECTIVE, THAT ULTIMATELY GIVES THE HUMAN SPIRIT FREEDOM!

Pontius Pilate asked Jesus—whether cynically or honestly, we don’t know for certain, “What is truth?” We do know that human beings from the beginning of time have pondered the subject—TRUTH! Truth is more than mere “facts.” Although all “facts” have some “truth” in them—even the “fact” of Satan’s existence and his modus operandi are “truthful facts.” HOWEVER, WHILE WHAT SATAN SAYS AND DOES (WITH GOD’S PERMISSION) IS FACTUAL, IT IS NEVER TRUTHFUL!. Jesus declared Satan is a “murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him” (Jn. 8:44-45). Truth is not something abstract, ephemeral, or perishable. Truth is not totally verbal or propositional. TRUTH IS A PERSON! AND THAT PERSON IS JESUS CHRIST! Jesus said it best in John 14:6—I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE. So when Jesus says in John 8:32, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free,” he means, IF YOU KNOW ME YOU WILL KNOW THE TRUTH. But very significantly, he prefaced that statement with, “If you continue in my word....” There is only one way for anyone, whether living contemporaneously with Jesus 2000 years ago—or today, 2000 years later—to know Jesus, and this is by knowing, believing, obeying and continuing to obey HIS WORD! Remember, this is exactly what Jesus said to the 12 apostles who lived contemporaneously with him 2000 years ago—see John chapters 14,15,16,17. YES! Even when Jesus was here on earth in the flesh, no one could know him without continuing in his word! You don’t know me, I don’t know you, we don’t know our spouses or our children apart from their WORDS! No person knows a persons’ thoughts except the spirit of the person himself—but when that person chooses to VERBALIZE himself to others, then others may know him. The exact same condition is true of God. Paul explained this in 1 Cor. 2:1-16! If the apostles had not been given the “mind of God and of Christ,” and had not “imparted” it to the world in “words,” NO ONE WOULD EVER HAVE KNOWN THE MIND OF GOD AND OF CHRIST AND TO NOT KNOW THE MIND IS TO NOT KNOW THE PERSON! If you want to know the TRUTH you must know the mind of Christ!

The Greek word chorei, is from the Greek verb choreo (from which we get the prefix to “choreography”) and means, “having movement, motion, progress, or find a place in.” The KJV & RSV translate it, “find no place,” the NIV translates, “have no room,” but the ASV translates it, “does not have free course.” They all mean somewhat the same, but I like the ASV translation, “does not have free course” better. Jesus is saying that while these wicked Jews who want to kill him may have intellectually assimilated the word of God in their minds,

THEY WERE NOT LETTING GOD'S WORD HAVE FREEDOM TO "COURSE" ALL THROUGH THEIR BEING—MIND, WILL, EMOTIONS, VALUES, CHOICES, ETC. Make no mistake about it, the scribes and Pharisees knew mentally, every jot and tittle of the Old Testament (plus their rabbinical traditions and interpretations of it). But they would not let God's Word, as much as they had of it, "dance and run and move" all through their hearts and wills and personalities. They blocked God's word off from dancing upon the entire "stage" of their being. Their "choreography" of God's word did not include the full platform of their essence. They confined it to a very small segment of their lives. Paul used the same idea, but not the same Greek word, in 2 Thess. 3:1 asking the Christians there to pray that "the word of the Lord might have free course or progress or movement and be glorified in him." The best illustration of what Jesus meant about the word of God finding "movement" or "a place" in people's entire being is the "Parable of the Sower" which is really the parable of the soils (Matt. 13; Mk. 4; Lk. 8). In this parable Jesus vividly portrays different circumstances and things which people allow to prohibit the word of God from having "free course" or "finding a place" in their essence—willful rejection, superficiality and shallowness, and the choking desire for material gain. The Pharisees and scribes and chief priests were guilty of all three! WE CHRISTIANS SHOULD NEVER MAKE A PRACTICE OF "BLOCKING OUT" ANY WORD OF GOD WE DON'T LIKE! WE MUST HEAR AND RECEIVE IT ALL AND LET IT ALL HAVE THE FULL "STAGE" AND FREE COURSE (BE "CHOREOGRAPHED," MOVE AND PROGRESS) IN OUR HEARTS!

INDEED! THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT JESUS SAYS, the devil is totally committed to lying and murdering. He is in FULL REBELLION AGAINST BOTH GOD AND MAN! Since Satan cannot hurt God, he has decided to do all he can to hurt God's "image"—MAN (Rev. 12:1-17). Satan thought he would stamp out God's kingdom and God's people during the appalling persecutions of the Roman empire (ca. A.D.100-500) called, "the great tribulation." BUT GOD KEPT HIS "BRIDE" ALIVE BY THRUSTING HER INTO THE "WILDERNESS" (right into the middle of the "tribulation") WHERE HE NOURISHED HER DURING ALL THOSE CENTURIES OF PERSECUTION! Strange way to "nourish" the church, wasn't it? NOT SO STRANGE WHEN YOU COMPARE IT WITH ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS—ISRAEL IN EXILE—and all other experiences by which human beings are strengthened by hardships (cf. Rom. 5:3; 8:18-30; 2 Cor. 1:3-11; 12:7-10, etc., etc.). Remember how God "nourished" David in the caves and rocks of the wilderness of Judea, pursued by King Saul. Remember how God "nourished" Elijah, on the run from Jezebel. Remember how God "nourished" Moses in Midian's deserts for 40 years. THAT IS GOD'S TRUTH. BUT THE DEVIL WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE WE ARE NOURISHED BY EASE AND COMFORT. HE WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO BE REALISTIC—BUT WE SHOULD LISTEN TO ILLUSIONS (Isa. 30:8-14). The devil (and his cohorts—those who are on his side) will not acknowledge the truth nor tell the truth, even when it stares them in the face—when other people recognize that it can't be denied. There's only one protection against the total commitment of the devil to ensnare all of mankind in lies and falsehoods—THAT'S THE BIBLE, THE APOSTOLIC WORD (see 1 John 4:1-6)... "keeping the commandments of God and bearing testimony to Jesus" DO THAT AND YOU CONQUER THE DEVIL (Rev. 12:11,17).

It really isn't all that difficult to imagine there are people who will refuse to believe (i.e., obey) something because it is the truth! WE ALL HAVE BEEN SUCH PEOPLE AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER IN OUR LIVES! We all like to think of ourselves as great "seekers and searchers after the truth." Come on, now, 'fess up! Isaiah says "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way..." Isa. 53:6. David said it before Isaiah (Psa. 14:3); and the apostle Paul makes it New Testament doctrine in Rom. 3:10-12. That is a shocking indictment, when you pause to think about it— BECAUSE JESUS IS AND SAYS THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH, HUMAN BEINGS LET THE DEVIL TALK THEM INTO REJECTING THE TRUTH BECAUSE IT IS THE TRUTH! If we are completely honest we will acknowledge that there have been occasions (hopefully, no longer) when, just because IT IS the truth, we have refused to acknowledge and do what the Bible says—or we have deliberately chosen to do what the Bible prohibits! Where, along the line from infancy to the moment of moral responsibility, did we make that decision? For everyone, the WHEN may be different—BUT WHY? Well, as Jesus says, the "why" is because it is the truth! It all started in the Garden of Eden, with our earliest "grandparents." God created "grandpa and grandma" with the awesome power to know, choose, and do THE TRUTH or not choose and not do IT. A huge part of God's truth is the parameters he sets on certain mind-sets and actions (i.e., "Thou shalt, and Thou shalt not"). Truth is not only a person, it is a choice! Truth is the choice between doing what God said TO do, and what God said NOT TO do! The devil, by his cunning and deceit, convinced Eve and Adam to choose against God's parameters, because the truth of God's limitations were disagreeable to their egotistical, fleshly cravings. You see, there is a constant war going on between the fleshly and the spiritual (Rom. 7:15-25; Gal. 5:16-25; James 4;1-4; 1 Pet. 2:11) in you and in me, and was, even in apostles! God made us that way. I don't presume to know all the reasons why he made us that way, but I'm sure we're that way! So, we must be convinced, and learn, by God's love or his chastening, or both, to choose that which is disagreeable to the flesh (Rom. 13:14; 1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Cor. 12:10-11). Otherwise we shall find ourselves refusing to "believe" and do the truth, because it is the truth!

Jesus says, in effect, John 8:50, "It matters little to me that you dishonor me, as far as selfish pride may be concerned (I don't have any), for I do not seek to glorify myself simply for the glory involved.." Jesus never sought the honor of men as an end to be desired for itself. He "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant...he humbled himself, becoming obedient...to the death of the cross" (Phil. 2;6-8). Though he was the Son of God, he left heaven's throne, and took upon himself mortal flesh and experienced humiliation, subjection, and obedience by the things which he suffered (Heb. 5;8). When his own disciples contended for places of honor he girded himself with a towel. took a basin of water and performed the lowliest of services by washing their feet (Jn. 13:1-17). The Lord Jesus Christ did not concern himself with seeking the praise and honor of men. His mission on earth was to glorify the Father's will... "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name..." Read John 17 about Jesus acknowledging his earthly mission was to "glorify the Father." The reason being, that if Jesus could get human beings to really glorify God the Father, they would recognize that Jesus himself was none other than God in the flesh! Just read in the Gospels for yourself—whenever anyone in those accounts is found to be a real godly, God-

glorifying person, they soon comprehend WHO JESUS IS! It took some, like Saul of Tarsus (later the apostle Paul), longer than others. The only reason Jesus wants us to glorify him is for our benefit—that we will know our place is God’s place and his place is redemption and regeneration. He (God through Christ) is the source of our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30-31). Jesus wanted all the weight (i.e., glory) of redemption’s majesty to belong to the Father. Humanness must not be venerated or revered. When the second person of the Godhead (the Son) willingly became incarnate (became a man in a fleshly body), it was obligatory that he become truly and essentially MAN just as truly and essentially as he was God, or “verily man” as the old Protestant catechisms say. Being “verily man” he must not seek to elevate man for that would be idolatry. Jesus glorified God, and in so doing earned (or restored) for human beings their proper “glory” (as a perfectly obedient human) giving proper status (glory) to God. Man’s very *raison d’être* (reason for existence) is to “glorify God and enjoy him forever” (again quoting the old catechisms).

Jesus is contrasting the faith of the one whom the Jews claimed as “Father Abraham” with their lack of understanding and lack of faith that God’s Messianic promises would come to pass. **HERE THE MESSIAH STOOD BEFORE THEM, HAVING DEMONSTRATED HIS CLAIMS WITH MIRACLES AND SIGNS AND DEEDS AND WORDS, AND THEY WOULD NOT BELIEVE!** The “gospel” was preached beforehand to Abraham (Gal. 3:8) and their “father Abraham” had, by faith, seen the day of the Messiah—i.e., he died believing God would fulfill every promise he made about a Redeemer! There were others, both before and after Abraham, who through eyes of faith beheld the day of Christ. Moses “accounted the reproach of Christ (Messiah) greater riches than the treasures of Egypt...for he endured as seeing him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:26-27). The prophets also “saw” the day of the Messiah (1 Pet. 1:10-12) and predicted his coming in minute detail—the place he would be born, the time in which he would be born, his ministry, his mission, even his words on the cross. Many of the OT saints “saw” by faith the “day” God would send his Redeemer into the world and they are named in Hebrews, chapter 11. “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb. 11:13). Abraham knew that God’s promises of redemption were NOT going to be fulfilled in a “nation” BUT IN A SINGULAR PERSON (Gal. 3:15-17). But these who gloried in their genetic descent from Abraham, rejected the ONE Abraham saw with eyes of faith 2000 years before they did! **ARE GOD’S PROMISES TO YOU IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT REAL TO YOU?** They should be! Open your eyes of faith!

John recorded in the Greek language what Jesus said in Hebrew or Aramaic. In Hebrew, Jesus would have used the word YHWH, sometimes called “The tetragram.” The Hebrews said YHWH was the “unutterable name” (Amos 6:10) and for fear of speaking God’s name in vain (Ex. 20:7), around 300 B.C. they decided not to pronounce it at all—whenever in reading they came to YHWH, they spoke the word Adhonai, which means, “Lord.” The word adhonai was carried into the Septuagint where YHWH is rendered by the Greek word, Kurios, “Lord,” so in the KJV “Lord” occurs instead of “Jehovah,” whereas in the

ASV YHWH is rendered “Jehovah” (which is YHWH with the vowels, e,o,a, added). The Hebrew root word is HWH, which means “to be, to exist, to breathe.” It is the word God used of himself in Exodus 3:14, “I AM WHO I AM.” The letters in the “tetragram” YHWH are all consonants. The ancient Israelites undoubtedly had vowels in their spoken language, but the earliest Hebrew mss. (i.e., Dead Sea Scrolls) do not have “vowel points” written in the text. The Massorettes (Jewish scribes) about A.D. 700, added the written “vowel points” as they had been handed-down through centuries of verbal repetition. In John’s Gospel it is recorded in Greek as ego eimi, which might be literally translated, “I AM WHO I AM.” The exact same way God “named” himself in Ex. 3:14! In other words, Jesus is claiming to be Jehovah-God, eternally pre-existing BEFORE Abraham. In rabbinic-eyes, in addition to speaking the unutterable name, Jesus also committed blasphemy when he called himself YHWH! According to Mosaic Law blasphemy was punishable by death, by stoning (Lev. 24:16). The Jewish hierarchy had already accused Jesus of blasphemy—more than once! NOW (Jn. 8:59) THEY LITERALLY, AND PHYSICALLY PICK UP STONES (from the litter of stone-masons working on Herod’s re-modeling of the temple) IN ORDER TO STONE JESUS TO DEATH ON THE SPOT! No official indictment, no trial, no evidence that what he said was false. Jesus knowing that his time had not yet come for the supreme sacrifice, hid himself amidst the crowd and went out of the temple. He will go back into the temple, more than once, before he is crucified. He will face the Jewish priesthood, the Pharisees, scribes and rulers again and again, before they murder him. AND EACH TIME THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES WILL REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT JESUS IS WHO HE CLAIMS TO BE—MESSIAH, GOD-INCARNATE. It will make no difference to them that he has presented a hundred times more evidence than would be needed to prove his claims beyond any reasonable doubt. Their minds were made up. He was a threat to their popularity, their economic income, their national survival (they thought), and their reputations in the world of human applause. Jesus merely postponed what he and God the Father knew was inevitable (Acts 2:23) in order to have more time to try to “pound into the heads” of his 12 apostles what was about to happen and what their role would thenceforth be in the divine scheme of redemption.

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 9:1-41

In the one of the gates exiting the temple, Jesus and his disciples were about to pass by a blind man begging in an opportune spot (Acts 3:3). The disciples asked Jesus, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” From the time of the ancient patriarch, Job, Jewish thought and literature emphasized that physical impairment was almost always an indication that God was punishing the impaired for their sins. This theology probably goes clear back to Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:10-13). The question about the reason for human suffering was strongly embedded in the conscience of mankind and one whole section of the Bible (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, & Ecclesiastes) is devoted to God’s revelation of the reasons for, and the proper human approach to, human suffering! It is dealt with clearly, unequivocally, and tenderly in the New Testament in passages too numerous to list here. Needless to say, the book of Hebrews says a lot about God’s loving chastening through suffering. Jesus gives a somewhat enigmatic answer here, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him.” Now, Jesus would not contradict the rest of the Holy Spirit’s revelation in the Bible which tells us that because of human sin (beginning with Adam and Eve) physical suffering was God’s curse upon the earth for man’s sake (Gen. 3:14-21; Rom. 8:18-25; Heb. 12:1-29, etc.) to cause mankind to repent. HOWEVER, SUFFERING IS GENERIC, that is, all humans suffer, those who are indifferently wicked and those who deliberately try their best to obey God (e.g., Job & David). God does not go around, maliciously pouncing on each individual every time they make a wrong move or think a wrong thought. In fact, God sends his rain and sunshine on the just and the unjust alike (Matt. 5:45). Bad things happen from numerous causes: (a) humans make errors in judgment about physical things and consequently suffer the “laws of nature” which God has built into this fallen world (Rom. 1:27-28); (b) God has cursed this cosmos with “futility and decay” (Rom. 8:18ff) which means the very physical elements (weather, gravity, thermodynamics (or entropy), etc.) are against physical survival and wholeness; (c) God may (and we need to be careful about deciding which cases) directly intervene in the “natural order” of life and bring catastrophe to individuals or sections of individuals at his own discretion; (d) and it is Biblical doctrine that the sins of parents may be visited upon their children, even to the 4th generation (Ex. 20:5; 34:7; Num. 14-18; Deut. 5:9; 28:32; Jer. 31:29; Ezek. 18:2). But! the children are not morally responsible for their parent’s sin, nor are parents morally responsible for their children’s sin (Ezek. 18:1-32) David’s big question was, as for months and months he fled from King Saul’s pursuit, “Why do the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer?” (Psa. 52:7-8; 73:12-14). While Jesus emphatically stated that the man was not blind because of any particular sin of his or his parents—Jesus did not say, either, that the man and his parents were without sin. The man was blind because of the mortal infirmities of human life after the fall in Eden. Jesus did not see this as a moment to try to answer the details of the disciples’ question—they would probably have had a thousand other questions to ask about something that the finite mind of man will never understand this side of eternity. What Jesus said was, “All things—even afflictions and

calamities—have as their ultimate purpose the glorification of God in Christ by means of the manifestation of his majesty. The tragic blindness of this beggar (due to sin entering into the human equation) was an OPPORTUNITY for Jesus to show the majestic mercy, kindness and power of Almighty God, even in his incarnate form! It was an OPPORTUNITY to demonstrate that any human being who has come to the “end of his rope” and throws himself upon the mercy of God, will find healing for the desperation and hopelessness in his soul, and ultimately, in heaven, healing for his mortal infirmities. Giving “sight to the blind” was a signal that the Messiah was present (Isa. 35:5; 29:18; 32:3ff; 42:7; Matt. 12:22; Lk. 4:18-19).

Jesus could have healed this blind man without a word. He could have healed him had he not even been in Jerusalem (he did more than one healing by “remote control” e.g., Matt. 15:21-28; Mk. 7:24-30; Jn. 4:46-54, etc.). The blind man evidently knew something about “this man called Jesus” (Jn. 9:11) even though he could not see Jesus with his eyes. He had probably heard others at the Feast of Tabernacles tell about the amazing healing Jesus had done in Galilee and heard them “banter about” whether Jesus was God’s “Anointed” (Messiah) or not. So, Jesus spat into the ground and made clay, and (“anointed”)—i.e., used his hand (finger) to put some on the eyes (whether eye-balls or eye-lids, we don’t know) of the blind beggar. Then Jesus told him to go wash off the clay in the pool of Siloam (see the notes at the beginning of chapter 7 for the symbolism associated with the pool of Siloam). Both of these “physical effects” were to give the bystanders NO DOUBT as to where the POWER resided to accomplish such a miraculous thing—IT WAS IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST. There was no hocus-pocus, no sleight of hand, no mystic outside source Jesus used here—THE SOURCE OF THE MAN’S HEALING WAS THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST! The washing in the pool was to show that there was no magic in the clay, or the “holy” spittle, of Jesus (like alleged “holy water” today from the Jordan River, or the “relics” of Lourdes, France, or the “handkerchiefs” of modern “faith healers”). The now-seeing-beggar, upon returning to the presence of those who knew him personally, was A SENSATION! Some of those who knew him before as a blind beggar couldn’t believe their eyes! When he told the doubters he was the man they knew before, they asked how he came to be able to see! He said, “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes....and I received my sight.” Jesus had disappeared into the multitudes at the Feast of Tabernacles and could not be found to be questioned.

The formerly-blind-beggar was brought to the Pharisees! This was a “miracle” and he said it had been done by “the man called Jesus.” That was a “red-flag” and a half! Almost everyone at the Feast knew the Jewish authorities wanted to know about anything Jesus said or did! Besides— IT WAS A SABBATH DAY WHEN JESUS HEALED THE BLIND MAN! There he goes again! Healing on the Sabbath! When the Pharisees “cross-examined” the man, they simply asked him how he had received his sight. The man undoubtedly told them the same story he told his associates—a man called Jesus “put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” NOTICE: The Pharisees did not challenge his former condition (until later when questioning the man’s parents). The Pharisees must have been told by other eyewitnesses that this was a blind man healed by Jesus. The Pharisees DID NOT QUESTION THAT THE MAN HAD BEEN BLIND AND THAT NOW HE COULD SEE!

But when the name of Jesus was connected to the phenomenon, their immediate, biased, rebuttal was, “This man (Jesus) is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath.” The Pharisees meant, of course, Jesus did not keep the rabbinical traditions concerning the Sabbath. **JESUS DID, IN FACT, KEEP THE SABBATH, BY DOING AN ACT OF MERCY ON THAT DAY!** (See the discussion in lesson notes on John 5). If God “works” every Sabbath (Jn. 5:16-17, i.e., makes the sun to shine, the rain to fall, seeds to grow, human beings to breathe and live), why should God-in-the-flesh, the Son of God, not be able also to sustain life on any given Sabbath? Of course, that was the rabbi’s problem! God could not be a man! No matter what that “man” might do to prove he was God in a human body, these Jewish authorities had decreed that God couldn’t be a man! That was it, the bottom line, and any man claiming to be God could not be anything but a blasphemer! They also imply that if God was a man, he would keep their traditions about the Sabbath.

Some of the crowd around the Pharisees and the former blind man said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” Welllll, the Pharisees had to get this settled immediately lest the multitudes actually start believing Jesus to be Messiah, God-incarnate! So, they asked the man again, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” **AGAIN, THE PHARISEES DO NOT DENY THAT HE WAS BLIND AND NOW SEES!** But having been blind 38 years and now able to see like any normally sighted person, the honest-hearted blind man can only come to the conclusion, “He is a prophet!” (i.e., someone sent from and speaking for God). Prophets, in the OT, you remember, did miracles—even occasionally raising the dead. Why didn’t the Pharisees remember that? They probably did—but you see, it is one thing for a totally-human “prophet” to do miracles and another thing for a totally-human man to call himself **GOD!** Besides, the Pharisees were certain that the OT prophets would not have broken the rabbinical traditions about the Sabbath! But still, the Pharisees didn’t know their OT very well or they would have known that during the exile, thousands of Jews were unable to keep the Law of Moses about sacrificing at the temple in Jerusalem at least 3 times each year (the temple had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and the Jews were not permitted to return to Israel’s land anyway). They did not remember that Ezekiel predicted God would build a temple in the future (Messianic age) for his people (and all nations) in which many things about the OT law in sacrifices, etc., would be changed. They did not give a thought to the fact that John the Immerser was going about the country telling people that now they must be immersed in his immersion to have their sins forgiven (not through sacrifices at the temple). **YOU SEE, THERE WAS PLENTY OF INFORMATION FOR THESE SO-CALLED “SCHOLARS” OF THE WORD OF GOD TO KNOW GOD COULD NOT AND WOULD NOT BE CONFINED TO THEIR “TEMPLE MADE WITH HANDS” AND THEIR DESPICABLE, APOSTATE TRADITIONS!**

The Pharisees got nowhere with the former blind man! They could not brow-beat him into “testifying” that Jesus had disobeyed their traditions and was a “sinner” and ought to be stoned to death for blasphemy. So, the Pharisees “hailed the man’s parents into (kangaroo) court.” This was not an “official” trial. The Pharisees were squarely in violation of the Law of Moses here! They had no legal right to put these people (or Jesus) on “trial.” Neither the man, nor his parents, nor Jesus had violated any Law of Moses! So,

sarcastically, the Pharisees asked the man's parents, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" The Pharisees seem to be trying to coerce out of the parents an admission that this, their son, was never blind to start with—and if he was, how are they going to give an account for his ability now to see! **THEY TRIED TO INDICT THE PARENTS FOR THE MIRACLE THAT HAD HAPPENED TO THE MAN!** The parents knew what the Pharisees were trying to do! They were not about to say that their son had been miraculously healed (on the Sabbath) by the alleged apostate, Jesus who calls himself the Messiah—for **IF THEY DID, THEY WOULD BE EXCOMMUNICATED FROM THEIR SYNAGOGUE!** To be put "out of the synagogue" meant more than being "churched" means today! For the Jew of that time, their local synagogue was the epi-center (focus) of their whole life. It was where their children were educated; it was where their civil codes of behavior were issued and regulated; it was where they worshiped God (except for an occasional "festival" at the temple"); it was where they went to get married, divorced, have their male children circumcised, give alms to help their poor neighbors. It was the city-hall, county courthouse, church, school, legal advisory, and many more functional sources all wrapped up into one place. To be banished from the synagogue meant such a person was *persona non grata* for the whole Jewish community! A banished Jew could not run across town and join a "different" synagogue. They would even be unable to go to the temple and seek atonement for their sins unless they could be reinstated in their synagogue. Their family and neighbors and friends would be forced to shun them. They could not carry on any commerce with fellow-Jews of any kind! The "excommunicated" one would be "as good as dead." To be excommunicated from the synagogue meant such a Jew was *m'shumad* (apostate), and his family would "sit shiva" (mourn for about his "death") for 7 days—during which time they could not leave their house, cut their hair, put on new clothes, sit on chairs or wear shoes, and neighbors would have to bring in food. **SO, HIS PARENTS GIVE, WHAT I THINK IS A HUMOROUS-TRAGIC ANSWER, "HE'S OF AGE, ASK HIM!"** The parents passed the "hot potato" into the hands of their son! They wouldn't stand up for him against the Pharisees and their kangaroo court! They were "cowards" (see Rev. 22:8; Matt. 10:32; Lk. 12:8).

The Pharisees called the former blind man back into their "court" and began to interrogate him! They are determined to get testimony they can call "evidence" of blasphemy on this "man called Jesus." So they say, "Give God the glory" (an ersatz "swearing-in" of the witness), we know that this man (Jesus) is a sinner." **THAT'S ALREADY AN ESTABLISHED FACT, ON THE PHARISEE'S AGENDA!** The man interrupted the interrogation, saying, "Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see." Then man said "Why this is a marvel! (Greek word is *thaumaston*, meaning, "amazing, beyond my comprehension"). 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 any one is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." (Jn. 9:30-33). The Pharisees' refusal to accept Jesus as Messiah was illogical, irrational, and incomprehensible to this lowly (but honest-minded) beggar. Jesus once marveled at the unbelief of some Jews (Mk. 6:6); but he also marveled at the faith of a Roman centurion (Matt. 8:10). Jesus was surprised! This formerly-blind beggar was

surprised at the bull-headed, fanatical prejudice of religious authorities who were supposed to be guardians of TRUTH! It was all very clear to the former blind man that Jesus was a God-sent person who had miraculous powers—apparently a “prophet of God.” The only answer the Pharisees could give was, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?”

Of course God hears sinners! He hears you and me, doesn't he? God hears sinners who are seeking him. God will never hide from those who sincerely and desperately seek him in supplication, thanksgiving or intercession. God even heard the prayers of an unimmersed (unbaptized) Gentile, Roman army officer (Acts 10:1-8) BECAUSE THE ARMY OFFICER WAS DEVOUT, FEARED GOD, GAVE ALMS LIBERALLY, AND PRAYED CONSTANTLY TO GOD! Cornelius was sincerely wanting to KNOW as much about God as God had chosen to reveal of himself—and God answered Cornelius' prayers by sending Peter to preach the Gospel of Christ to him. What the Jewish religious authorities meant to say was, “God does not hear anyone who is not a Pharisee!” Remember the Pharisee and the publican praying in the temple (Lk. 18:9-14). The Pharisee prayed with himself, thanking God (who wouldn't heed the prayer because the Pharisee was not really praying to God) that he was not like other men (sinners). The publican wouldn't even look toward heaven but bowed his face to the ground and prayed, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” Jesus said the humble, penitent publican went down to his house “justified” (i.e., right with God) but the Pharisee stood “unjustified” (not right with) before God. God hears the honest, earnest, seeking, penitent prayer of any sinner. JUST HOW GOD ANSWERS THE PRAYERS OF SUCH “SINNERS” WE DO NOT KNOW. He probably answers each one according to the individual's circumstances and needs—and if the petitioner does not follow through with the answer, then God has done all he can do for the sinner! GOD DOESN'T SAVE SINNERS THROUGH PRAYER ALONE! Cornelius' prayer was answered unto salvation ONLY when Peter was directed to his house and when Cornelius and his household heard and obeyed the Gospel as Peter preached it to them! Prayer alone, just like “faith alone,” without obeying the command to be immersed “in the name of” (by authority of) the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, for the remission of sins, does not appropriate the atoning death of Christ.

In John 3:17, John wrote, “For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.” In John 9:39, Jesus said, “For judgment came I into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.” NOW WHICH IS RIGHT? It is axiomatic logic that two propositions which contradict one another cannot both be correct! The Greek phrase is literally, hina sothe ho kosmos di autou, “...in order that, might be saved, the world, through him.” The Greek verb sothe, “saved” is subjunctive aorist passive. Jesus did come into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world MIGHT BE saved through him. The world MAY be saved only if it believes in him and obeys him. But if it doesn't, it will be condemned by its own unbelief and disobedience. SO BOTH STATEMENTS, QUALIFIED, ARE CORRECT! And, yes, Jesus did come into the world for judgment, FOR IN THE VERY ACT OF ATTEMPTING TO SAVE THE WORLD, HE NECESSARILY CONDEMNNS THAT PART OF THE WORLD WHICH REFUSES HIS SALVATION. The only way those two statements could contradict one another is that Jesus came to save the world whether it wanted to be

saved or not-----OR, he came to judge the world without giving it any opportunity to be saved at all. Anyone who is honest, and has read the Bible, knows this is. There is no contradiction in Jesus' words any more than the words of God the Father in both OT and NT through his Holy Spirit when he **MAKES HIS DELIVERANCES AND SALVATIONS CONDITIONED UPON MAN'S BELIEF AND REPENTANCE AND OBEDIENCE!**

The English word "blind" comes from Indo-European *bhrendhos* which apparently meant not so much "sightlessness" as it meant "confusion and obscurity." The notion of someone wandering around in actual or mental darkness, not knowing where to go, naturally progressed to the "inability to see." Related words that fit this pattern are blunder, possibly from Old Norse *blunda* "to shut one's eyes," blunt, and maybe also blend. Pepys in his diary, writes of a "little blind (i.e., dark) bed-chamber" A.D. 1666, and traces of the ancient words remain in "blind entrance." The Greek word used by John to record Jesus' utterance in 9:41 is *tuphloi*. This Greek word or a variation is used 50 times in the Greek text, and often in a metaphorical sense of deliberate moral ignorance (i.e., "blindness" e.g., Matt. 15:14). When Jesus said to the Pharisees, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt..." he meant that if they were honestly ignorant "i.e., blind" they would not be guilty of the sin of disbelieving in him and wanting to kill him. If they were "poor in spirit," if they honestly, through no deliberate fault of their own, were destitute of those virtues Peter says one must have (2 Pet. 1:5-9), if they honestly did not know they had violated the Law of Moses (Rom. 2:19), then they would have no guilt. **BUT WHO, EVEN IN THIS VERY DAY CAN MAKE SUCH CLAIMS, HONESTLY?** The Pharisees dishonestly claimed they were righteous (i.e., not blind, blundering, sinning). **THEREFORE, THEY WERE BLIND AND THEIR GUILT REMAINED!** No man is so blind as one who will not see! If the Pharisees had only acknowledged their spiritual blindness (their unrighteousness), and had been pure in heart, they would have sought the Light of the World, who enlightens every person who wants the Light. The person who knows his own ignorance and blindness, and who desires to know the Light, is the man whose vision can be increased and his redemption accomplished. These Pharisees did not "see" the True Light right before their physical eyes, because the "eyes" of their hearts were crusted over with the cataracts of greed, envy, hatred, self-righteousness, and evil. **WHAT A LESSON FOR EVERYONE TODAY! MAY WE NEVER ARRIVE AT THE PLACE WHERE WE REJECT GOD'S RIGHTEOUS WORD IN FAVOR OF OUR OWN SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS "FEELINGS!" LET US NEVER BE PRESUMPTUOUS AS TO THINK THAT WE CAN NEVER BE TAUGHT FROM GOD'S WORD BECAUSE WE KNOW IT ALL. WE NEED TO GET THOSE 100 (UN-BIBLE-SCHOOLED) PEOPLE WHO COME TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY TO ALSO ATTEND SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS SO THEY WON'T GRADUALLY BECOME BLIND!** The Feast of Tabernacles has taught us that (a) spiritual blindness is caused by—(a) materialism (Isa. 56:10; 59:10), (b) by fear (Acts 24:25), (c) by self-righteousness and prejudice (Jn. 7-8-9). The cure for spiritual blindness is: (a) purity and humility, (Jn. 9:39-41); (b) faith (Heb. 11:27); (c) courage (Jn. 9:13-34); and, (d) loyalty to Christ (Jn. 19:13-34).

We should have added John 10:1-21 to this lesson since that text is also a record of part of what Jesus said (the last words he said) at this Feast of Tabernacles. But, since

we take one chapter at a time in Sunday School, we will simply make a note in the next lesson that John 10 has a gap of about 3 months between verses 21 and 22. The Feast of Tabernacles was in late September or very early October. The Feast of Dedication (Jn. 10:22) is December 25th (same day as the Christian's Christmas) and is called "Hanukkah" or "Chanukah" in Hebrew, which means, "Dedication." It is sometimes called "The Feast of Lights." More about that in the next lesson.

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 10:1-42

Indeed! It is possible for “thieves and robbers” to get into the earthly sheep-fold of God (the church). Jesus was talking about the church here—not heaven (Matt. 7:15-20)! Paul warned the elders of the church at Ephesus in Acts 20:28-32 that “fierce wolves would come in” from outside the church and “from among (themselves) men would arise speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples...therefore the elders must be alert and must feed the flock on “the word of God’s grace” to build them up so they do not lose their inheritance among the saints. **AND PAUL SHOULD KNOW! HE HAD TO FIGHT THOSE FROM WITHOUT AND WITHIN ALL HIS LIFE TO PRESERVE THE VULNERABLE FLOCK OF GOD!** We know why and how the “outsiders” try to savage the sheep of God—they can’t tolerate the truth because it condemns them in their sins! They have concluded that the best way to ease a guilty conscience is to stamp out that which pierces through their facade of self-righteousness—so they attack, viciously, maliciously and overtly. **BUT WHY AND HOW DO “OUTSIDERS” GET TO BE “INSIDERS” AND ONCE THEY’RE INSIDE, WHY DO THEY WANT TO TAKE GOD’S FLOCK AWAY FROM HIM?** (Ezek. 34:1-10). WHY they “get in” is to exploit the sheep for their own selfish purposes—they do not care about the sheep, only themselves. “Thieves robbers” get into the flock to “feed” upon and devour it for themselves and God’s sheep who are meek and humble, who do not retaliate, are deemed an “easy mark” by those who exploit them. Paul said of the Judaizers (Jews who came into the Christian church of the first century) who tried to “steal” the flock of God back to Judaism, “they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh” (Gal. 6:13). Such Judaizers would not only profit in a monetary way from “stealing” followers, they would also “profit” in human accolades and esteem. **HOW they get “in” is by sneaking in “secretly” and becoming “false brethren”** (Gal. 2:4; Acts 15:1,24; 2 Cor. 11:13,26; Gal. 1:7; 2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 4). There are “thieves and robbers” TODAY (Gal. 1:6-7) “in” Christendom preaching another gospel (contrary to the written word of God) so they can make money and/or hear the applause of the world! **THEY HAVE COME INTO THE FOLD “BY ANOTHER WAY” i.e., BY THEIR UNSCRIPTURAL AND IN SOME CASES, ANTI-SCRIPTURAL, TEACHINGS—BY “FLATTERING WORDS”** (Rom. 16:18) **THEY DECEIVE THE SIMPLE-MINDED—THEY DIDN’T GET IN BY USING THE PURE WORD OF GOD ALONE!** How are the “sheep” to recognize “thieves and robbers” within the flock? **BY NOTING THOSE WHO “DO VIOLENCE” TO GOD’S WORD** (Ezek. 22:25-27); **BY NOTING THOSE WHO “SPEAK PERVERSE THINGS”** (Acts 20:30); **BY NOTING THOSE WHO PREACH “A DIFFERENT GOSPEL”** (Gal. 1:6-7); **BY NOTING THOSE WHO “CREATE DISSENSIONS AND DIFFICULTIES, IN OPPOSITION TO THE DOCTRINE” OF THE APOSTLES** (Rom. 16:17); **BY NOTING WHAT KIND OF “FRUIT” THEIR TEACHINGS AND THEIR LIVES PRODUCE** (Matt. 7:15-20). These “insiders” don’t attack overtly—they do it covertly, clandestinely. They pretend to be part of the flock, but then they “draw away” the sheep from the fold and the Good Shepherd, to their own, private “folds” and eat away at the sheep until they have gobbled up their souls in false teaching and false living!

In John 10:2-6 Jesus is not talking about himself, per se, as The Good Shepherd. He is contrasting “good shepherds” (the prophets, John the Immerser, etc.) with bad shepherds (i.e., the Pharisees). Jesus is contrasting what he wants the apostles (and later, elders, evangelists {preachers} and teachers, Eph. 4:11-16) to be against what the Pharisees were! The figures (shepherds, sheep, sheep-folds, hirelings) used by Jesus in these allegories were familiar enough to the Jews. Read these OT references for yourself (Num. 27:17; 1 Sam. 17:34-36; 2 Sam. 12:3; 1 Kings 22:17; Psa. 23, 27:13; 80:1; 95:7; Isa. 40:11; Jer. 23:1; Ezek. 34; Zech. 10:2; 11:17; 13:7, et al.). Jesus’ main purpose here is to show that those rulers who had excommunicated the beggar (chapter 9) were not, as they claimed to be, true shepherds of God’s flock—because they refused to lead that one “lamb” (the beggar) through the true Door of the Sheep (Jesus). Some ancient Greek mss. do not have the definite article before the word “shepherd” in verse 2 which means it could be translated, “but he who enters by the door is (indefinite article) a shepherd of the sheep.” Characteristics of a “good shepherd” are: (a) he enters by the Door—Jesus—he does not sneak in by another “way”; (b) he is recognized by those who care for and want to protect the sheep (gate-keepers); (c) he is recognized (voice—his word is good) by the sheep because he is the one who cares for them; (d) he calls his own sheep by name—he knows each sheep intimately and individually; (e) he goes ahead of his sheep and leads them out into pasture-lands—he doesn’t drive or drag them; (f) he regards the sheep as “his own” and treats them as a “possession-in-trust” from his Master; (g) he is so trustworthy the sheep “know (heed) his voice; and follow him.” Jesus, is of course, the “template” for the true shepherd, but others have allowed themselves to be “conformed” to his image as “good shepherds” (i.e., the prophets and the apostles and martyred “leaders” centuries past and now).

The responsibility of a true shepherd is to lead the sheep entrusted to him into the fold THROUGH THE TRUE DOOR JESUS CHRIST!! There are other “ways” to get into the “fold” but they are not “true” doors! Through self, through lying, flattering, forcing, or sneaking (hypocrisy) in secretly are false ways to get “in.” MANY OF THOSE FALSE WAYS ARE SO SUBTLE, SHREWD AND CUNNING, THEY ARE ALMOST UNDETECTABLE! It behooves any man who desires to be a “true shepherd” (elder, preacher or teacher) of God’s flock (the church) to train and prepare himself (i.e., “take heed to yourselves” Acts 20:28) so that he will be able to “take heed to the flock to feed it (Greek poimainein, (“keeping or pasturing sheep” in Lk. 17:7) and visit, or, care for it (“oversee” episkopous in Greek). That is the responsibility of the one wanting to be a shepherd. The sheep have their own responsibility (knowing a true shepherd’s voice and following it)—but a shepherd has the responsibility to be A TRUE SHEPHERD! That is an AWESOME responsibility! One for which he will “give an account” before God (Heb. 13:17). A TRUE SHEPHERD MUST “KNOW” JESUS CHRIST (i.e., KNOWING AND DOING THE WORD OF CHRIST) WELL ENOUGH TO LEAD THE SHEEP INTO GOD’S FOLD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST! To “lead” means to be a “pathfinder” a “pioneer”—one who has gone all the way in which, or through which, he wishes others to follow! THAT WAS THE FUNDAMENTAL (AND ALMOST ONLY) PRINCIPLE TAUGHT “NON-COMS” IN THE NAVY IN LEADERSHIP SCHOOL (WHEN YOUR’S TRULY ATTENDED)! “YOU CAN’T GET PEOPLE TO FOLLOW WHERE YOU HAVEN’T GONE BEFORE.” i.e., if you are going to give orders, you have to have learned to take orders and do the job you want your “followers” to do.

Now the characteristics of a hireling are just the opposite of a true shepherd. The HIRELING (a) is a sneak—enters the fold by some way other than coming through Jesus—the Door; (b) is a predator—comes only to steal, kill and destroy the sheep and the fold; (c) does not consider the sheep as entrusted to him to be treated as he would his own; (d) is a coward—sees the “wolf” (danger) coming and deserts the sheep to save himself from the danger; (d) is indifferent about the sheep’s needs (Greek, *ou melei*, “not a concern for”). The hireling is concerned ONLY ABOUT HIMSELF—WHAT HE CAN GET “OUT” OF THE SHEEP, AND HOW HE CAN AVOID ANY DANGER TO HIMSELF! TWICE IN THIS CONTEXT, JESUS WILL SAY THAT A GOOD SHEPHERD (LIKE HIMSELF) WOULD LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR GOD’S SHEEP! That’s why we repeat over and over, being an elder, a preacher, or a teacher, is an awesome responsibility! Communist troublemakers infiltrated South Korea, sparking local rebellions in which many Christians died for their faith. Two of those martyred were Tong-In and Tong-Sin, the sons of Pastor Son, the minister of a Presbyterian church near Sonchum. Tong-In, the eldest, had been thrown out of school by the Japanese, during World War II, for refusing to worship at a Shinto Shrine. After WWII, he had gone back to high school where he was elected president of the campus YMCA. In October 1948, a wild Communist uprising exploded in the area and young Communists seized the school. A 19-year-old Marxist pointed a pistol at Tong-In and ordered him to renounce Christ. Tong-In replied with the gospel message, pleading for the communist to accept Christ. Suddenly Tong-Sin, the youngest brother, rushed up. “Shoot me,” he shouted, “and let my brother live.” “No,” objected Tong-In, “I am the elder brother. If you must kill someone, shoot me.” The Communist killed them both. When Pastor Son was brought to identify their bodies, he said only, “Their shining faces are as lovely as flowers.”—By Their Blood, by James & Marti Hefley, Baker, 1996, p. 97. Every “shepherd” who makes a mistake, or sins, in shepherding God’s flock is not necessarily an hireling. All human “shepherds” (elders, preachers, teachers) sin occasionally! The difference between the hireling and the erring shepherd is in the heart. When the erring shepherd realizes he has sinned, he repents (truly) and changes his thinking and his actions, asking God’s forgiveness and the forgiveness of flock and/or individual sheep he has sinned against. Because the erring, but true, shepherd cares about the flock, not himself! That is why the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy that desiring to become an elder (shepherd) is the number one qualification—such a person wants to lead God’s flock, not for his own desires, but for God’s desires! That’s how you tell the difference!

The one virtue that distinguishes Jesus as the GOOD SHEPHERD is that he not only lays down his life for the sheep, but “no one takes it from him...he lays it down of his own accord...and did, in fact, exercise his power to take it up again.” John 10:18). JESUS WAS THE GOOD SHEPHERD BECAUSE HE SACRIFICED HIS LIFE FOR GOD’S SHEEP—BUT LOTS OF “SHEPHERDS” HAVE LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES FOR GOD’S SHEEP, EVEN “OF THEIR OWN ACCORD” (i.e., THEY COULD HAVE DONE OTHERWISE). HOWEVER NO SHEPHERD OF GOD’S FLOCK HAS EVER TAKEN UP HIS LIFE AGAIN (i.e., RESURRECTED HIMSELF FROM THE DEAD)! All the goodness of shepherding residing in Jesus could never have been confirmed apart from his resurrection from the dead! A few people have been resurrected from the dead by either a prophet, an apostle, or the incarnate-Christ. But no prophet or apostle was present in the tomb when Jesus arose from the dead—HE DID IT ALL ON HIS OWN BY THE POWER OF GOD THE FATHER! That

makes him unique—absolutely different—than all other people ever to exist on the face of this earth! THAT MAKES HIM, BEYOND ANY REASONABLE DOUBT, THE ONLY TRUSTWORTHY SPOKESMAN FOR GOD THE CREATOR, SUSTAINER, AND SAVIOR OF LIFE! He alone can be trusted to “shepherd” humanity through this life and into the next one!

About 3 months of time elapsed between John 10:21 and 10:22! It is very doubtful that Hanukkah was celebrated in Jesus’ time as it is today! Jesus was “present” in the temple during this Feast but our text does not positively say he was “observing” Hanukkah! He certainly took advantage of the opportunity to reach the multitudes gathered in one place, to preach and teach. The “Feast of Dedication” is called Chanuka or Hanukkah by Jews. The word in Hebrew means, “Dedication.” “Dedication” is a very “patriotic” festival in modern Judaism. According to Michael Asheri, author of, *Living Jewish*, Everest House, 1978, pp. 175-176, “It commemorates the rededication of the temple in Jerusalem by Judah Maccabee, his brothers and their Jewish soldiers on the 25th day of Kislev (December), 165 B.C. When this group wanted to light the great menorah (originally a 7-pronged lamp) they could find consecrated oil enough for only one day (it took a week to prepare “consecrated” oil). They lit the menorah with the oil they had on hand and by a miracle (it is alleged) the lamp burned for 8 days, giving them time to prepare enough oil to keep it burning after that time. That is why today Jews celebrate the holiday for 8 days, the main day being December 25th. In modern Judaism each Jewish family lights an 8-branched Chanuka lamp, or Chanukiya. The Chanukiya is actually composed of 8 lights on the lamp, plus one extra one called the shamash, or servant, which is used to light the other lights. This feast is also called “The Feast of Lights.” The Chanuka lamp is to be set next to a door or window so that it can be seen from outside—it is entirely for adornment and its light may not be used to read by, examine things by or for any other practical purpose. In the U.S. it is not unusual to see electric Chanuka lamps...and according to most rabbinical opinion, these lamps are kosher. Gambling, which is frowned upon the rest of the year, is permitted and even encouraged on Chanuka. A toy 4-sided-top called a dreidel, or s’vivon is used (i.e., something like a die)—the players all bet the same amount while one player spins the dreidel. This “top” has the Hebrew letters nun, gimel, heh and shin—one on each side. If the letter nun comes up, the bets remain while the dreidel is passed to the next player. If the letter gimel comes up, the player who has spun takes everything in the pot; if heh, the player takes half; if shin, the player has to ante the same amount he did at first, and the dreidel is passed to the next player. This custom originated in Roman times when the study of the Torah (Law of Moses) was forbidden. Jewish children were given these tops and when Roman authorities came to inspect the schools, they found the children playing instead of studying. The letters really stand for Nes Gadol Haya Sham (“A great miracle has happened there”). On the 5th night of Chanuka, after the 5th light is lit, it is customary to give the children Chanuka gelt. Gelt is Yiddish for Chanuka money. The custom of giving other sorts of gifts really belongs to Passover and Purim, and its adoption in the U.S. at Chanuka is in imitation of the Christian custom of giving presents at Christmas, which comes about the same time as Chanuka. (Mr. Asheri, verbatim)“Chanuka is not a ‘Jewish Christmas’ and no service is done to Judaism by attempting to turn it into one. Neither is it a major holiday on the same level of importance as Passover or Shavuot (Pentecost)...and to overemphasize it as a sort of antidote for

Christmas has proven to be exactly the wrong direction to take....I recall once witnessing a class at a 'Jewish' kindergarten where the teachers, instructing their little charges about Chanuka, had trained them, when asked, 'What is just as important as getting presents on Chanuka?' to answer: 'Giving!' This is nonsense. Children are not expected to give anything on Chanuka to their parents or friends; they are only supposed to receive." It is the custom of the Ashkenazim (eastern European Jews) to eat latkes, or potato pancakes, on Chanuka. Where this custom originated is not known except that it was not among the Hasmoneans (Maccabees). The potato was unknown in the Old World before Columbus discovered the New. And while we are on the subject of Columbus, he may have been born in Italy, but his parents were Spaniards and his native language Spanish. All Spanish historians are in accord on one fact concerning Columbus: he was a Jew (Columbus Day is still not a Jewish holiday, however)."

PTB's comments: It commemorates, as it did in Jesus' day, the expulsion of the hated Syrians from the land of the Jews and the cleansing of the Hebrew temple. In 165 B.C. the Jews became free (for about 100 years) of foreign oppression (until the Romans marched down into Palestine and occupied it as one of their provinces). However, the Hasmoneans (165-60 BC.—descendants of the Maccabees) became just as oppressive as their foreign "masters" (Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece) had been! "Dedication" was not legislated in the Law of Moses. It was not a commandment from God—it was added to the religion of the Jews by the rabbis. TWICE (Deut. 4:2; 12:32) THE ISRAELITES WERE WARNED NOT TO ADD ANYTHING TO THE LAW OF MOSES OR TAKE AWAY FROM IT! Furthermore, if Columbus was a "Jew" why did he have his men erect a large wooden cross "as a token of Jesus Christ our Lord, and in honor of the Christian faith" on every island at which they stopped in their discovery of the "New World"? Why did he refer to "Jesus Christ" as his Savior in his own diary? And why was he named "Christopher" which means "Christ-bearer"? And why did he have Catholic priests with him in his journeys, and why did the Pope congratulate him for "inducing the native inhabitants to worship our Redeemer" and call Columbus, "our (Catholicism's) beloved son"? Mr. Asheri doesn't know his history very well!

B. F. Westcott, venerable Bible scholar, says of John 10:25-30 "If man falls (from grace) at any stage in his spiritual life, it is not from want of divine grace, nor from the overwhelming power of adversaries (i.e., Satan and cohorts) but from his neglect to use that which he may or may not use. We cannot be protected against ourselves in spite of ourselves...The sense of the divine protection is at any moment sufficient to inspire confidence, but not to render effort (on our own part) unnecessary." (Italics, mine). No outside force may snatch us from the hand of God, but we may certainly jump out on our own! Paul states plainly that salvation is given by God, but requires a continuing effort of faith and works on the part of man (Eph. 2:8-10; Phil 2:12-13). Romans, chapter 8, combines the two ideas: when man submits to the leading of the Holy Spirit and acts to put to death the deeds of the body, there is no principality, power, nor any other creature which is able to separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Numerous passages in the NT clearly state that it is possible for believers, on their own initiative, to fall from grace (e.g., Gal. 5:4; 1 Tim. 5:8; 2 Tim. 2:12; Heb. 6:1-8; 10:26-31; James 1:19-20; 2 Pet. 2:1;

2:20-22). The doctrine of “eternal security” is nowhere taught in the Bible, and would be a contradiction of the very idea that salvation is dependent upon the continuing faith, repentance, and good works of the Christian! If “eternal security” were correct, then once a person believed he would not have to believe again; once he repented, he would not have to repent again; if he did one good work, he would not have to do any more— if it is true, he would not ever sin again—and we know what John wrote about that (1 Jn. 1:8-10). You want an up-to-date example? A former college and professional basketball star is running for the nomination to the U.S. presidency in A.D. 2000. As a 25-year-old New York Nick, he said: “I’ve made my choice. I love Jesus Christ and try to serve Him to the best of my ability.” In the March 1968 *Christian Athlete* (periodical of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes) and a tract published by the American Tract Society, he said: “It is remarkable how relevant, how real and vital Jesus Christ is today...” and that he accepted Christ as his savior at Princeton University, and ended the tract by saying, “The choice is simple. It is between the eternal and the passing, between the strong and the weak, between the living challenge and a boring conformity...Between Jesus Christ and the world.” As late as 1968 he told the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, “Man is insufficient on his own and needs a savior. For me this savior is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” Today however you won’t hear this “star” professing such strong and exclusive faith in Jesus Christ—he resists the “exclusivity of ‘true believers’” and accepts all faiths... “Christianity offers one way to achieve it (inner peace); Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Confucianism, Hinduism offer others.” On the campaign trail he is championing gay rights and federal funding for abortion (even in the final month of pregnancy). At one time he embraced the American Tract Society’s “statement of faith.” Today he says that homosexuality “happens to be an attribute about as meaningful as having blond hair.” (If you want to read more about this “fall from grace” it is in the December 1999/January 2000 *The American Spectator* magazine).

The Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy saying that human beings must not be called “God.” Jesus first quoted to them scripture from their Torah (the Old Testament) in Psalms 82:6 where Asaph, by the power of the Holy Spirit, wrote, “I say, ‘You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you....’” And the Hebrew word used there is Elohim (“gods”), the same word used to name “God” in Genesis 1:1! The parenthetical statement of Jesus, “and the Scripture cannot be broken,” has far-reaching implications. It is the unequivocal, dogmatic assertion by the Incarnate God that the revealed, recorded and canonical word of God is divinely inspired, inerrant, authoritative and imperishable! Edward J. Young, in *Thy Word is Truth*, Eerdmans, p. 27—“The Scriptures possess an authority so great that they cannot be broken. What they say will stand and cannot be annulled or set aside. If the Scripture speaks, the issue is settled once and for all...” Today’s existential and subjective approach which scoffs at the historical objectivity of the Bible is crushed by this statement of Jesus. “Cannot be broken,” does not mean, however, that a portion of Scripture may not have already been fulfilled, abrogated, or made inapplicable to man by God himself (e.g., God’s abrogation of the Law of Moses as a covenant, and the fulfillment of all the OT prophecies in Jesus Christ and his church). “Cannot be broken” does mean that the Scripture cannot be altered as to its historical factuality everywhere, and its applicability in its own dispensation. So Jesus informs these Jewish “scholars” that even in their own Scripture (still applicable in their day) God called some men “gods.” Would God blaspheme himself? Man can be called

“god” without blaspheming! SECOND, however, and most significant, Jesus made his defense against blasphemy on the basis of empirically-verifiable evidence that the works he had done could be tested by his accusers through their own sensate receptors (eyes, ears, touch, etc.) to reach the conclusion beyond any reasonable doubt that he was God. God placed the spirit of man within a fleshly, sensate “tabernacle” (body) when he created man. It was therefore necessary that God reveal himself (to a degree sufficient to establish faith) in a sensory perceptible form. So, all through the ages God made himself and his will known by miracles and signs which man could see and hear and feel and touch. At the end of the OT age, God himself became incarnate in his Son and did his works among men that men might know by seeing, hearing, and touching him! SO JESUS APPEALS TO HIS “SIGNS” AS EVIDENCE THAT HE IS WHO HE CLAIMS TO BE—SON OF GOD, MESSIAH, IMMANUEL, GOD IN THE FLESH!

Jesus certainly does not overemphasize the empirical (physical) approach to faith in him! The Bible appeals constantly and consistently to EVIDENCE for faith in itself as the word of God. That was the purpose of miracles in the OT (Abraham & Sarah’s miraculous child; Moses’ miracles in the court of Pharaoh and the wilderness; the prophets and the fulfillment of their prophecies, e.g., Isa. 41;21-29; 44:6-22). All Jesus’ miracles in the Gospels were to engender faith in him—almost all of these were done in the presence of huge crowds of eyewitnesses (some of whom were enemies of Jesus). After his resurrection, Jesus invited “doubting” Thomas to touch the nail prints and the spear-gash in his resurrected body. Peter’s first sermon on the day of Pentecost invited all his audience to “check out” the empty tomb. Every sermon in the book of Acts appeals to the historicity of eye-witnessed facts of the resurrection. Paul appealed to the Corinthian church on the basis of empirically known facts (1 Cor. 15). Paul challenged King Agrippa about Christianity, “...the king knows about these things...for I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner.” (Acts 26:25). ONE THING IS CERTAIN—THE BIBLE EXPECTS PEOPLE TO BELIEVE IN GOD AND CHRIST ON THE BASIS OF EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE...NOT SUBJECTIVE WISH, GAMBLE, FANCY, DREAM, LONGING, WANT, OR ANY OTHER SUBJECTIVE EXCUSE! CHRISTIANS MUST NOT DEFEND THEIR FAITH ON ANY BASIS EXCEPT EMPIRICAL (PHYSICAL) EVIDENCE. We are commanded by apostolic doctrine, “Always be prepared to make a defense (give a reason) to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you...” Wishes, longings, and wants are not reasons! FACTS OF HISTORY (THINGS DONE WHICH WERE SEEN BY EYEWITNESSES) ARE REASONS! Jesus appealed to this for verification of his claims to be God in the flesh! We can do no less!

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 11:1-57

Jesus told his disciples that the illness of Lazarus was not unto death because Jesus knew he was going to go to Bethany and raise from its tomb the physically-dead body of Lazarus. Lazarus was going to “die!” Jesus waited, in fact, until he was sure Lazarus was “dead” (Jn. 11:6,11,13,14) before he went back to Bethany from Perea (John 10:4-42, Perea is on the eastern side of the Jordan River in what is now the modern nation of “Jordan”) where he had gone after the Feast of Dedication. Jesus talked of Lazarus being “asleep” rather than dead. Jesus knows (and so do we through his revelation, (e.g., Lk. 16:19-31), that no one ever “dies” in the sense of being annihilated, erased, completely “gone.” Everyone “lives” in another life beyond this one of the physical earth! The question is not whether we shall have a life beyond this one or not—WE SHALL—the big question is what kind of life shall we have in the next existence! Lazarus was NOT dead, he never did die! He was “gone” from his earthly body when Jesus finally arrived in Bethany. In fact, as Lazarus’ sisters said, by the time Jesus got there Lazarus’ body had begun to decompose (11:39). Lazarus was somewhere in Paradise (Lk. 23:43) where believers go after their bodies cease to function. He was “in the bosom of Abraham” because our Lord is the God of the living, not the dead (Mk. 12:24-27; Lk. 20:34-40). Dallas Willard writes in *The Divine Conspiracy*, “Once we have grasped our situation in God’s full world, the startling disregard Jesus and the New Testament writers had for ‘physical death’ suddenly makes sense. Paul bluntly states...that Jesus abolished death—simply did away with it. Nothing like what is usually understood as death will happen to those who have entered his life....Jesus shows his apprentices (disciples) how to live in the light of the fact that they will never stop living...The American evangelist Dwight Moody remarked toward the end of his life, ‘One day soon you will hear that I am dead. Do not believe it. I will then be alive as never before.’ When the two guards came to take Deitrich Bonhoeffer to the gallows, he briefly took a friend aside to say, ‘This is the end, but for me it is the beginning of life.’ How then are we to think about the transition (from physical death to eternal life)? Failure to have a way of thinking about it is one of the things that continues to make it dreadful even to those who have every confidence in Jesus. The unimaginable is naturally frightening to us. But there are two pictures that I believe to be accurate as well as helpful. They can help us know what to expect as we leave ‘our tent,’ our body (2 Cor. 5:1-6). One was made famous by Peter Marshall some years ago. It is the picture of a child playing in the evening among her toys. Gradually she grows weary and lays her head down for a moment of rest, lazily continuing to play. The next thing she experiences or ‘tastes’ is the morning light of a new day flooding the bed and the room where her mother or father took her. Interestingly, we never remember falling asleep. We do not ‘see’ it, ‘taste’ it. Another picture is of one who walks to a doorway between rooms. While still interacting with those in the room she is leaving, she begins to see and converse with people in the room beyond, who may be totally concealed from those left behind. Before wide spread use of heavy sedation, it was quite common for those keeping watch to observe something like this. The one making the transition (dying) often

begins to speak to those who have gone before. They come to meet us while we are still in touch with those left behind. The curtains part for us briefly before we go through” (Acts 7:54-60). LAZARUS WASN'T GOING TO “DIE” HE WOULD JUST BE “ABSENT FROM THE BODY AND AT HOME WITH THE LORD”—UNTIL JESUS BROUGHT HIM BACK TO THIS WORLD!

Jesus used the imminent death of Lazarus (which he alone knew at that point would take place) to speak this little parable about “walking in the day.” His disciples were still thinking materialistically (with a worldly mind-set) about his Messiahship and his kingdom. They were afraid for him to return to Judea lest he be killed and all their ambitions and aspirations about an earthly kingdom would disappear with his death! Jesus NEVER QUIT TRYING TO GET THEM TO THINK spiritually. JESUS IS THE “LIGHT OF DAY” IN WHICH THEY SHOULD TRUSTINGLY WALK, WHETHER IT MEANT HIS PHYSICAL DEATH OR NOT! He must prove to them AGAIN, that he has the power over life and death—HE is the “light of day.” He had already raised two people from death, the widow of Nain’s son and Jairus’ daughter! He had been transfigured back into some of his heavenly glory. He had done miracle after miracle and miracle—but they still didn’t get it! THEY STILL DID NOT CONCEIVE OF HIM AS BEING IN CONTROL OF ALL THAT EXISTS—LIFE, DEATH, DISEASE, DEMONS, NATURE, etc. etc. So what appeared to them to be Jesus “stumbling around in the darkness” of naivete about his enemies, was really Jesus leading the disciples into “sovereign day-light of eternal life.” LET US MAKE SURE WE ARE WALKING IN THE “DAYLIGHT” OF JESUS’ SOVEREIGNTY OVER EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE!

Jesus was not glad Lazarus had died! He wept at the grave-side of Lazarus and the grief of Lazarus’ sisters! Jesus was compassionate with people’s sadness and loneliness and fear because of physical death and the temporary separation it causes! Jesus was glad that he had not been present to save him from dying. He must have known that if he had been there when Lazarus was merely very ill, he would have healed Lazarus and the majesty and wonder of his bringing his spirit back into his decomposing body would never have occurred. What he said to the apostles sounds quite shocking 2000 years later! But apparently the disciples didn’t even hear what he said, or were not shocked about his “being glad he was not there” when Lazarus died! Because when he said, “But let us go to him,” their immediate reaction was, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” It was clear to them that Jesus was determined to go to Jerusalem where he would endanger his life with those who had a couple of months earlier wanted to stone him to death. So, the disciples were ready to go with Jesus to Jerusalem, even if it meant they would “become dead” like Lazarus, fighting against overwhelming odds to keep Jesus alive. Peter was always read to “die” fighting for Jesus’ life! (Mk. 14:31; Jn. 18:10) and so were the other apostles. They had visions of Jesus conquering his enemies in Jerusalem and setting up his throne, and each one of them would have some “great” position in the Messianic kingdom of God on earth! Jesus was glad for one more opportunity to show his sovereignty over death and life—that his kingdom was about eternal life.

John records that Lazarus’ body had been in the tomb four days by the time Jesus

and the disciples arrived at Bethany John 11:17. John took extra care to record this little detail about the length of Lazarus' entombment for a very important purpose. Later (John 11:34) Jesus asked where they had buried Lazarus. The sisters led him to Lazarus' burial place and Jesus said, "Take away the stone." That was when Martha said, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days!" The RSV translation, "there will be an odor" is rather euphemistic because the literal translation from the Greek words *ede oze*, would be, "by this time he stinks." It may seem strange that John would recollect (with the help of the Holy Spirit) to record this little detail about the "stinking corpse" of Lazarus' body. **BUT IT IS THIS KIND OF DETAIL THAT MAKES THE GOSPEL RECORDS CREDIBLE AND AUTHENTIC.** It is also detail that substantiates this to be an actual resurrection from the dead accomplished by the power and presence of Jesus Christ. Lazarus was really dead! No doubt about it with Martha and Mary. They knew exactly how long his body had lain in that "cave—four days. And to roll away the stone covering it would let escape a very foul, sickening stench of rotting flesh! If Lazarus comes out of that "cave" alive in his own body—**IT WILL BE MIRACLE. THIS IS NOT A HOAX, NOT SLEIGHT-OF-HAND-MAGIC.** There were eyewitnesses—some of whom were "spies" for the Pharisees! **THEY BELIEVED IT HAPPENED!** They went and told the Pharisees (and the chief priests) "what Jesus had done."

Godly Jews of the OT and NT times believed in the "resurrection of the just." Even Pharisees believed in a resurrection (Acts 22:6-8). Some liberal schools of theology maintain that the Jews in the Old Testament did not believe in the future life. Of, if they did, say these theologians, they received their beliefs of the future life from heathen philosophies. Nothing could be more idiotic! Prophets literally raised people from the dead (1 Kings 17:22; 2 Kings 4:35; 13:21); Elijah was transported to heaven in a fiery chariot (2 Kings 2:11); the 23rd Psalm says believers will "dwell in the house of the Lord forever"; Isaiah 14:9 speaks of the after-life; Isaiah 25:8 predicts God will "swallow up death forever"; Isaiah 53:10-12 predicts the resurrection of the Messiah; Isaiah 66:24 predicts the after-life; Hebrews 11:13-16 and 11:39—12:2 (written to Hebrew-Christians) assumes its Hebrew audience believes in the resurrection. When Jesus gave the parable of Lazarus (a different Lazarus) and the rich man who died and went to Hades, Jesus expected there would be no shock to the Jewish mind when he said the beggar died and went to Abraham's bosom! Michael Asheri, *Living Jewish*, pp. 195-196, *op.cit.* exemplifies modern Jews who do not believe in an "after-life." He says, "...in the entire Torah there is not a single word which can literally be taken to refer to life beyond the grave or to a 'world to come.' In other words, God did not see fit to tell us anything at all about an afterlife...we are under no obligation to accept it...He has revealed nothing concerning it...In Hebrew, reincarnation is called *Gilgul Neshamoi*, and a great many Orthodox Jews maintain that under certain circumstances, never very clearly defined, the soul of a Jew can return to life in the body of another person or even of an animal or a plant....most Orthodox Jews (believe) that some day a Jew will appear who will announce the end of the world as we know it and the establishment of the kingdom of God...this Jew will be a person, not an incarnation of God, as if such a thing were possible (*italics ours*), is called *Mashiach*, or Messiah. When he arrives there will be a resurrection of the dead, called in Hebrew, *T'chiat Ha-metim*, and all the resurrected Jews will gather in Israel, there to live forever." Mr. Asheri does not tell us what Orthodox Jews believe will happen to Gentiles

when the Mashiach (Messiah) appears. The Orthodox Jewish theology about the afterlife (“olam-habbah”) contemplates a “resurrection” for Jews on this presently inhabited earth—it is focused on a materialistic “heaven.” BUT I AM CONVINCED THAT MARY AND MARTHA BELIEVED IN A “RESURRECTION” TO AN AFTER-LIFE IN ANOTHER EXISTENCE! However, the certainty, and the nature of the “resurrection” was quite opaque in the Jewish mind, even in Jesus’ day. Jesus was attempting to get these two dear friends of his to see life after death in a much more CERTAIN AND REALISTIC VIEW by pointing to HIMSELF as “the resurrection and the life.” HE (THE ONE STANDING THERE BEFORE THEM; THE ONE ABOUT TO DEMONSTRATION HIS POWER OVER LIFE AND DEATH) IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. Any one who believes and trusts him will never die—won’t go to a state of unconscious sleep for a thousand years—will “be at home with the Lord” and eventually, his body will be raised from the dust of this earth IN A NEW, GLORIFIED, ETERNALIZED FORM!

When Jesus had been led to the spot of Lazarus’ tomb, Jesus wept (shortest verse in the Bible, Jn. 11:35). Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb; it was a “cave” and a stone lay upon it. It is very seldom that we find Jesus “deeply moved.” The Greek phrase is, *lesousoun palin embrimomenos*, and the word *embrimomenos* means “groaned, moaned, sobbed, wailed.” Another form of the verb appears in Jn. 11:33. The verb is sometimes used to denote expressions of deep anxiety or even of anger. It expresses DEEP feeling. How sweet and comforting this picture of Jesus weeping at the tomb of Lazarus. Here is the heart of God demonstrably going out to suffering, sorrowing humanity in the tears of God’s Only Son. Our Savior is not aloof and cold and unfeeling, “For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that has been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). Seeing the woe and deep grief which sin caused among men, Jesus was visibly troubled of spirit—so visibly overwrought that John remembered it and recorded it here. There were other times when Jesus was visibly troubled within because of sin and unbelief. He was “grieved” at the unbelief of the Jews (Mk. 3:5). He was troubled at the last supper over the one who was about to betray him (Jn. 13:21). He was troubled of soul when the Greeks were brought to him and he was made vividly aware of the cost he was about to pay for humanity’s atonement (Jn. 12:27). God’s heart is touched with our grief. Soon he would shed tears of grief and sympathy for the rebellious people of Jerusalem (Lk. 19:41-44) seeing prophetically the future holocaust of the city’s destruction in A.D. 70, he knew the terrible agonies that would be theirs. Yes! God cries! The book of Hosea (esp. Hos. 11:1-9) depicts how God hurts when his people transgress his commandments and go against his will. Remember the lines of the old hymn (which I wish we could sing in our congregational service once in a while): “Does Jesus care, when I’ve said good-by To the dearest on earth to me, and my sad heart aches, till it nearly breaks—Is it aught to Him? Does He see? O yes, He cares, I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief; When the days are weary, the long nights dreary, I know my Saviour cares.”

As the stone was being rolled away from the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus looked toward the heavens reverently and prayed. There is a noticeable contrast between our Lord’s public

prayers and the prayers of many religious men today. His were brief; theirs long and extended; his were simple and conversational—though not at all disrespectful; theirs filled with impressive vocabulary and oratorical eloquence (Matt. 11:25-26; Lk. 10:21; 24:30; Jn. 12:27-28). The absolute and perfect faith Jesus has in his Father is shown in his prayer. He thanks the Father for answering him through the miracle even before the miracle takes place. The prayer also shows the perfect ONENESS of Son and Father. But again, the prayer was not necessarily for Christ's benefit, but for the people standing there in his presence. He made sure that they would recognize his unique relationship to God the Father by praying to him just before the miracle. The emphasis is that he is working the miracle in complete harmony with God—he has been given a unique commission from the Father (cf. Jn. 5:9-36). Jesus so prayed that he manifested the immediate presence or closeness of heaven (the throne of God) to this existence in time! To Jesus, prayer was simply “touching bases with” or “phoning up” the Father just a prayer away! **GOD IS OVER US, THROUGH US, IN US, AND ALL AROUND US, EVERY MOMENT, EVERY DAY.** We may express our deepest thoughts and yearnings in words and he hears. We may pick up our father's “love letters” to us in the Bible and get his reply! **IT IS ALL RIGHT THERE—IMMEDIATELY! NO WAITING TO “GET ON-LINE, NO “CRASHES,” NO “SCREEN-LOCKS,” NO DOWNED LINES—JUST SPEAK AND LISTEN BY READING HIS WORD AND WE ARE IN TOUCH!**

Jesus yelled, “Lazarus, come out.” “The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, Unbind him, and let him go.” (Jn. 11:43-44). How cryptic—how utterly mysterious! How our hearts burn within us for more detail concerning this great miracle—but nothing more is said. We are not even told how Lazarus was able to come out of the tomb bound, as he was, hand and foot with grave wrappings! Did he hop out? Did he float out? Where was he while his body lay decomposing in the tomb? What did he experience in the world “over-there”? Did he feel—did he know? How was his spirit united again with his body? **BUT WE ARE NOT INDULGED IN OUR IDLE CURIOSITIES!** What plagues me about all this is, since Lazarus was in Paradise, what an awful sacrifice to call upon him to make to leave Paradise and return to this cruel world and find out (later) that the Jewish authorities wanted to make him dead (kill him) again! This amazing, astounding, baffling miracle, in no way explained, is just another one of those events which John so emphatically says, “...are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and believing have eternal life in him” (Jn. 20:30-31). This miracle is not recorded for our theorizing or theologizing about. There were eyewitnesses, abundantly, even including some of the enemies of Jesus, who “saw, heard, and undoubtedly touched” this miracle. **IT HAPPENED!** Do you think for one moment that when John wrote his “Gospel” in A.D. 98, had there been anyone still living (and there were because John himself was still alive then) who could have contradicted, disputed, confuted, or discredited this **UNIQUE MIRACLE** wouldn't have done so? **OF COURSE THEY WOULD! THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES MOST OF ALL! THEY HAD EVERYTHING TO LOOSE IF THIS WAS TRUE! BUT THERE'S NOT A “PEEP” OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY TO DISCREDIT IT!**

The very reaction to the enemies of Jesus establishes the authenticity of the

miracle. The account of this miracle is plain and forthright enough in its claim to be an historical event that we must accept it as historical fact or reject it, the consequence being that Jesus and his apostles are the most demonical liars that ever lived. **JESUS' ENEMIES BELIEVED IT!** They said, "...this man performs many signs. If we let him go on thus, every one will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation." (11:47-48). The Greek word *semeia*, usually used along side the words "wonders and miracles," means a supernatural event contrary to the usual course of nature which is intended as a "pointer" or means of confirmation. **THESE JEWISH AUTHORITIES ADMITTED THAT JESUS HAD DONE A "SIGN"—A SIGN SO MARVELOUS THAT EVERYONE WOULD BELIEVE IN HIM—IF THEY DID NOT DO SOMETHING ABOUT HIM!** They couldn't do anything about the sign—that was already established, *de facto*! So they would do something about the "sign-maker."

Caiphas' statement 11:50 is a very shrewd political, but maliciously unscrupulous, solution to their problem. Actually, the high priest and his cohorts were not especially interested in either the temple, the nation, or the people except insofar as to exploit them for their own material gain! Jesus predicted exactly the opposite of what Caiphas did for the Jewish nation should they reject their Messiah (Lk. 19:41-44; 21:5-28; Mk. 13:1-31; Matt. 23:27-39; 24:1-35). And it came to pass as Jesus predicted! In the heat of their malice and hatred for Jesus many of the Jews cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him, his blood be upon us and upon our children" (Matt. 27:25) and what Jesus predicted (and the Jews "swore") came to pass! His blood was upon them when the Romans destroyed their city (see Matt. 22:1-7). Josephus describes it and says it is what Daniel predicted (Dan. 9:24-27). **WHAT CAIAPHAS UTTERED WAS HIS OWN SCHEME, A FULL EXPRESSION OF HIS OWN FREE WILL, AND FOR EVIL PURPOSES.** It was not a prophecy in the sense that God's Holy Spirit "inspired" him to become God's spokesman—like Isaiah or John the Immerser, et al. **I BELIEVE THE WORD "PROPHESED"** (Greek, *epropheteusen*, 11:51) **IS BEING USED IN ITS GENERIC SENSE HERE.** In other words, the high priest was making a "pronouncement, an edict, issuing a directive" from his official position. It was, in effect, an order from the "top of the heap," the chief Jewish authority, that Jesus was to be put to death. Notice the repeated reference to his position (vv. 49,51). Jn. 11:57 also notes that an official pronouncement had been published! What the high priest was "revealing" was what these "authorities" had been keeping "secret" from the masses for more than 2 years (remember John 5:18)! **NOW THE CHIEF PRIEST MANDATED ("PROPHESED") JESUS' DEATH—IT WAS OFFICIAL, NO LONGER A SECRET OF THE RULERS!** Jesus had twice already revealed to his apostles and others ("predicted") his death by crucifixion at the hands of Jewish and Gentile authorities (Matt. 16:21-23; 17:22) and would do so a third time (Matt. 20:18-19). **WHY WOULD GOD HAVE TO USE A WICKED, MURDEROUS HIGH PRIEST AS A DIVINE MESSENGER ABOUT JESUS' DEATH?** He didn't! This high priest spoke for himself and his cohorts—not for God! What John wrote about the high priest was inspired by the Holy Spirit—but not what the high priest said, any more than what Satan says in the Scripture is sanctioned by God! To show that the Jewish priests were not spokesmen for God one only has to remember that they said Jesus was not to be killed "during the feast" (Matt. 26:5)—but Jesus knew that he would be crucified during the feast, in fact he knew it would be Friday!

An American missionary had gone to Korea to preach. He preached faithfully for a number of years and then lost his wife while she was in the flower of her life to one of the dread diseases of the Orient. Her last words to her husband, while the tears streamed down his face were, "Do not grieve for me dear, you'll get me back." A month passed and again this missionary father sat beside a death bed—this time his little boy was dying. Again he heard these words..."Don't cry Daddy, Mommy said you'll get us back." Two Korean women were present and one was weeping and wailing. The other woman said to the one wailing, "Why do you weep?" She replied, "I am weeping for this poor father." The first one advised, "Do not weep for these Christians—they have a way of getting their dead back. Weep for yourself for you have lost a son and you shall never get him back." The missionary, overhearing this hopeless moaning was challenged to many more years of zealous, fruitful preaching of the gospel to the Korean people. If the resurrection of Lazarus, and subsequently the resurrection of Jesus Christ, are just symbolic or mythological, I WOULD QUIT JESUS IN AN INSTANT! I would do as the apostle Paul says, "If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.'" (1 Cor. 15:32). IF CHRIST IS NOT RAISED, IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION OF BELIEVERS, THEN FAITH IN CHRIST IS USELESS, PREACHING THE GOSPEL IS USELESS, AND THOSE WHO BELIEVE IT AND PREACH IT ARE LIARS AND FRAUDS! Who would want to "turn the other cheek," "walk the second mile," "lay up treasures in heaven," "love one's enemies," "forgive those who sin against you," IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION—WE MIGHT AS WELL "ROOT HOG OR DIE" AS MY GRANNY USED TO SAY! Who could have any respect for the Bible if it was only myth—I don't have much respect for Babylonian, Persian, Greek or Roman myths—they're "hogwash" as far as I'm concerned. And so would the Bible be, if it was mythological! WHY DON'T THESE MODERN CHURCH-GOING-THEOLOGIAN-UNBELIEVERS "GET A LIFE!"? Who would want to "play church" if the Bible was only mythological? SUCH A "FAITH" IS RIDICULOUS! It's about as ridiculous as obeying the laws of the United States if the Constitution and its amendments and all the laws passed by Congress (a phenomenon that most of us have never seen or heard with our own eyes and ears) are mythological! It's about as absurd as going to buy groceries at Albertson's if Albertson's is mythological! IF CHRIST IS NOT RAISED AND IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION FOR BELIEVERS, THEN BELIEVERS ARE OF ALL PEOPLE MOST TO BE PITIED!

To be a believing practicing Christian, if Jesus Christ was never raised from the dead, and if we as believers cannot anticipate our own resurrection, is more absurd than to be a believing, practicing Moslem, Jew, Buddhist, Hindi, or any other "religion" you can think of. Because those who practice those "religions" at least do not "mortify the flesh in order to save the soul." Most of them "eat and drink, and make merry" and use their bodies for their own selfish pursuits and ends while they practice their religion. And even those Moslems who don't satiate the flesh with certain hedonistic indulgences, do avenge themselves on their enemies, and have no compunctions about amassing great fortunes at the expense of their peers to use for their own selfish purposes.

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 12:1-50

Jesus had an extensive ministry in Perea (lasting probably 2-3 months) which John does not record. It takes place between John chapters 11 and 12, but is recorded in Matthew chapters 19-20 and Luke chapters 17-19. John 11 leaves Jesus in Bethany (2 miles east of Jerusalem, just around the brow of the Mt. of Olives). He evidently goes from there north of Jerusalem to Ephraim with his disciples. From Ephraim he goes on a short journey through the “borders” of Samaria, Galilee, and finally winds up across the Jordan River to the east in Perea. But John 12 becomes the introductory chapter to Jesus’ return to Jerusalem for the 4th Passover of his adult ministry (and the final one). It is now (Jn. 12) April. Jesus is back at the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, 3 of his very few confidants! He probably arrived there Friday evening April 7th just before sun-down because Sabbath, i.e., Saturday, began at sun-down on Friday —“6 days before” Passover Day that year which was April 14th, the following Thursday (which for the Jew, began on Wednesday night after sun-down). While they were visiting at the supper table, Mary, took a very costly jar of ointment (pure nard) and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. John says the jar was a “liter” (Greek, *litran murou nardou*, “a liter of perfumed nard”—a liter is a little over a quart). That’s a lot of nard! Judas estimated its worth at 300 denarii (300 day’s—a year’s wages!). Nard came from India and was very expensive. It was mostly used to anoint corpses to hide the stinking odor of dead bodies. Mary was going against the customs of the day to “let her hair down” in public—and then to top it, she wiped Jesus’ feet with her hair! Her love for the gentle Jesus was uninhibited and unreserved! She laid her pride and honor at the feet of Jesus in worship and adoration. Judas started the grousing and all the other 11 disciples joined in (Matt. 16:8; Mk. 14:4). They were indignant (Greek, *aganaktountes*, “angry, upset”) and they reproached her (Greek, *enebrimonto* “scolded, grumbled at”) for “wasting” this much “money.” Isn’t it nice that the disciples butted their noses into the incident and “spoke up for Jesus?” TROUBLE WAS, THEY WEREN’T SPEAKING FOR JESUS! What Judas said might be correct under normal circumstances but Judas was not interested in the poor—Judas was interested in himself—he was thinking only of “poor Judas.” Judas cunningly and secretly (he thought) planned to have Mary give the ointment to this trusty band of disciples of Jesus (for which Judas carried the money purse) and they could sell it, give the money to Judas, as “treasurer,” to give out to the poor. However, Judas was “dipping” into the money, and keeping for himself, what people had given to support Jesus and the other apostles in their ministry (see Luke 8:1-3). Jesus knew it all along but wanted to give Judas time to repent and be redeemed. WHAT JUDAS SAID WAS HYPOCRITICAL—A LIE! The other 11, no doubt feeling a little self-righteous themselves, joined right in the carping at Mary! Judas (and the other 11 unwittingly we hope) was even inferring that Jesus was allowing to be lavished upon himself what should have been given to the poor. Jesus rebukes them all! “Leave her alone,” he says sternly! “Why do you trouble her?—allow her to do this toward the day of my burial.” The translation in John 12:7 “....let her keep it for the day of my burial” is unfortunate in light of the fact that she

didn't "keep" it but poured it out! There is no word in Greek in that phrase which should be translated "keep." Jesus wanted it poured out to make these disciples realize later (after his resurrection) that this humble lady, Mary, knew better than they at the time that Jesus really was going to die and she agonized in her heart about it! These 12 "apostles" were "stone-cold" dumb about the impending, terrible, unjust death Jesus was about to endure! BUT MARY UNDERSTOOD!—and, Jesus needed someone to sympathize with him in his agonizing anticipation of crucifixion—no one else was!

Mark records Jesus' answer this way: "For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you will, you can do good to them; but you will not always have me." (RSV). John and Matthew both omit the words, "...and whenever you will, you can do good to them..." Matthew adds, "In pouring this ointment on my body she has done it to prepare me for burial. Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her." AND SO IT HAS! This little incident has been recorded in 3 gospel records (Matthew, Mark and John) and memorializes Mary wherever these gospels are read and preached! Jesus would not always be with them in the flesh—but while he was, he desired their companionship, their support and their loving concern as he faced the horror of the cross. BUT HE WASN'T GETTING IT! What he was getting was insensitive, greedy, materialistic carping at one of his dearest friends on earth, Mary, who was giving him companionship, support and loving concern. There would always be opportunities to help the poor, but there would be only a few opportunities left to help the Son of God bear the burden of the cross while he was here on earth! Hendricksen puts it: "He was telling them that just now anointing him in anticipation of his burial is more important than the care of the poor." YOU MEAN THERE IS SOMETHING MORE IMPORTANT THAN CARING FOR THE POOR????!!! YES! IT IS RIGHT TO ALWAYS WORSHIP JESUS FIRST, BEFORE CARING FOR THE POOR. NO GIFT GIVEN TO JESUS IS EVER TOO EXTRAVAGANT OR TOO SMALL. As one writer put it: "Where Jesus is anointed (worshiped, adored, cared about) the poor will never suffer." IF ALL THE JUDASES WOULD BECOME MARYS THE LORD'S CHURCH COULD TAKE CARE OF THE POOR! Since Jesus is not bodily present with us now, one of the best ways to worship and adore him is by caring for the poor (Matt. 25:31-46; Heb. 13:1-3; James 1:26-27; 2:1-7; 2:14-17; 1 Jn. 3:16-18; 4:19-21). Mary, like the Macedonians, had "first given herself to the Lord" (2 Cor. 8:1-7), and was then able to "overflow in a wealth of liberality" toward his need. The problem with the "apostles" at this point is they had not "given themselves" completely to Jesus and his divine mission! No amount of "giving" to the poor will please the Lord unless the "giver" has FIRST given him/herself completely, body and soul, to Jesus and his word!

Great number of pilgrims going up to the Feast of Passover and of those already in Jerusalem (more than 2 million—and that's people packed "in there like a can of sardines") had learned that Jesus the miracle working rabbi, who claimed to be their Messiah was in Bethany! So the Jews came in great numbers, crowding into the village of Bethany, to see both Jesus and Lazarus (miracle-doer and miracle-receiver)—thousands and thousands came! They were intensely interested, as one might imagine, in seeing and, if possible, talking to Lazarus who had been called back from the dead and of seeing and petitioning

Jesus to do a miracle like that for them or one of their family members! There, before their eyes, stood irrefutable proof to substantiate Jesus' claims! The crowds became "Messiah-delirious." The Jewish authorities, fearful of losing their "positions," wringing their hands, beginning to feel extreme jealousy and paranoia, said, "You see that you can do nothing; look, the world has gone after him." These terrified rulers could see only one solution to the preservation of their positions and money-making-schemes. So they met in their council-chambers and made plans to kill Lazarus just as they had before put into action their plan to kill Jesus. Gotta get rid of all evidence that this Jesus is their Messiah! CAN YOU IMAGINE TRYING TO KILL A MAN (LAZARUS) WHO WILL NOT STAY DEAD? He was dead once—that's usually enough for any human being—but now he is alive again and the Jewish authorities plan to put him to death again! It was about as foolish as trying to seal the tomb of Jesus and set Roman guards at the entrance to make sure he stayed dead—this Jesus who had already raised 3 people from the dead! If Jesus wants dead people to come back to life, there's nothing anyone else can do to prevent it! Remember the "many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep and were raised" at the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus (Matt. 27:51-54)? "If God is for us, who can be against us (Rom. 8:31-39). And we don't say that flippantly or sentimentally—but rationally and faithfully because we KNOW these gospel records are authentic, historical, credible evidence that Jesus keeps his word to "raise the dead who believe in him."

There were 3 courts in the temple of Jesus' day. The extreme outer court was known as the 'court of the Gentiles,' the next court toward the temple was the "court of the women," and the court immediately surrounding the sanctuary of the temple building itself was "the court of Israel." Only Jewish men were allowed in the "court of Israel." The Gentiles were prohibited from all but the extreme outer court. The "court of the Gentiles" was where most of the money-changing and selling of animals was done. It was a literal "department store" (Greek, emporiou, "emporium") where the chief priests (and their friends) were making more than \$1,000,000 (today's money probably 10 million) per year! Gentiles from all over the Roman world of that day frequently became proselytes (converts to the monotheistic religion of the Jews). They are referred to in the OT as "strangers or sojourners" and in the NT usually as those "who fear God" (Lev. 22-25; 1 Kings 8:41-43; Isa. 56:3-8; Mark. 11:17; Acts 10:1,22,35; 13:16,26,43,50; 17:4; Eph. 2:12). The Greek participle in John 12:20 is, anabainonton, is present tense, literally, "among those accustomed to or continually going up" were some Greeks. In other words, the "Greeks" were worshipers of Jehovah according to the Hebrew religion and were frequently at the temple. Whether they were Jews who were descended from some of their OT ancestors who had been exiled (722-586 B.C.) in Assyria, Babylon and Persia, or whether they were "Greeks" by birth is a moot question. There were Jews, "men from every nation under heaven," called by the name of the country in which they had been born at Pentecost, just a few months hence (Acts 2:5-13). Since John calls them exclusively, "Greeks," I tend to think they were Gentiles, born and bred, from Greece who, out of their hopelessness and despair with their Greek philosophies and mystery-cult-religions, had been attracted to the Jewish religion because of its reasonableness and high moral standards and had become proselytes, like Cornelius, the Roman army officer! But they could have merely been Greek merchants or travelers passing through Jerusalem. The "court of the Gentiles" was "not holy ground" and non-Jews were permitted there. Above this

court, 22 steps or 22 feet, were the other two courts, with a stone wall around them and short stone pillars placed every so many “cubits” apart with inscriptions in Greek and Latin forbidding non-Jews from entering on pain of death (several of these stones have been found by archaeologists (see also Acts 21:26-28). Whatever their reason for being there, they had heard about this Jesus of Nazareth, the miracle worker and claimant to the throne of David who was creating a tremendous “stir” among the Jews at this Passover! THEY WANTED TO SEE THIS MAN, JESUS! They had enough “gall” to find one of Jesus’ “apostles,” Philip (they may have known him from Bethsaida), and send him to tell Jesus they wanted to see him! They may have been a part of the glorious entry of Jesus into Jerusalem the day before (Palm Sunday), either as spectators or participants, and there were many questions on their minds.

Were the Greeks within hearing distance of Jesus’ answer? Did he go to where they were? We don’t know for sure, but I think he may have. His answer was enigmatic and paradoxical. It was in the form Jesus used most—a metaphor from nature! First, it was about the necessity of the grain of wheat falling into the earth and dying before it could bear fruit! Jesus was preaching his own death as a necessity for vicarious atonement for the sins of the world. These “Greek” God-believers (along with his disciples and all others who might have been present) must understand that he did not come to start a physical revolution and establish a fleshly kingdom. If he does not die (and be resurrected) there would be no “fruit” of atonement for sin and no salvation. Second, Jesus answered the question of the sinner’s appropriation of this atonement which his death shall provide. Sinners must also “die” to self in penitent belief and make the things of this world secondary to the pursuit of the spiritual kingdom of God. The human being who makes food, drink, shelter and the vanities of worldly fame his ultimate goal is bound to lose, for this flesh and the world and its works are destined for destruction. Those who desire to follow Jesus and become his disciples must imitate him; do what he does, bear what he bears, and love what he loves (Heb. 12:1-2). They must follow in his steps of self-renunciation and obedience to the will of God. The person who longs to be rid of this earthly tabernacle (2 Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 1:20-24; 2 Pet. 1:13-15) and by faith looks forward with eager anticipation to the life to come will “keep safe” (or “guard” as the Greek word *phulaxei* says it) his real life forever. Third, those who choose to follow Jesus, even to death, need not fear, for where he is there will his servant be. Jesus dwelt always in the constant presence and care of the Father, and taught his disciples that they should expect the same constant, divine care (Matt. 6:19-34; 28:19-20). When a disciple leaves all to follow Jesus and serve him, the Father rewards with certain blessings in this life (Lk. 18:28-30) and the most precious reward of all—the crown of life with the approbation, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” (Rev. 2:10; 3:21). So in this brief discourse Jesus gave the “gospel” in miniature: (a) glorification and atonement in Jesus’ death; (b) appropriation of that atonement by the sinner’s death to self and living in the word of Christ; (c) the reward of salvation (guarded) by a Heavenly Father who honor’s his promises! Those present heard the “gospel.”

Jesus was tempted from the very beginning of his ministry (and no doubt earlier when he was a youngster) by the devil himself, to forego the way of the cross (Matt. 4:8-10,

et al.). Again, when Peter refused to accept the prediction of the cross for the Messiah (Matt. 16:21-28) it was a temptation that disturbed the Master's soul, and when Mary anointed his feet, it reminded him of his death. Now, when the Greeks came seeking him it reminded him again of his death. So his agitated soul (Jn. 12:27-28) considers the cross. This "troubling of his soul" had come to him often (Lk. 12:49-53; 17:22-37; Heb. 5:7-9; etc.). The shadow of the cross fell across his path from the day of his birth (Luke 2:34-35) It was not the physical torture from which he shrank, but the curse of sin he took (2 Cor. 5:21) at which time he suffered "the second death" for all people. Who could trust a perfect, sinless Savior (or "high priest"—intercessor) who HAD NOT BEEN TEMPTED AND TROUBLED IN HIS SOUL? That was the impotency of the heathen "gods"—they could never become human—they could never know how humans had to live, what they had to endure, how they could conquer. Our Savior conquered—even though "troubled." "For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Jesus was no "ubermensch," (German for "superman") impervious to feelings and being troubled in his soul with the burden of carrying out the will of God. Jesus was no stoic who had no sensibilities or emotions. He "felt" deeply, because he "knew" the realities of surrendering to the will of God, even if it meant he didn't deserve the consequences, and even though he could have chosen otherwise! It isn't wrong to be "troubled in your soul" about surrendering to the will of God (think of Abraham, Moses, David, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Jonah, Elijah, Peter, Paul, John and millions of others). What's wrong is being troubled and letting the trouble keep you from surrendering to God's will! Jesus makes a tremendously significant statement (John 12:30-31). It is literally cosmic! In the Greek text, it is:—nun krisis estin tou kosmou toutou eklethesetai exo, literally translated, it would likely read, "Now, the judgment it is, of this very cosmos, now the (pretended) ruler of this very cosmos shall be thrown out." "Now is the crisis of the cosmos, now shall the pretended ruler of this cosmos be cast out" makes it more understandable. Jesus is anticipating his death and resurrection in just one week! AND THESE TWO EVENTS WILL BE COSMIC IN THEIR SIGNIFICANCE! He is about to accomplish what will ultimately bring about that which Paul writes about in Romans 8:1-39— THE REDEMPTION OF ALL OF GOD'S CREATION! THE EVENTS OCCURRING TO JESUS OF NAZARETH WOULD BE THE MOST CRITICAL EVENTS in the history of mankind, should the world continue for 10 million years! One of the significant events to occur in connection with Jesus' death and resurrection, was the "dethroning" of Satan. Satan is only the PRETENDING ruler of this cosmos! Surely, no Christian well read in the Scriptures, would entertain the idea that Satan rules the cosmos! GOD ALMIGHTY RULES EVERYTHING THAT EXISTS, INCLUDING SATAN HIMSELF! Until Jesus came and conquered sin in the flesh, and conquered death over the flesh, Satan used God's judgment upon sin (death) as a power to keep most of the world (including Jews) in bondage to him through the fear of death,(Heb. 2:14-15; Rom. 6:5-21). Everyone who trusts and obeys Jesus is DELIVERED from bondage to the fear of death. Satan is no king, no ruler! He was, at one time, a servant of God—and still is, though a disobeying servant and one doomed to the lake of fire and brimstone along with all other disobeying servants of God. Satan doesn't even "rule" hell—God made hell and he is sovereign over it by right of being Creator! The death and resurrection of Christ and the victory of the church over the Roman empire was the point in history where Satan was "bound for a little while." Prior to these events, Satan had a much wider sphere of activity in which he was allowed by God

(Job 1 & 2) to deceive and lie and influence humans to rebel against God. Since Christ and the gospel, Satan's sphere of activity and ability to deceive has been more limited and circumscribed. The word of God in the gospel of Christ has gone out to all nations and peoples and tribes and tongues, whereas before the gospel, the word of God was almost exclusively confined within Judaism! IT WAS THE REDEMPTIVE WORK OF JESUS, 2000 YEARS AGO, THAT "BOUND" SATAN SO GOD'S TRUTH COULD ENCIRCLE THIS GLOBE WE CALL EARTH! Satan's "binding" is now, not yet to be—what is yet to be for Satan is his final, complete, incarceration in the eternal prison called hell!

While John's quotation of Isaiah 6:10 in John 12:40 sounds like God blinded peoples eyes and hardened their hearts, don't forget to notice that John prefaced 12:40 with 12:38... "Lord who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" The Lord revealed his will to the prophets of old and they reported it to the people in order that the people might choose whether they would obey God's word or not. Read Isaiah 30:8-14; then read Jeremiah 6:16-21; then read Isaiah 65:1-7. There are literally hundreds of passages like these in the OT Prophets. God doesn't force people to disbelieve—nor does God force people to believe! OUR GOD IS A REVEALING GOD! HE WANTS HIS CREATURES TO KNOW HIM, ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, BELIEVE AND TRUST HIM, OBEY HIM, AND ENJOY HIM FOR ALL ETERNITY! He walked and talked with Adam and Eve in Eden until they decided they would rather listen and walk with the Serpent (Satan). John quotes Isaiah 6:10 to show that God had foreknowledge of the unbelief of the Jews (again, many passages in the OT prophets predict the unbelief of the Jews in their rejection of the Messiah, Dan. 9:24-27; Isa. 53, etc.). Their unbelief did not surprise God—God knows that the number of truly committed believers in Jesus Christ will always be a minority in this world (Mt. 7:13-14; Mk. 10:24-25; Lk. 13:22-30—"many are called, but few are chosen"). THE DOCTRINE OF THE "FREE WILL" OF HUMAN BEINGS IS SO PLAINLY TAUGHT IN THE ENTIRE BIBLE (starting with Genesis 2:15) IT IS LUDICROUS FOR ANYONE TO THINK OTHERWISE (see Ezek. 18:1-32; 33:1-33, etc.). Yet, most of secular philosophy and psychology today keeps insisting that human beings, especially those born into and reared in "disadvantaged" circumstances (poverty, one-parent-families, poor education, drug-infested-environments, etc., etc., etc.) should not be held accountable for their choices and actions! But the word of God and history says otherwise (e.g., George Washington Carver, Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Helen Keller, we could go on and on). Paul said it succinctly, "Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the Deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, a representation by the art and imagination of man" (Acts 17:29) and "For what can be know about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse..." (Rom. 1:18-20) and "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, and what is good and acceptable and perfect"(Rom. 12:1-2). WE "OUGHT NOT" TO THINK LIKE UNBELIEVING IDOLATERS, BECAUSE GOD CAN BE "CLEARLY PERCEIVED." OUR "REASONABLE" SERVICE IS TO "PROVE" WHAT THE WILL OF GOD IS BY

RENEWING OUR MINDS!

“Jesus cried out and said”---EVERYTHING THAT FOLLOWS IS THE COMMANDMENT UNTO ETERNAL LIFE! Mainly, “THE” commandment is stated by this same author, the apostle John, in 1 John 3:23—“And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ...” And belief in Jesus requires receiving his “sayings” (i.e., his word, his commandments). John uses both hremata (“sayings”) and logos, (“word”) to record what Jesus said in 12:48. Jesus speaks here of THE COMMANDMENT from Almighty God which sent the Son into the world to reveal authoritatively the redemptive works and message of God the Father. It was the very same God who formed the nation of Israel, delivered them from Egypt, led them into Canaan and gave them the land, delivered them to exile, returned them from exile—he sent Jesus to them (and the rest of the world) under orders (“commandment”) as to what to say and do! JESUS CRIES OUT AND JOHN RECORDS HIS CRY AS A SUMMING UP OF HIS ENTIRE PUBLIC MINISTRY TO THE JEWISH NATION HERE! R. C. Foster summarizes this way:

The Self-revelation of Christ to the World, John 1:19—12:50

The Proclamation, 1:19—4:54

The Conflict, 5:1—12:50

II The Self-revelation of Christ to the Disciples, 13:1—21:23

A. The Last Ministry of Love, chapters 13-17

A. The Victory Through Death and Resurrection, chapters 18-20

A. Epilogue, chapter 21

I especially like the comments of Albert Barnes here: “It is such a close (to ministry) as all his ministers should desire to make—a solemn, deliberate, firm exhibition of the truth of God, under a belief that on it was depending the eternal salvation of his hearers, and uttering without fear the solemn message of the Most High to a lost world.”

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 13:1-38

John is writing his Gospel nearly 65-70 years after this event. He is the only Gospel author to include this incident in the events of the last week. I believe the “feet-washing” incident occurred about fourth in the following sequence:

1. Preparations for the Passover and coming into the Upper Room, Matt. 26:17-19; Mk. 14:12-16; Lk. 22:7-13
2. Opening of the Passover Supper by Jesus Lk. 22:15-18
3. Dispute Among the Disciples as to Who would be Greatest in the Kingdom Lk. 22:24-30
4. Feet Washing incident and lessons in greatness John 13:1-30
5. The betrayer revealed and he goes out Matt. 26:21-25; Mk. 14:18-21; Lk. 22:21-23; Jn. 18:18-32
6. Institution of the Lord’s Supper Matt. 26:26-29; Mk. 14:22-25; Lk. 22:19-20
7. The New Commandment Given John 13:33-35
8. Peter’s denial and denial of all the apostles foretold (Matt. 26:27-35; Mk: 14:26-31; Lk. 22:31-38; John 18:36-38)

John has had a long time to think about this incident. It kept constant in his mind **THE GREATEST DEMONSTRATION OF LOVE HE (JOHN) HAD EVER SEEN DISPLAYED!** John is reminded by this incident, over and over, that Jesus loved them to the very end of his life on earth. Through 3 ½ years of their stupidity about the nature of his kingdom, their inordinate concern about where they would be positioned in his kingdom, their lack of faith in his promises to them, knowing all this all along, and finally, and their desertion of him at his crucifixion—**HE LOVED THEM TO THE END!** They never understood that he must fulfill the mission of a humble servant to all mankind—even the most humble and loving servitude possible—laying down his life in their place. Washing someone else’s feet, changing someone else’s vomit filled bed clothes, cleaning someone else’s foul toilet—**WITHOUT ANY THANKS, WITHOUT ANY RECOGNITION—IS NOTHING COMPARED BEING MADE TO “BE SIN” AND DYING ON AN UNDESERVED CROSS FOR MILLIONS WHO WOULD NEVER APPRECIATE OR RECOGNIZE IT!** The very idea that GOD should, could, and would, become humanity’s servant was repugnant then—and still is today! **BUT LIKE IT OR NOT, THERE IT IS! HE DID SO WHILE MOST PEOPLE WERE SO WRAPPED UP IN THEIR OWN SELFISH ENDS, THEY WERE UNAWARE OF WHAT WAS GOING ON BEFORE THEIR VERY EYES!**

This last “idea” is what was precisely in Peter’s mind when he “refused” to let Jesus wash his feet. It was unthinkable that a Rabbi (a “Master”) should stoop so low! Rabbis always had their followers (and other low-caste people) “fawning” upon them. Rabbis always had the “best” of everything—free of charge. Remember Fiddler On The Roof! You didn’t see any rabbi washing the feet of Tevyev did you? Peter knew the “game.” Peter knew the “pecking order” of life. This is the game—there are some who, by birth, by “luck,” by hard work, by “politics” get themselves into places of power—everyone else exists only to serve them! You learn early in life that’s how life goes. No one has ever made exerted effort to work himself down the ladder of power from CEO to janitor! NO ONE, UNTIL JESUS (Phil. 2:5-11). Very few ever go into an official banquet and say, “put me down at the bottom table where we’ll not be noticed and be served last.”—UNTIL JESUS. Peter probably thought of himself as little “Jack Horner” who put in his thumb, and pulled out a plum and said, “What a good boy, am I.” Peter must have congratulated himself that he was being humble himself by refusing to let Jesus wash his feet! T he same way he congratulated himself that he was being courageous when he volunteered to go with Jesus to Jerusalem and fight Jesus’ enemies and die at his side, if necessary! IN PETER’S MIND, IF JESUS WAS GOD’S “ANOINTED” (MESSIAH) HE SHOULDN’T, COULDN’T, AND WOULDN’T ALLOW HIM TO BE HUMILIATED IN ANY WAY-SHAPE-OR-FORM! Regardless of what the OT Prophets said about a “Suffering Servant” (e.g. Isa. 53:1-12)! Many so-called “Christian Theologians” today abhor the idea that God would become flesh and be humiliated by becoming sin for us and dying an atoning death on the cross for us—just to serve us! Canon Vernon F. Storrs is quoted, “We are in no way bound to accept Paul’s interpretation of Christ’s death. I dismiss from my mind all ideas of substitution, or of the innocent paying the penalty of the guilty because these ideas offend my moral consciousness” —Baker’s Dictionary of Theology, 1960, art. on “Atonement” p. 75.” In the same Dictionary of Theology, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, former head of the World Council of Churches is quoted, “We hear much of the substitutionary theory of the atonement. This theory to me is immoral. If Jesus paid it all, or if He is the substitute for me, or if He is the sacrifice for all the sin of the world, then why discuss forgiveness? The books are closed. Another has paid the debt, borne the penalty. I owe nothing. I am absolved. I cannot see forgiveness as predicated upon the act of some one else. It is my sin. I must atone.” Baker, op.cit. p. 77. It is the very heart of the Judaistic (and Gentile) concept of a “blameless righteousness under the law” (Phil. 3:4-6) at which Jesus was striking throughout his earthly ministry—and which John the Baptist began!

Jesus actually made three replies: (a) “What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand” (b) “If I do not wash you, you have no part in me.” (c) “He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but he is clean all over; and you are clean, but not every one of you.” It is clearly evident that Peter and the other apostles “did not know (understand) what Jesus was doing” (SPIRITUALLY) when he washed their feet. Jesus’ second reply, “If I do not wash you, you have no part in me” means if they do not allow HIM to become their source of “righteousness, sanctification and redemption” (i.e., 1 Cor. 1:30), they have no part in his kingdom. He is establishing a kingdom of spiritual renewal—they are looking for a physical kingdom—if they don’t let him dictate the constitution and citizenship requirements of this kingdom, they have no part in it! The establishment of his kingdom will NECESSITATE HIS HUMILIATION IN A REJECTION BY THE WORLD AND A

VICARIOUS DEATH (AND RESURRECTION). If they are not prepared to allow God to become a human servant, they are not ready for the kingdom of God! THAT IS STILL TRUE TODAY. Contemporary existential, “neo-orthodox” theologians have relegated God to the “Wholly Other” and forbidden him the capability to become human. To them, Jesus was human alright—but that’s all he was—he was not God in the flesh humiliating himself in human form. Modern “neo-orthodoxy” is nothing more than modern Gnosticism. The epistle to the Hebrews is the most extensive of all the books of the Bible dealing with the necessity of God’s participation in humanity (as Jesus Christ) in order that he might save, sanctify and intercede for man. If, by grace, God does not become incarnate in flesh so as to win the victory (see Rom. 8:3-4) over the flesh and offer that victory to mankind by grace through faith, how would humanity ever be restored to fellowship with a perfectly righteous and just Creator? If our carnal minds cause us to evaluate honor and dignity as the world evaluates, and reject the way of humility and service which our God chose and bids us follow—WE SHALL HAVE NO PART WITH HIM! Peter, ever the fervent-follower (Jn. 6:68-69; Matt. 26:35; Jn. 18:10-11; 18:36), was startled by this ominous warning from Jesus about “washing.” He couldn’t bear the thought of being excluded from Jesus’ kingdom, so he jumps to the opposite extreme of legalistic compliance—from refusing to have his feet washed to insisting that Jesus wash his whole body! Now, what Jesus must teach Peter is that once you have been “washed” by Jesus you don’t need to be “washed” again! The “washing” Jesus gives is perfect—nothing is incomplete (Heb. 9:25-28; 10:10-18). Once a man has become a devoted and faithful follower of Jesus by an initial cleansing and sanctifying call (belief and baptism), the new disciple must then grow in his spiritual comprehension of Christ’s will and work (Heb. 10:19—13:25). The disciples, all except the hypocrite Judas, had in all sincerity and honest desire, answered his call to follow him. They had all, no doubt, been baptized with John’s baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. Being therefore of honest hearts and having by obedience to the command of God through John the Baptist been initially cleansed, they needed not to go back to their “first cleansing” but they definitely needed to be purified of their carnal conception of the Messianic mission. They needed to grow in humility and love for one another even to the extent that they would be willing to perform the lowliest services for one another—washing one another’s feet!

Hendricksen notes that “foot-washing was practiced on Maundy Thursday (from Old French *mande* or Latin *mandatum*, i.e., “command” Jn. 13:34) by the church of Augustine’s (A.D. 354-430) day. It was recommended by Bernard of Clairvaux in one of his sermons. The practice was continued by the pope at Rome and by emperors of Austria and Russia and by kings of Spain, Portugal, and Bavaria. For a while it was practiced by the Church of England and by the Moravians. It has been continued to this very day by certain Baptist and Adventist bodies...” I do not believe literal “foot-washing” was ordained by Jesus here, nor do I believe anywhere else the NT ordains literal “foot-washing” as a practice in which the church is to be literally engaged on a weekly, quarterly or annually schedule. It is mentioned only one more time in all the NT (1 Tim. 5:9-10) and even there it may be merely metaphor for “deeds of humbleness.” If Jesus had ordained it as he did baptism and the Lord’s Supper, he (and his apostles) would have mentioned it more than once—and that having not to do with a “weekly ordinance” but with “enrolling” widows for financial support from the

congregation who had been “well attested for her good deeds.” HOWEVER, when one considers the spiritual-metaphorical implications of Jesus humbling himself to the lowliest task within the will of God and becoming a servant of all (Matt. 20:25-28, etc.), one must understand that this principle is the very basis for kingdom membership! BUT IT IS CONSTANT—AND NOT TO BE RELEGATED TO “WEEKLY” LITERAL PRACTICE! “Spiritual” feet-washing may require something much more humiliating than literally washing someone’s feet—like giving up one’s own “rights” to keep a brother from stumbling! “Mother” Teresa not only literally washed the feet of street beggars of Calcutta, but she did even more humiliating things with her life, giving Christ the glory—quite a contrast to that fleshly life of power of the pope who, once a year, washes one of his underling’s feet! JESUS DID NOT LITERALLY WASH THE DISCIPLE’S FEET MORE THAN ONCE—WE FIND NO PRACTICE OF IT IN THE BOOK OF ACTS OR ANY EPISTLES, EXCEPT 1 Tim. 5. “Whenever washing one another’s feet is an act of practical courtesy and helpfulness, that we can perform in a true spirit of simple love and humble service, we ought to wash one another’s feet. But when it is of no practical helpfulness, when it is performed as a public religious ritual to display our humility, at special seasons, toward selected persons, it does not seem to fit the pattern Jesus gave. Ritualizing such an act of love absolutely destroys its meaning...There is no indication in the way that Jesus did the act at the Last Supper that he was instituting a form of worship or making it a part of his death. It is not an act of worship to God, but of service to man out of the right kind of a godly heart of humility and love. Even those who urge it as a perpetual ordinance in the church teach that it ‘symbolizes humility and service.’ Exactly so: Jesus gave a very striking example and symbol of that manner of conduct and attitude of heart that he wants us to have. He does not want us to repeat the symbol, but to practice the reality. His example was clear, and no command of his is more direct or authoritative”—Seth Wilson

The promise of Jesus is definite. “If you know these things (humble service for God), blessed are you if you do them.” John 13:17. When we do what Jesus taught here we will find happiness (“blessedness”). The true road to happiness and joy is service motivated by love. Man was not created to be just a taker and never a giver. Man was created to give joy and honor to the heart of God. This is man’s ultimate purpose and only when he is fulfilling that purpose does he find joy and satisfaction of soul. “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). There is a noticeable dissatisfaction, almost unhappiness, in some of the disciples before the resurrection of Christ when they were always seeking and waiting for the Lord to appoint them to places of earthly honor and prestige. They bickered with one another and were jealous of one another. But, notice the change in these men as evidenced in the book of Acts and their Epistles when they put into practice the teaching of Jesus here in John 13:17. They found the joy unspeakable and full of glory Jesus said they would find through bearing fruit (John 15:1-11). The blessedness of lowly service out of love is both objective and subjective. But the objective must precede the subjective. We must literally do humble, loving service just like Jesus did (washing the disciple’s feet) in order to know that we have God’s approval. Afterward the feeling of joy and happiness fills our emotions. The result of humble acts of servant-hood will be, as C. S. Lewis describes in his *Eternal Weight of Glory*, “The promise of glory is the promise, almost incredible and only possible by the work of Christ, that some of us, that any of us who really chooses, shall

actually survive that examination, shall find approval, shall please God. To please God...to be a real ingredient in the divine happiness...to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son—it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain. But so it is.” YOU WANT HAPPINESS? BE OF HUMBLE SERVICE IN THE NAME OF JESUS!

There is more than one reason Jesus made this prophecy that Judas was to betray him: (a) so that when it came to pass the disciples would have their belief in Jesus strengthened; (b) it was another attempt by Jesus to penetrate the hardened heart of Judas and bring him to repentance; (c) for those who will accept the testimony as credible it shows that what was happening was all within the eternal purpose of God. Jesus could not stop the devil from entering Judas unless he turned Judas into a robot. When God created human beings with the freedom to choose and exercise their will, he had to make himself vulnerable to being “chosen against.” Human beings without the power to over-ride God by their choices would not be human beings—they would be animals or vegetables! The same was true of the devil when God created him—he chose, and continues to choose to rebel against God’s will—so God let him do so, along with a host of other angels who chose against God’s will. But God has assigned them to the bottomless pit for eternity. Jesus could not use supernatural force to over-ride Judas’ choice to allow the devil to enter him. True love comes only to those who make themselves vulnerable to being rejected or hurt. God could not create beings to return his love without limiting himself in this area of absolute sovereignty! I TELL YOU, IT IS AWESOME TO CONSIDER THE POWER OF THE FREEDOM OF HUMAN WILL! Judas was not demon possessed in the sense of those whom we read about Jesus exorcizing of demon possession. I believe demon possession such as we read of in Matt. 12:22-32, etc., was not a matter of human choice! I believe demons were allowed by God to come into people much like God allows some physical illnesses to come upon people in spite of all they can do to keep it from happening. Demon possession was catastrophic, irresistible, and took place only during the lifetimes of Jesus and the apostles for the purpose of showing, by their exorcisms, that they had the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit of God—thus validating their messages as from God. When the devil “entered” Judas, he did so because he found an “open door” to Judas’ heart which Judas himself had opened by his choice to betray Jesus. Albert Barnes notes in his commentary: on the Gospel of John, “These things have occurred (Judas’ betrayal) in order that the prophecies my receive their completion. It does not mean that Judas was compelled to this course in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, but this was foretold, and that by this prophecy did they receive a completion.” The “scripture” to be fulfilled (John 13:18) is from Psalms 41:9 (see also 2 Sam. 9:7-13; Psa. 55:12-14). Actually, the devil exerts power of condemnation over human beings, only by the freedom of choice of human beings, therefore, since “demon possession” was not by choice, it was not damning! How could God condemn the Syro-Phoenician’s little baby girl for being “demon possessed” (Matt. 15:21-28) or, later, the unnamed man’s little boy (Matt. 17:14-21).

Love can become a “commandment” if the One ordering it has earned the right to command it! Just like honor, glory, respect and awe, love has to be earned! Love does not

originate in the human heart. The human heart is deceitful above all things and desperately corrupt (Jer. 17:9-10). The capacity to love is placed in the human heart by God; then God objectively presents himself as one worthy of that capacity by not only demonstrating that he is Creator but also through redemption demonstrating he is the exclusive, divine Lover. It is on this basis that he, and his Son, Jesus Christ, can command love. I refer you again to Paul's succinct and penetrating statement, "For the love of Christ controls us..." (2 Cor. 5:14ff). And you should remember John's statements, "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his son to be the expiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10), and "We love, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19). This is the fundamental principle of human marriage—the one expecting to receive love must earn that love by giving love! It is possible to be "charitable" and to do "good" from ulterior motives! But that kind of "charity" will soon be exposed for the hypocrisy it is! Paul indicated it might be possible even to give one's body to be burned as a "martyr" without having done it from love (1 Cor. 13). The "greatest commandment" is that man should love God with all his being (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44; 22:36) and one's neighbor as oneself. On this "commandment" hangs all the law and the prophets (i.e., all the will of God, both in OT and NT times). Love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:8-10). Jesus commanded the church at Ephesus to return to its "first love" (Rev. 2:4-5), but he earned the right to command the church to love! The love we are discussing is in the Greek text, *avgapa/te*, *agapate*, from *agape*! It is not primarily sentiment or feeling. *Agape* is a deliberated choice to care for and cherish when one does not "feel" like caring! It is based on whether the object to be loved deserves that right or not. God has earned the right to command us to love other human beings on the basis of the fact that Jesus died for them as much as he died for us (2 Cor. 5:14ff). So we are obligated to love others—even our enemies—in spite of our fleshly feelings to the contrary!

The Old English word for love goes back to an Indo-European *leubh* which has spawned a huge lexical progeny; not just words for "love" (i.e., Germanic relatives, such as German *liebe* and Dutch *liefde*, as well as the archaic OE *lief* "dear" and Latin *libido* "strong desire") but also words for "praise" (German *lob* and Dutch *lof*) and "belief" (German *glauben*, Dutch *gelooven*, English *believe*). The sense, "find pleasing" is primary; it subsequently developed to "praise" and, probably via "be satisfied with," to "trust, believe." Isn't it interesting that "love" is synonymous with "belief." The Greek language had four words for "love" and C. S. Lewis in his book, *The Four Loves* defines them in four levels—*storge* ("affection"); *philo* ("friendship"); *eros* ("carnal desire"); and *agape* ("charity"). C. S. Lewis explains: "God is love....In God there is no hunger that needs to be filled, only plenteousness that desires to give. The doctrine that God was under no necessity to create is not a piece of dry scholastic speculation. It is essential. Without it we can hardly avoid the conception of what I can only call a 'managerial' God...But to be sovereign of the universe is no great matter to God...God, who needs nothing, loves into existence wholly superfluous creatures in order that He may love and perfect them...God is a 'host' who deliberately creates His own parasites; causes us to be that we may exploit and 'take advantage of' Him. Herein is love." In our text, Jesus audaciously uses himself as the definition of "love" when he says, "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." 13:34-35. If you want to know what "love" is, learn it from doing what Jesus did for

his disciples(except for the miracles). Jesus will say later, “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (Jn. 15:13). **WOULD YOU LAY DOWN YOUR LIFE FOR A FRIEND? ARE YOU?**

Yes! Peter was willing to lay down his life for Jesus—with qualifications! Peter was willing to take up the sword and fight to the death to keep Jesus from being crucified (Jn. 18:10-11). Peter was not afraid to follow Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest’s house (Jn. 18:12-27). But there was one qualification—mainly, Jesus must not surrender to his enemies to be crucified in a humiliating death. Peter (and John) stayed with Jesus, ready at any moment to take up a sword and fight to the death, but Jesus “gave up.” That plummeted all the disciples into a deep, dark depressive state of mind about the “Messianic” glories Jesus taught them to hope for. The only trouble was, they were expecting a carnal, earthly messianic glory, and Jesus had been talking about the glory of the Messiah in their souls and hearts as they awaited heaven. Again, as with Judas, Jesus is not making a prediction just to make sure everything gets fulfilled. He is making a prediction, so that when it is fulfilled, Peter will be reminded of how much Jesus loved him, knowing all along that he would deny him 3 times, when Peter had so boastfully said, “If I must die with you, I will not deny you” (Mk. 14:31). Peter would later need motivation to bring him to repentance!

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 14:1-31

In interpreting John 14, we must (a) understand it as the speaker who spoke it intended; (b) understand it in the light of its over-all context (which is John 14-15-16-17); and, (c) understand it in light of what all the rest of the Bible has to say about its concepts or teachings. Jesus is NOT speaking here about his Second Coming! He IS speaking about his return to these disciples (and all subsequent disciples) in the person of the HOLY SPIRIT! That is clear not only from the over-all context of what Jesus is attempting to do (console his disciples that he must soon depart their presence in his fleshly body), but also from the statement of Jesus himself in John 14:17. Dallas Willard, in *The Divine Conspiracy*, says, “In John 14, he (Jesus) goes carefully over the fact that he would soon be taken away from them in the visible human form they had known. Then, he explains, another “strengtheners”—“comforter” is just not the right word to use in translating paraclete today—would be active and interactive in their lives. The marginal reading of John 14:16 in the New American Standard version is excellent for the meaning intended: a paraclete is ‘one called alongside to help.’ This other strengthener (other, that is, than the visible Jesus as they had known him) would be with them to the end...The human order, or ‘world’ (cosmos), by contrast, cannot receive this ‘spirit of truth,’ as Jesus describes it, because it can’t see it and therefore cannot know it. The human mind in its now standard form does not generally speaking, accept as reality what it cannot see...God as personality is not a physical reality that everyone must see whether they want to or not. He can, of course, make himself present to the human mind in any way he chooses. But—for good reasons rooted deeply in the nature of the person and of personal relationships—his preferred way is to speak, to communicate: thus the absolute centrality of scripture to our discipleship.” *ibid.* p. 276-277. The One who is “coming again” to receive them (these disciples) unto himself is none other than Jesus Christ in the Person of the “Strengthener” or Holy Spirit. And the “coming again” is immediately after his bodily ascension into heaven. Carl Ketcherside wrote a definitive article to this interpretation in *The Gospel Speaker*, entitled, “Another Comforter Just Like Me” undated, which I have in my files. I will use some of Carl’s discussion trying to give credit by (“CK”) each time I find myself using it.

Jesus says, “Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me.” They believe in a God whom they have never seen. Now they must prepare themselves to believe in a Jesus whom they will no longer see in the flesh after he “goes away” (see 1 Pet. 1:8-9). Jesus says, “In my Father’s house are many rooms” (Gr. *oikia* and *monai*, Latin *domo* and *mansiones*). The Greek word translated “rooms” or “mansions” (KJV) is found only one other time in the Bible, and that time is in this chapter (“CK”)...Now that word *abode* (John 14:22-23) is the same word that is translated *mansions*. Jesus is saying that there is going to be a distinction between you and those in the world. Jesus is going to “manifest” himself to these disciples but not unto the world (as per Jesus statement Jn. 14:14-17 and Judas’ question, Jn. 14:27). Jesus cannot be referring to the Second Coming because when Jesus

comes the Second and final time (Heb. 9:27-28) he will “manifest” himself to everyone! (1 Thess. 4:13—5:11; 2 Thess. 1:8-12). God “abides” in (a) the Incarnate Son; (b) creation; (c) believers; (d) the church; (e) heaven; (f) angels; (g) prophets and, in (h) apostles—GOD CAN ABIDE ANYWHERE AND IN ANY FORM HE WISHES! God, dwelling in the Son, was for a little while made lower than the angels (Heb. 2:5-18; Phil. 2:5-11 Heb. 10:5ff; Jn. 14:28; Jn. 1:1-18). BUT THE SON WAS STILL GOD AND THE WORD! One of God’s many dwelling places was the fleshly body of man in the Person of the Son. And the Son was also God, and the Son was also the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:17), dwelling in the fleshly body of Jesus of Nazareth. After his redemptive work on earth was accomplished, the Son returned to heaven but then he came back to dwell in the apostles (in a special, miraculous way) and in all believers since as the Holy Spirit—AND THAT IS WHAT JOHN 14,15,16,17 IS ALL ABOUT! The “place” Jesus was going away to prepare where both he and his disciples would be together was “the church” (Matt. 18:20; 28:18-20; Eph. 2:19-22; 3:17; 1 Cor. 3:9; 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Pet. 2:5, etc.). Dallas Willard, writes, “The reality of the kingdom life is an inner one, a hidden one, with ‘the Father who is in secret’....Not that the genuine presence of the kingdom in a person can really be hidden. It cannot, nor, for that matter, can its absence....So the kingdom of the heavens, from the practical point of view in which we all must live, is simply our experience of Jesus’ continual interaction with us in history and throughout the days, hours and moments of our earthly existence.” op.cit. p. 279,280.

There is no way to prove that Jesus is the ONLY way to God! But we do accept the truth of his statement on the basis of his authority to make it! What can be proven is that his word is absolutely trustworthy! That Jesus was a real person, who lived in history, who did the things the Gospels say he did, and said the things he said—those are the things that can be proven! BUT HIS CLAIMS ARE ESTABLISHED AS TRUE ON THE BASIS OF THE HISTORICITY OF THE RECORD AS TO HIS DEEDS! Jesus’ authority is established on the basis of his resurrection (Matt. 28:18-20), his claims are to be accepted on the basis of his authority! Jesus claims that access to God the Creator is available only through him! That is an intolerable claim, unless Jesus has the authority to make it! And for most of the religious world, including most of Christendom—sad to say—it has become an intolerable statement for any of Jesus’ followers to make on his behalf. Nearly everyone in the world believes there are “many accesses” to God (Islam, Hinduism, Shintoism, Taoism, Judaism, Americanism, deism, agnosticism—you name it and these are just other “ways to God”). But, if words have any meaning, when Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me” (14:6), then he meant THERE IS NO WAY TO GOD EXCEPT BY (THROUGH) HIM (and all which that entails by way of exclusive faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to his commandments and those of his apostles in the New Testament). Have you been watching our current crop of “hopefuls” for the White House? Our presidential candidates, almost without exception—begin to “hem and haw” when pinned down about their position on Jesus Christ and Christianity being the exclusive “way to God.” It was not so with America’s early political leadership! If you don’t believe that last statement, get yourself a copy of America’s God and Country Encyclopedia Of Quotations, by William J. Federer, 1994, Fame Pub., Inc., Coppell, TX, 843 pages. That’s not the only “documentation” of the Christ-centered pronouncements of America’s founding fathers, but it would be a good start. CLEARLY, THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, “THE PILLAR AND

GROUND OF THE TRUTH" MUST STAND UP FOR JESUS' STATEMENT—FOR NO OTHER ENTITY ON EARTH WILL! World magazine, Dec. 18, 1999, article, "Your tax dollars a work," p. 19, noted that U.S. Congressman James McDermott (D) wrote to all his 434 fellow House members, on Congressional letter-head paper (meaning it is his official "government" position), charging Southern Baptists with "an aggressive, intolerant approach" and "an intolerant view that has inflamed Hindu communities worldwide." He urged his fellow Congressmen to join his effort to urge So. Baptists "to end your conversion campaign directed to members of the Hindu faith." Earlier he had sent a letter signed by 6 other members of Congress to Morris Chapman, pres. of Southern Baptist Convention's Exec. Committee, stating "We cannot understand how men and women, raised and educated in the world's bastion of religious freedom and tolerance, can characterize another religion as spiritually dark and false. The lack of respect that this statement shows for the basic rights of an individual to believe in whatever faith they choose is perhaps the most disturbing." World editorializes, "It is Congressman McDermott's letter that should disturb American taxpayers, who should be outraged at the intrusion of governmental officials into the evangelism efforts of American Christians, who are, after all, supposedly protected by the Bill of Rights," writes World. McDermott's letter also shows a complete ignorance of India's history in terms of religious "liberty." In it he stated, "India has been one of the great bulwarks in her commitment to secularism and the belief that all men and women have a right to believe in their own faith...Hinduism has lasted for thousands of years and espouses a fundamental respect for all creeds and ways of life." All he would have to do to become "enlightened" is read pp. 149-163 of *By Their Blood*, by James & Marti Hefley, about the persecution of Christians in India by the Hindus and the Hindu-Muslim wars in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. World, continues, "To preach Christ is to risk being charged with a hate crime, and to pray for the conversion of non-Christians is intolerant. To describe those without Christ as 'lost' and in 'darkness' is outside the pale of enlightened and acceptable conduct, according to Mr. McDermott..." Mr. McDermott is a graduate of Wheaton College whose slogan boasts "Since 1860, for Christ and His Kingdom." "What tangled webs we weave, when first we practice to deceive"—please, Mr. McDermott, get it right!

Many people would think walking on water, changing water into wine, casting out demons, curing the ill could not be topped as "great works." But of none of these things does Jesus picture the angels of heaven rejoicing. He does, however, say that the angels of heaven rejoice over one sinner brought to repentance (Lk. 15:7,9). Jesus does indicate that those who are thrilled that they would be permitted to do miracles should have rejoiced rather that their names were written in heaven (Lk. 10:20). Thus, to save souls is the most important "work" that can ever be done for God! Few, very few, of those whom Jesus "evangelized" in his 3 ½ year ministry stayed true to their professions of faith in him. So, those who came after Jesus would have, generally speaking, longer lives to spend in winning people to the kingdom. However, the one thing that Jesus could not do during his earthly ministry, that those disciples he left behind could do (after he went back to the Father and sent his Holy Spirit) was take the gospel all over the world—to people of every nation and tribe and tongue. Jesus' ministry was limited to Israel (Matt. 10:6,23; 15:24). He could not go and teach the Gentiles as Paul did. But, in the end, Jesus is saying that the spiritual victories these disciples would see in establishing the church and converting thousands of

people, would far outshine any physical miracles which he had done! In conversion the Christian evangelist faces the formidable task of persuading and convincing a free-willed-human-being to repent and change his life. In a physical miracle Jesus had only to command the physical-material objects of creation and they had to obey! Furthermore, if Jesus does not go away, the Holy Spirit cannot come and “guide (the apostles) into all the truth” (Jn. 16:12). There was yet MORE truth to come from God even after Jesus’ death and resurrection, and that would make the TRUTH complete and final and perfected (“reach its goal”). The TRUTH that was yet to come to the apostles would make them capable of delivering to the world the FINAL, WHOLE, AND EXCLUSIVE TRUTH OF GOD FOR MAN’S REDEMPTION—a “greater work” than Jesus could do while here in the flesh!

The “Counselor” (or “Comforter” KJV & ASV) is in Greek, *allon parakleton allon parakleton*. A *parakleton* is literally, “one called alongside to assist or help.” In the Greek language they had two words for “another”. The first word was the word *heteros* which means another of a different kind, and the second was the word *allos* which means another of the same kind. So what Jesus is saying in John 14:15-17 is that when he “goes away” in the flesh, he will send back to the apostles (and subsequently to all believers), another “called-alongside-Strengthener”—the same “kind” of Person as Jesus was only not in the flesh! Actually, Jesus makes it clear in 14:17 that this “one-of-the-same-kind” of Strengthener will be none other than himself, when he says, “...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.” I have emphasized “for he dwells with you” to show that Jesus was talking about himself! So Jesus cannot possibly be talking here about his Second Coming to judge the world—he is talking about his “second” coming to the apostles (and subsequently to the whole world) as the “Spirit of truth” (i.e., the Holy Spirit). If Jesus has come back as The Strengthener (i.e., the Counselor)—WHO NEEDS ANOTHER COUNSELOR? IF THE WORLD TODAY TOOK JESUS AT HIS WORD, BELIEVED, REPENTED AND PUT TO PRACTICE WHAT JESUS TEACHES, IT WOULD SOLVE ALL THE SPIRITUAL PROBLEMS THAT OCCUR (HOSTILITY, LOSS OF IDENTITY, FAMILY CONFLICTS, POVERTY, “LOSTNESS,” DISSATISFACTION, DISILLUSIONMENT, DEPRESSION, ALIENATION, SOCIAL-ESTRANGEMENT—ALL WOULD DISAPPEAR). Read Dallas Willard’s book, *The Divine Conspiracy*, for a discussion of this very proposition!

The world of unbelief “cannot receive” (Greek, *dunatai labein*, “has no power to take hold of”), because it does not “see” the Holy Spirit, and it does not “know” the Holy Spirit. The world has no ability to take hold of that which is spiritual because it “believes and knows only what it sees” (2 Cor. 4:16-18). Christians walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7) when it comes to what the Bible says about things impossible to see with the physical eye (heaven, the Holy Spirit, the future, etc.). That doesn’t mean that Christians are credulous and will believe anything and everything—it means that Christians walk by faith in Jesus Christ and his word, so that what the Bible says about things unseeable is believed but what anyone else says about things unseeable that is contrary to what the Bible says, is not believed (even if it is a preacher, Bible-teacher, philosopher, politician, educator, scientist, angel, the devil and his helpers, or a donkey). Now, of course, the “world” uses the capacity

to “see” many non-physical/non-material things “by faith” such as “the laws of nature.” The effects of “Nature” is seen with the physical eye, but the “laws” behind nature are presupposed by faith! What the world does in areas that seem not to demand (but they do, Rom. 1:18ff) i.e., moral responses or obligations, it refuses to do in areas that do, unequivocally demand moral responses (i.e., the teachings of Jesus Christ about spirituality, heaven, hell, the end of the world, his second coming, etc., etc.).

Jesus promised the apostles that he would not leave them “desolate” (RSV & ASV) or “comfortless” (KJV). Actually the Greek word translated “desolate” is orphanous, from which we get the English word, orphans. He was going to leave them in his physical form, but he was not going to “abandon” them. He was going to come back to them in a much more real presence through the relationship of their loving obedience to his commandments and his loving manifestation of himself. Jesus being able to manifest himself to them and not to the world bothered Judas (not Iscariot). So Jesus makes it very simple for him: “If a man 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. It can’t be any simpler (yet more profound) than that! Love Jesus and keep his word and he (and the Holy Spirit) and the Father will love him and come and “they” will make their abode (Gr. monen, “dwelling-place”) with you. The Greek syntax in this sentence is significant. The “making” of the abode is emphasized as belonging to Jesus (and the Holy Spirit) and the Father. Human beings don’t “make” Jesus dwell in them—he does so when they permit it by loving him and keeping his word, but all the doing is his. Jesus says to the churches of Asia Minor, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.” (Rev. 3:20). But just before that he had said, “Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent.” (Rev. 3:19). **SO, HOME WITH JESUS, AT LEAST IN THIS WORLD, MEANS TO HEED HIS PLEADING VOICE —AND TO OPEN THE DOOR OF YOUR MIND AND HEART TO A RELATIONSHIP OF LOVE, REPROOF AND CHASTENING!** Has Jesus been invited into your life? If not, you are, sadly, among the billions of SPIRITUAL ORPHANS in the world today! **NO ONE CAN TAKE HIS PLACE!**

Jesus says plainly 14:27 that the peace he gives is not the kind of peace the world gives! The peace Jesus gives is the “peace which passes all understanding and guards our hearts and minds against all anxiety” (Isa. 26:3; Phil. 4:7). It is a peace that cannot ever be had from a worldly point of reference. “Peace” in the Bible means more than mere calmness, or absence of hostility. The Hebrew word for “peace” is shalom, and means “wholeness, veracity, goodness, completeness, harmony, unity.” Jesus would have used this word or some Aramaic form of it like salem, while John translated Jesus’ utterance into the Greek word eirenen, which means much the same as the Hebrew word shalom. There can never be a cessation of hostilities (“peace”) in a fallen world! There will be no final, complete, peace among men while this world continues. The only real peace that exists, does so within the kingdom of God, among those who do the good will of God. Jesus Christ has made final, everlasting, and complete peace between man and God. Jesus, in his going to the father by his death, resurrection, ascension and exaltation to his high-priesthood, accomplished man’s atonement, paid man’s penalty and accomplished reconciliation (Rom. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 5:17-21;

Eph. 2:11-22; Col. 1:19-20). If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature and is at peace (in harmony) with God, and therefore, at peace (in harmony) with his fellow man and all the rest of God's creation! To have this peace requires that an individual "let not his/her heart be troubled, neither let them be afraid." In other words, this peace comes only to those who are totally trusting in and totally committed to Jesus Christ. We should never expect the whole world to find the peace Jesus gives until the whole world trusts in him! That, of course, is never going to happen. When Jesus comes in his final "coming" there will be "MANY" who have not found the "WAY" that is pressurized and difficult. A CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE IS A PEACEMAKER (Matt. 5:9)—BUT ON A ONE-BY-ONE BASIS! EVERY PERSON WON TO CHRIST IS ANOTHER "STEP" CLOSER TO BRING TO FRUITION GOD'S KINGDOM OF PEACE! It is in existence now all over the world—Americans are at peace with Japanese (Christians); Germans are at peace with British(Christians); Russians are at peace with Balkan (Christians), etc., etc. SO JESUS' ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND TEACHINGS ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PEACE-BRINGING DEEDS AND WORDS THAT WERE EVER DONE OR UTTERED ON THE FACE OF THIS EARTH! Peace—one victory at a time!

Jesus did not mean the disciples should "rejoice" in the excruciating sufferings he was about to endure—as if they were sado-masochists! He meant that they would rejoice after the fact, and could rejoice even when he told them had they truly believed that it was his God-ordained-mission to do so! Notice in 14:29 Jesus says, "And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe." He could not be resurrected until he died! That sounds simple enough, but there are so many people today, yet, who attempt every ruse possible to "prove" that Jesus never died, so they won't have to prove that he arose from the dead. Jesus is telling his disciples that he is predicting all these things before hand so that when it all comes to pass they will "rejoice" in the evidence he has given them that his promises and words do all come to pass—that he, Jesus, is the "Amen" to all God's promises (2 Cor. 1:19-21)!

Jesus must prepare to face his darkest hour. His foes would accuse him and the alleged prince of this world would rail at him and slander him through the mouths of human beings, but no sin or guilt would be found in him (Jn. 18:23; Lk. 23:22; Mk. 14:56-59, etc.). There is no doubt from this passage and others that Jesus was aware of his own sinlessness. No critic has a right to say that Jesus did not know whether he was sinless or divine—or, that he never said he was without sin—because it is plain from this passage that Jesus both knew it and said it! Yes! Jesus knew the "goings and comings" of the devil. He knew, perfectly, the "designs" 2 Cor. 2:11 (Gr. noemata, "mentality, deviousness, scheming") so that Satan could never gain an advantage over Jesus. It was not the devil that put Jesus on the cross—it was Jesus who put himself there! He had the power to resist and refuse the cross—he did not deserve it—no sin of his demanded his death. The devil could not indict him before God the Father! HE WENT THERE STRICTLY OUT OF PURE-LOVE! He went to the cross so that the world might "know" of his love for the Father (notice, that was priority with Jesus)—and subsequently, his love for all mankind. IN DEMONSTRATING HIS TOTAL LOVE FOR GOD, JESUS WOULD BE ABLE TO CONVINCe OTHERS THAT THEY, TOO, SHOULD LOVE GOD SO! And we have the same power of innocence over the devil that

Jesus had because Jesus has given it to us by his grace. The devil cannot indict us before God the Father because Jesus has paid for our sins! We also have available to us, in the final, complete word of God, the ability to keep Satan from gaining an advantage over us because we are not ignorant of his “mentality and devices” (2 Cor. 2:11).

WE DO HAVE THE CAPACITY AND THE MECHANICS BY WHICH WE CAN HAVE AN INTIMATE, POWERFUL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT. It is through believing and keeping his word. We have said much about this before—and will say much about it in lessons to come. A special study is attached to help understand it from the Scriptures.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD WORKS THROUGH HIS WORD TO EFFECT THE NEW BIRTH
notes from Z. T. Sweeney, in *The Spirit and the Word*,
reprint by Gospel Advocate, no date, paperback, pp. 118-121

“How does Christ dwell in us? The passage...(Eph. 3:17) says, ‘Christ shall dwell in your hearts by faith;’ more correctly rendered, ‘the (Gr. tes pisteos, definite article, tes) faith’ or the gospel. How does the spirit dwell in us? In Gal. 3:2, Paul asks the Galatians: ‘Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of the faith?’—or the gospel. The above Scriptures clearly teach that when the words, thoughts and Spirit of God are controlling in our lives, God dwells in us; that when the gospel controls us, Christ dwells in us; that when we receive the gospel by the hearing of faith, the Spirit dwells in us.

“But says one, I do not have to depend upon the word. I know it by my own consciousness (feeling). It is a principle as old as metaphysics (i.e., philosophy) that consciousness does not take cognizance of causes, but of effects. You may be conscious of an effect within you, but you can not be conscious of the cause that produced the effect. Suppose you are lying asleep on the ground; you are suddenly awakened by a severe pain in your lower limb; consciousness (feeling) tells you that you are suffering pain, but it does not tell you what produced that pain. This must be decided by reason or faith. If you find a thorn in the grass where your limb was resting, reason says the thorn stuck you; if you find a bumblebee mashed in the grass, reason will say the insect stung you; or, if someone near you says a boy with a pin in his hand ran away from you, faith will say the boy stuck you. But in either case it was reason or faith that decided the cause of your pain. Now, when a man says, I am conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit within me, he simply means, I am conscious of a feeling within me which I have been taught was caused by the Holy Spirit. If a man has been taught wrong, he assigns a wrong cause for the feeling.

“I assert it to be a fact that everything that is claimed to be effected by a personal indwelling of the Spirit is clearly accomplished by the Spirit acting through the word of God. (our emphasis).

“It is the testimony of metaphysicians, from Sir William Hamilton down to the writer, that consciousness (feeling) does not take cognizance of causes, but effects. Feelings are effects and not causes. Consciousness tells us when we feel good or bad, but it does not tell us what makes us feel good or bad. When a man has been taught that a certain feeling in his heart is produced by a certain agency, his faith and reason may decide that the agency produced the feeling, but consciousness has nothing whatever to do with the cause of the feeling. Likewise, a certain feeling in the heart may be attributed to the Spirit because one has been taught that the Spirit will produce such a feeling, but consciousness can not trace that feeling to the Spirit himself. A man should feel right because he knows he is right, and not know he is right because he feels right.” op.cit., p 132

(PTB’s note: “For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all....etc.” (2 Cor. 5:14-21). THE LOVE OF CHRIST DOES NOT COME TO US SUBJECTIVELY, BUT OBJECTIVELY, HISTORICALLY, AS WE ARE CONVINCED OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS (AND THE REST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT)!

From the book, MOSES LARD, THAT PRINCE OF PREACHERS, 1987
by Kenneth Van Deusen, College Press

Moses Lard made the following arguments to establish once and for always the true position of Alexander Campbell and his brethren regarding the Holy Spirit in man’s conversion:

MOSES E. LARD: “REVIEW OF CAMPBELLISM EXAMINED”

Necessity does not exist for any influence in conversion except such as is exerted through divine Truth and that hence no other is exerted.

Any influence more intense than that of divine Truth and above it, such as Mr. Jeter contends for, would of necessity infringe the freedom of the human will and hence cannot be admitted to be present in conversion.

The Spirit does not exert on the sinner a special influence to induce him to receive the Truth and obey it when he is perfectly conscious he can and should do both without the influence.

The Savior and the apostles always addressed their audiences as if their conversion depended alone on the Truth they heard, which is inconsistent with the hypothesis that it depended on the Truth and something else.

In no land or age has there ever yet occurred a single case of conversion without the Truth—a fact which proves that conversion is effected only through the Truth.

The apostle James ascribes conversion to the Truth and to that alone, which forbids the belief that it is effected by the Truth and something more.

The apostle Peter ascribes conversion, or being born again, to the Truth and to that alone as the means by which it had been effected; and that, therefore, we are not at liberty to ascribe it even in part to another and unknown cause.

Belief in Christ and being born of God are identical and that, since belief in Christ depends on the Truth alone, therefore being born of God, or conversion, depends on the Truth alone.

The original of John 3:8 in its most natural sense—that which it yields by the soundest rules of interpretation—teaches that being born of the Spirit (or conversion) is effected by hearing or receiving the Truth.

Conviction of the sinner, which is peculiarly the work of the Spirit, and which may be considered as but another name for conversion in the view we are now taking of it, can be effected in no other way known to the human mind except by the Truth.

There is no cause known to have contributed to the conversion of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, except the Truth which they heard and that it is hence unjust and unfair to infer the presence of any other.

The conversion of the eunuch (sic) justifies belief in no other influence as the cause of his conversion except the Truth which he heard.

The apostle Paul represents himself as having begotten or converted the Corinthians by the gospel and that since the gospel in its ordinary acceptation does not include an influence distinct from and above itself; therefore, the gospel is the sole influence of conversion.

The only known or determinate cause of Lydia's conversion was the Truth which she heard and that this is hence the real cause of conversion.

Brother Moses Lard presented Rev. Jeter (Baptist) with three challenges to establish his (Mr. Jeter's) position that there is work by the Holy Spirit over and above the work of the word of God in human conversion:

Produce from the Bible at least one passage which either actually asserts or necessarily implies the existence of an influence distinct from and above the Truth as an influence in conversion.

Prove, since this influence is 'distinct from and above' the Truth, that it is even exerted through the Truth.

Prove that it is ever exerted without the Truth.

NO SUCH PASSAGES OR EVIDENCE WAS EVER PRESENTED BY REV. JETER OR ANY OF HIS ASSOCIATES!

The prophet Isaiah asks, ca. 745-695 B.C., "...Where is he who put his Holy Spirit within them...." (Isa. 63:11). Isaiah used the Hebrew preposition, beqrebbo which is from the Hebrew root, qereb, meaning, "inside, inward part, inwards, bowels; hence, the heart." This Hebrew phrase in Isaiah 63:11 is translated in the Septuagint (Greek version of the OT ca. 200 B.C.) pou estin ho theis en autois to pneuma to hagion, or, "Where is he who put in them his holy spirit?" The Greek preposition en, definitively means, within. David used the same Hebrew preposition when he wrote: "...and put a new and right spirit within me..." Psa. 51:10, just before he wrote, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me..." From these two passages, AND FURTHER REASONING FROM THE SCRIPTURES TO FOLLOW, we conclude that the Holy Spirit "indwelt" those who were true believers in the Old Testament!

The following quotations are from A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion, 1962, James Oliver Buswell, pp. 114-119:

"...The streams of living water flowing forth from the hearts of believers (John 7:P37-39) evidently signify the power of the Holy Spirit in the missionary program for this age..." p. 114 (emphasis added).

"There is a popular cliché, based upon a misunderstanding of these verses, to the effect that the Holy Spirit since the day of Pentecost dwells in believers, whereas in the Old Testament times He dwelt only with or upon them. The facts give no support to such a view. The Spirit dwelt in Joshua (Num. 27:18, Heb. bo, a prepositional prefix meaning, "in"). It is said of Israel under Moses' leadership that God 'put his Holy Spirit within (see our statement in #1) him (them)' Isa. 63:11. 'My Spirit remaineth among ("in," the same preposition) you; fear ye not' (Hag. 2:5). In all three of these passages the preposition is 'in,' Hebrew beth, the equivalent of the New Testament word en. The Holy Spirit of God, as a Personal Presence, is and always has been and always will be in the midst of God's people, in their hearts and in their minds." p. 115 (emphasis added).

"...If Christ had not finished His earthly ministry, the Holy Spirit never could have come...But this fact should not be taken in a narrow sense. It is equally true that if it were not for the certainty of the finished work of Christ, the Holy Spirit never would have come to the prophets of the Old Testament. If it were not for the finished work of Christ, absolutely certain in the eternal decrees of God, the Spirit of God never could have been manifested. The revelation at Pentecost, the revelation at Sinai, all God's grace and all God's truth in all ages are totally contingent upon Christ's finished work...Jesus continued His discourse (i.e., John 14-15-16) 'And when he comes he will convict the world....' p. 116-117 (emphasis added).

"The filling of the Spirit may be a repeated act in the experience of a child of God in

any dispensation. For purposes of the topic under discussion (John 7:37-39 and John 14-15-16) it should be clear...that the reception of the Holy Spirit, a filling of the Holy Spirit, is not confined to special occasions and the unfolding of the dispensations, but is always available for the Lord's people. This in turn signifies that the Holy Spirit is immutable in the sense in which the Triune God is immutable, namely, that His actions are consistent and that His character and essential ministry are always consistent. The above study in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the gospel according to John makes it abundantly evident that the Holy Spirit is God, 'co-equal and con-substantial' with the Father and the Son, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in all His divine attributes, and consistent in all dispensations in His particular ministry in the divine redemptive program." p. 119. ### PTB's note: This would explain Romans 8:9-11; the saints of the OT could thus be qualified for resurrection from their death (which occurred millennia before the Incarnate Spirit in Christ) since God's Spirit dwelt in them through their faith in both Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, as well as later in the Christian dispensation.

Buswell's interpretation of John 7:37-38 focuses on the "power of the Holy Spirit in the missionary program for this (Christian) age" as compared with a non-missionary work of the Holy Spirit in the OT ages. Buswell explains further on p. 114 (part I), "The missionary program for this age, and the giving of the Holy Spirit in this respect (as stated in John 7:37-39), the streams of living water, began at the day of Pentecost." ###PTB's note: In fact, Jesus may not be talking about the new-birth-indwelling of the Spirit of God at all in John 7:37-39. He may be talking about what the apostles were to receive (the baptism of the Holy Spirit—special miraculous powers) on Pentecost (which, of course, was not given for the WORLD until Pentecost—cf. John 20:22; Lk. 24:44-49; Acts 11-8; 2:1-24, et al).

Whatever the intent or extent of the "receiving" of the Spirit meant by Jesus in John 7:37-39—whether "indwelling for new birth" which all Christians receive, or special-gift-for-inerrant-preaching, or miraculous-wonder-working, the idea that Jesus' words do not mean the Holy Spirit was never previously dwelling in believers but will dwell in them in a new, more-convincingly (see Heb. 6:13-20) manifestation—in the ultimate Messianic fulfillment—fits both OT prophecy (Joel 2:28ff Isa. 32:15; 44:3; 59:21; Ezek. 39:29; etal). It also fits perfectly with the symbolism and typical import of the Feast of Tabernacles (Ingathering, cf. Zech. 14:8,16,19, etc.). The Israelites (those who believed and were faithful to God) had God's Spirit dwelling in them in the OT but he did not "flow out of them like rivers of living water" until the Messiah came and completed his work!

DO NOT MISS THE CONTEXT IN JOHN 7-8-9-10! JESUS IS AT THE FEAST OF "BOOTHES" (TABERNACLES/INGATHERING) TRYING TO CONVINCING THE JEWS THAT HE IS THE MESSIAH, AND THAT HE, NOT JUDAISM, IS THE PERFECTED AND ULTIMATE (THAT IS, IN HIS SPIRITUAL NATURE) FULFILLMENT OF BOTH THE PHYSICAL FEAST AND THE O.T. PROPHECIES OF "LIVING WATER UNTO THE WORLD"! Judaism was provincial. It was limited by God (for God's purposes) to the Jews. It was not to "flow out unto the world." But the Person in the doctrine of the Messiah was The Spirit unto the whole world.

If after you read Romans 4:1-25; Galatians 3:1-29; Hebrews 11:8-22; and James 2:18-16, you can contend that Abraham did not have the Spirit of God dwelling in him, you're a better man than I am, Gunga Din! Of all people who have ever lived, Abraham is one of only two or three who, by name, is assuredly in heaven (Matt. 8:11; Lk. 13:28). No one will get to heaven without the Spirit of God in them (Rom. 8:9-11). We are even told in Gal. 3:8 that Abraham had "the gospel preached to him."! And that in a context of showing that the Spirit of God dwells in people "by faith"—even in Abraham!

The Theology of the Older Testament, by J. Barton Payne, Th.D., 1969, Zondervan, pp. 174-175: "David, in his intimate personal communion with God, was the first to reveal the activity of the Holy Spirit as indwelling and guiding the believer. For the king prayed.... 'Thy Spirit is good' (Psa. 143:10). Isaiah...described how Israel collectively had vexed God's Spirit during the wilderness wanderings (Isa. 63:10-11)...Ezekiel...spoke of how the Spirit would be active in reviving the community life in the post-exilic days (Ezek. 37:14)...Then in that post-exilic period, Haggai noted that even as Yahweh's Spirit had indwelt Israel as a part of their inheritance under the Sinaitic testament (Neh. 9:20), so in his own day the 'Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not' (Hag. 2:5)."

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD DWELT IN THE SAINTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT,
JUST AS SURELY AS HE DOES IN THE SAINTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT!

THE "MANY ABIDING PLACES" OF JOHN CHAPTERS 14-15-16-17

THE GODHEAD

(Gr. theotetos, Col. 2:9 only)

God the Father, the Word & The Spirit

Jesus said, "Believe in God, believe also in me..." In Jesus

(the Incarnate Son) dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead

bodily, Col. 2:9, and in him dwelt the fulness of the

Holy Spirit, Jn. 3:34.

In John 14, Jesus is talking
about his return to abide with
the apostles and Christians as
the Spirit, the Strengtheners
&
in any form he wishes.

God abides in: The Incarnate Son; in
Creation; in people; in the church; in
Heaven; in angels; in prophets and
apostles—God can abide anywhere

Christ, the Son &
The Word & The
Holy Spirit

Christ the Counselor
& The Word & The
Holy Spirit

FOR REDEMPTION

The Son was, for a little while, made a little lower than the angels (Heb. 2:5-18; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 10:5ff; Jn. 1:1-8; 14:28) But the Son was still God and The Word and the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:17).

One of God's "many dwelling places" was the fleshly body of a human being in the Person of the Son of God. And this human was also God, the Holy Spirit, dwelling in the Son. Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit (the divine nature, 2 Pet. 1:3-11) dwells in every Christian through the agency of the divine Word delivered orally, at After his redemptive work on earth was accomplished, Christ the Son returned to heaven but then he came back to inspire the apostles and dwell in Christians as the Holy Spirit—and that is what John 14-17 is all about!

In John chapters 14-17 Jesus repeats that he will manifest himself as the Holy Spirit or Comforter—this cannot be referring to his Second Coming in judgment because the "manifestation" is "not to the world." His Second Coming in judgment will be to the whole world!

FOR SANCTIFICATION

The Spirit of Christ, The Spirit of God, The Spirit of Truth, The Holy Spirit, dwells in:

a select few in the OT and in the apostles in the NT miraculously in order to reveal God's word to mankind (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

First, and written finally, by the writers of the Bible (Rom. 8:1-17; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 2:21-22; 3:17; Col. 1:27-29; Jn. 14:17; 14:21-23; 15:1-11; 17:20:21; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Pet. 1:3-11; 1 Jn. 2:24; 3:24; 4:12,15; 5:11-12).

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 15:1-27

Jesus used the figure of the vine and branches because (1) it was a very familiar part of the ancient Israelite life; the fruit of the vine was in wise use for drinking in a land where water was scarce, and hard to purify for drinking; (2) the OT used vine and vineyard to symbolize God's covenant people Psa. 80:8; Isa. 5:1ff; 27:2ff; Jer. 2:21; 12:10; Ezek. 15:1ff; 17:5-6; 19:10; Hosea 10:1; Micah 4:4, so Jesus used the same figures (Matt. 20:1-14; 21:28-32; 21:33-43; Mk. 11:1ff; Lk. 20:9ff; 13:6ff); and (3) the grape vine had become the official symbol of Israel in Herod's day, so much so, Herod had commissioned goldsmiths to build a huge golden grapevine and put it on the huge door of the Temple when he "remodeled" it (this is Herod the Great). It is always a good symbol of productiveness, fruit-bearing (1 Cor. 9:7) or of uselessness (Rev. 14:17-20; 19:15-16). BUT, AS THE PROPHET EZEKIEL SAID, WHAT ELSE IS A GRAPEVINE FOR EXCEPT PRODUCING GRAPES—IF NOT IT IS GOOD FOR NOTHING (Ezek. 15:1ff). Every farmer (or would-be farmer) knows about vines, trees, branches, pruning, and producing or being burned. Very few people today (even those who've never been on a farm) would fail to understand Jesus' meaning here!

Grapevines must be pruned if they are to bear fruit. Cultivated grapes grow from cuttings made from canes. In winter, growers cut pieces of cane about 12 inches long. Each section has five or six buds. These cuttings are stored. Early in spring, workers plant the cuttings upright in nursery beds, leaving the tops exposed. These grow during the summer. The following spring, when growing has stopped, the vine is dug and the top and roots are pruned. Then the new vines are planted in the vineyard in rows 10 to 12 feet apart. Vineyards need cultivation because grapes will not grow well in sod. Every winter, growers prune the vines to keep them compact and to regulate the fruit they will bear. One may see a vivid example of this driving Interstate 44 toward St. Louis at Cuba, MO, and St. James, MO, where there are many grape vineyards along the highway. Human beings must be "cultivated" and "pruned" if they are going to be kept "compact" and "regulated" in the fruit which they grow. God prunes human beings to produce in them the "fruit of the Holy Spirit" (i.e., the nature of God). God prunes by tribulation, chastening, trials, tests. The fruit is the "victory." Would you, or anyone else you know, really produce the "fruit of the Spirit" without chastening from God? Regardless of what we may "feel" about it, the Bible plainly says that this is the only way more fruit is produced in our lives (Heb. 12:11). The Greek word John uses is *kathairei*, from which the English word, *catharsis* comes. It means "a purging, a purifying." It is often translated "pure" (Matt. 5:8; 1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:2; Titus 1:15); sometimes translated "innocent" (Acts 20:26; James 1:17)—"unspotted"; sometimes "a clean conscience" (1 Tim. 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 10:22). When the Lord "prunes" his "branches" it is to take away that which pollutes and debilitates. He wants us to be productive in righteousness and goodness and spirituality—like Jesus was. We may cooperate with the Lord in this pruning process by "purifying our souls by obedience to the truth" (1 Pet. 1:23).

Did God prune Joseph? Job? Moses? David? Jeremiah? Peter? Paul? Then how dare we think we shall escape! The Lord will work on us if we allow him to do so, in order that we may bear more fruit. What is fruit for? To sustain life! “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life...” Prov. 11:30

Branches (we’re not talking about “canes” here) are made for bearing fruit—but take the branch away from the vine and it dies (the vine goes on living). Branches get all their sustenance from the vine. They cannot live on their own. And what are “branches” good for when dead? TO BE BURNED? (Isa. 27:11; Ezek. 15:4; 19:12-14; Rev. 14). The same is true of unproductive “land” (Heb. 6;7-8)—GOOD FOR NOTHING! The Lord expects his people to bear fruit (Matt. 21:23ff; Mk. 12:2; Lk. 13:6-7; 20:10). The “fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true” (Eph. 5:9) “Likewise, my brethren, you 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” (Rom. 7:4). We are to be “filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:10). THERE’S NO ESCAPING IT, CHRISTIANS ARE GOD’S BRANCHES TO BEAR HIS FRUIT IN THIS WORLD!

1. The abiding of his words in us is the means of his abiding in us (15:7; 1 Jn. 2:24) (see notes at the end of this section)
2. We abide in him when we keep his commandments, John 15:10; 1 Jn. 3:24
3. We abide in him when we walk in the same way he walked, 1 John 2:6
4. We abide in him (in the light) when we love our brother, 1 Jn. 2:10
5. We abide in him by refraining from sin, 1 Jn. 3:6
6. We abide in him when we “eat his flesh and drink his blood” Jn. 6:56 (which is “eating his word, Jn. 6:63)
7. We know we abide in him because he has given us his Spirit, 1 Jn. 4:13
8. We abide in him when we confess (say the same as God says about him) that Jesus is the Son of God 1 Jn. 4:15
9. We abide in him when we abide in love, 1 Jn. 4:16
10. We abide in him when we abide in his doctrine (or didache) 2 Jn. 9

Joy is from the Greek word chara, and may involve the idea of “enjoy the possession of...” Sir Geoffrey Fenton, in his Golden Epistles, A.D. 1577 wrote, “Many

covetous men do we see...to whom God gives power to get riches...but not liberty to rejoice and use them.” That may be behind the old Christian creeds which say that man’s purpose is to possess God and enjoy him forever. A giddy exhilaration, similar to joy, may be founded on a superficial basis (Matt. 13:20—the rocky soil—surface deep), but it will wither when trials and tribulations come. Joy is good and true even in difficult circumstances (Heb. 10:34; Jas. 1:2); Jesus had joy even when “enduring the cross” (Heb. 12:2). The Macedonians had joy when “in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of liberality on their part” to their starving Hebrew-Christian brethren (2 Cor. 8:2). Joy is that experience when one has found the ultimate treasure (Matt. 13:44). It is that experience a mother has when she has delivered a child (Jn. 16:21). Joy is the essence of the kingdom of God (Rom. 14:17). Joy is what heaven experiences when one sinner repents (Lk. 15:7,10). **JOY IS A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE—NOT A FLESHLY EXPERIENCE.** Synonyms for “joy” are “ecstasy, rapture, bliss, pleasure.” Joy is not a capricious, silly, fickle impulsive giddiness. **JOY IS SATISFACTION, FULFILLMENT, COMPLETION, PEACE AND SECURITY OF BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT!**

The difference between “friend” and “servant” may not be as great as we suppose. Here Jesus distinguishes a “friend” from a “servant” by saying that a “servant does not know what his master is doing,” but he is going to tell his disciples all that he has heard from the Father, so that makes them his “friends.” In many other places in the NT we are called “bond servants” of Christ. And this includes apostles! So, a servant who is a willing servant, a very grateful servant, a servant out of love, who obeys his master’s commandments and is willing to lay down his life for the master—**NOW THAT IS A SERVANT WHO IS ALSO A FRIEND!** That is a servant in whom the master confides, and to whom the master reveals his heart and soul. But we must remember, his calling us to him as friends is out of his grace to begin with, and not out of our goodness. We were at one time, enemies of the cross, prodigal sons, children of wrath, sons of disobedience. **BUT WE WERE PURSUED BY “THE HOUND OF HEAVEN” AND EVENTUALLY “CONSTRAINED BY THE LOVE OF CHRIST”...CONVERTED TO BE HIS FRIENDS BECAUSE HE WAS OUR FRIEND FIRST!** Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto him as righteousness; and he was called the friend of God (Jas. 2:23).

It is a prediction of Jesus Christ, whose predictions have never failed, that those who belong to him **WILL BE HATED BY THE WORLD.** James 4:4 “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.” And the obverse is also true—become a friend of God and you become the world’s enemy! Jesus sent the apostles out two by two and told them they were sent as “sheep among wolves, and they would be hated by all people (Matt. 10:22). Why does the world hate those who bring the light of God to it? Because the world’s deeds are evil and they do not want their deeds to be exposed (John 3:18-21). Jesus told his unbelieving brothers, “...the world hates me because I testify of it that its works are evil” (John 7:7). John asks the rhetorical question, Why did Cain murder Abel? Then John answers his own question— because his Cain’s deeds were evil and Abel’s were righteous. **DO NOT WONDER, BRETHREN, THAT THE WORLD HATES YOU!”** (1 John 3:12-13).

Peter tells us that we should not be surprised at the hatred of the world as if it was something strange happening to us (1 Pet. 4:12). Now how does an elder in the church reconcile the fact that he will be hated by the world and Paul's admonition that he must be "above reproach" and "well thought of by outsiders" (1 Tim. 3:2,7)? It can only mean that an elder must be above any "false" accusations! And for that matter, all Christians are to "live quietly, mind their own affairs, and work with their hands...so that they may command the respect of outsiders, and be dependent on nobody" (1 Thess. 4:11-12). Paul told Titus that Christians are to so live that "nothing evil may be said of us" (Titus 2:8). Predicting the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus told his disciples they "would be hated by all nations for his name's sake" (Matt. 24:9). **NOW THIS TAKES A BALANCED, STEADFAST, STABLE CHRISTIAN WALK!** "But what an unusual recruiting procedure! Jesus promises apostles and all other Christians that if they remain loyal to him they may be sure they will be hated (Jn. 15:18) and persecuted (15:20), and that their preaching will be largely ignored and rejected (15:20). Not many people would volunteer for a mission like that."—Stan Paregien, *26 Lessons on the Gospel of John*, College Press. Cain hated Abel; Esau hated Jacob; Joseph's brothers hated him; Moses' brother and sister hated him; Saul hated David; the majority of Israelites hated God's prophets (especially Jeremiah who's own family hated him); Daniel's Babylonian and Persian co-workers hated him; Jesus was bitterly hated by those to whom he wanted to do nothing but good (**THEY HATED HIM WITHOUT A CAUSE**); the apostles were hated; Christians in the "great tribulation" of the Roman empire were hated—so it is not strange if we are hated, without cause, just for being Christians! The so-called "radical, fringe, extreme religious right" is having a lot of hatred spewed toward it from worldly minded opposition today. Remember this, "...the mind that is set on the flesh is **HOSTILE TO GOD**; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:7-8). **THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE KINGDOM OF FLESH ARE IN A CONSTANT WAR!** The Bible is realistic about this—and we had better be also!

Why does the world hate Christians? Because Christians will not give them an excuse for their sins (Jn. 15:22). Because Christians shine the light of truth on their evil deeds and expose them for what they really are (Jn. 3:18-21; Eph. 5:11-13)—deeds that produce **DEATH**, both in the here and now and in the hereafter! Because they cannot seduce faithful Christians into joining them in their sin (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Gal. 5:13-26; Eph. 5:3-11; Col. 2:8-23; 1 Thess. 5:12-22; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 2 Pet. 3:11-18, etc.). Because they hate God and Jesus and the Bible—and that is what the church is—the body of Christ still in the world is the pillar and ground of the truth. They tried to get rid of Jesus once by killing him. Then they tried to get rid of the "body" of Christ, the church—with a vengeance—Revelation 12-20. Do we think the world has given up and surrendered to God today? **THINK AGAIN!** What the world does not know, or doesn't want to know, is that it hates Christians because it is in a state of war against God. It hates because it is not reconciled to God's law and judgment upon its sin—it is still arrogant and proud and refuses to allow God, by his free grace, to forgive it! Worldly-minded also hate other worldly-minded people—"for we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy and hated by men and hating one another" (Titus 3:3) (see also Rev. 17:16, where the "beast" hates the "harlot" and devours her; and Matt. 24:10, where "many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate

one another”).

The worldly-minded have NO REASON to hate Jesus Christ and his followers! They are WITHOUT A CAUSE! Their viewpoint toward Jesus and his church is irrational, illogical, insane! Worldly-minded people can appear to be very logical and rational when they are rationalizing their own viewpoints. But they aren't even logical in that according to Romans 1:18-32. They can appear to be very tolerant, helpful, condescending, and “fair” when they are presenting their dogmas and doctrines—but their dogmas have no relationship to truth and reality! Worldly-minded people have no obligations to self-sacrifice—only to wickedness, falsehood and materialism. Because unbelief inexorably ends in moral relativism it HAS NO OBLIGATIONS TO ANYONE OR ANYTHING! Relativism inexorably ends in “me-ism” and selfishness. There is no death to self in unbelief. The preservation of self at all costs is the primary dogma of relativism---even at the cost of principle, truth, other people and God himself. It all started with the unbelief, distrust of God, and choice to give heed to Satan's lie in the Garden of Eden. God is pure truth, goodness, holiness, righteousness, and justice. To disbelieve that is to hate God. To hate God inevitably results in a hatred of those who believe God! Indeed—it is alright to prosecute with legal means unjustified harassment or bodily harm. The Bible gives us clear teaching and apostolic precedent that Christians did so—or at least they tried to do so. When the Christian tries to claim his “unalienable” human rights, endowed by his Creator, and the government under which he lives is unwilling to protect him in those rights, then the Christian must do the will of God to the best of his knowledge and conscience, and accept the consequences!

The following propositions are representative of Alexander Campbell's position on the mission and medium(i.e., instrumentality) of the Holy Spirit as presented in the Christian Baptist, The Millennial Harbinger, and the Campbell-Rice debate—they are not direct quotations, but summarizations---from, A Second Look at the New Testament, by Dr. Harold W. Ford, 1988, pub. Puget Sound Christian College

The Holy Spirit is the same person as Christ (Jn. 14:17), the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Grace and sent to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment.

Conversion is a moral or a spiritual change which can be wrought in man only through the introduction of new ideas and arguments—i.e., by language or verbalizations.

Regeneration, conversion and sanctification are simply three words for the same spiritual process.

The Holy Spirit operates only through the Word and its ordinances, in conversion and sanctification.

The particular knowledge that comes by seeing must always come that way. One does not see with the ears or hear with the eyes. All we know of this external world must come through the appointed means. So also it is in conversion.

There is no record of the Holy Spirit ever working aside from the Word in conversion. The Spirit follows the Word, and in no case precedes the Word.

The written Word contains all the Spirit ever revealed with reference to conversion.

Whatever is essential to regeneration in any case is essential to it in every case. Natural birth is always the same: so is the New Birth.

The Holy Spirit used words to plead his cause: miracles do not convert anyone.

The Holy Spirit is God's "advocate," and he uses words to advocate God's cause.

As the woodsman expends all of his energy through the axe in chopping down a tree, so the Holy Spirit expends all of his energy through the Word in sanctification.

The gift of tongues on Pentecost is positive proof that the Spirit works through the Word. This was the first gift.

The Word of God is the seed that, when planted, brings forth new life (1 Pet. 1:23); no seed planted brings forth no fruit.

Release from the afflictions of the people, in Paul's cause and in Christ's, was to be made through preaching the Word.

Whatever is ascribed to the Word of God, is also ascribed to the Spirit of God.

Resisting the Word of God and resisting the Spirit of God are one and the same.

The fruit of the Spirit and the fruit of the Gospel are the same thing.

God created nothing apart from his Word.

As from eternity God was manifest in and by the Word, but in Jesus Christ, God is manifest in the Word made flesh.

God operates with an instrument: the naked Spirit of God has never operated upon the naked spirit of man.

Scripture references on the modus operandi of the Holy Spirit which substantiate Alexander Campbell's propositions: (by PTB---note: scripture passages are cited and summarized—not fully quoted)

1. Luke 8:11—The divine “seed” sown in the honest and good heart is the Word of God.
2. John 6:63—The Words of Christ are Spirit and life and are to be assimilated (eaten) mentally and spiritually as one would eat his flesh and blood (see also Jer. 15:16; Ezek. 3:1; Rev. 10:8-11).
3. John 8:31-31—To continue in Christ's Word is to be his disciple and know the truth.
4. John 14:23—Anyone who keeps Christ's commandments (Word) will have the Godhead dwelling in him (see Jn. 15:1-11).
5. John 16:8-11—The modus operandi of the Holy Spirit is to convict the world by divinely inspired Word of the apostles.
6. John 17:17—The Word of God is that which sanctifies people in the truth.
7. Acts 2:38—Obedience to the preached Gospel brings the indwelling Spirit.
8. Acts 11:13—God told Cornelius he would receive a “message’ by which he would be saved.
9. Acts 17:30-31—Paul told Greeks of Athens that God's command for the whole world was to repent based upon the eye-witnessed testimony to the resurrection of Christ.
10. Romans 1:16—The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to all mankind—the Gospel has to be relayed by words.
11. Romans 8:1-17—The leading of the Spirit has to do with the mind of man being led by the testimony of God's law.
12. Romans 10:14-17—Faith comes from hearing the preaching of the Gospel—no other way.
13. Romans 12:1-2--We are to be transformed by the logic of our minds responding to the logical demands of God's grace.
14. 1 Cor. 1:6-16—The apostles were the exclusive revealers of the mind of the Spirit. No one can know the Spirit's mind unless the Spirit chooses to reveal it to him. He chose to reveal it to us through the apostles in “words”

15. 1 Cor. 4:15—Paul became the “father” of the Corinthians unto Christ through the Gospel. The Spirit of Christ made them Christ’s through Paul’s preaching of the Gospel.
16. 2 Cor. 3:12-18—When Moses is read a veil falls; when Christ is read in the Gospel the Spirit is found and as He is beheld in the Gospel, people are changed into Christ’s likeness from one degree of glory to another.
17. 2 Cor. 5:11-21—The love of Christ controls us through a conviction (a mental response to the Gospel) and we assume an entirely new perspective on everything, and we are a “new creation in Christ.” The Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit are one and the same).
18. 2 Cor. 11:1-16—To accept the Gospel is to accept the Spirit, to accept a different gospel is to accept a different spirit. To be married to Christ is by the agency of the Gospel preached.
19. Gal. 3:2—The Spirit is to be received by the hearing with faith.
20. Eph. 4:11-16—The work of the ministry of the church is to mature Christians to the full measure of the stature of Christ. Could this be anything less than the indwelling of Christ’ Spirit?
21. Eph. 4:17-24—To learn Christ, to hear of him and be taught about him in truth is to put off the old man, put on the new man which is renewed in the spirit of the mind.
22. Eph. 6:17—The “sword” (instrument) of the Spirit is the Word of God.
23. Col. 1:9—To be filled with the knowledge of Christ’s will is to be filled with spiritual wisdom.
24. Col. 1:24-29—The “mystery” of Christ in us is through the agency of the preaching of the Gospel for which Paul toiled, striving with all the energy within him.
25. Col. 3:9-10—The “new nature’ being renewed within the believer is being done through the knowledge of the image of the Creator which can only be found in the Word.
26. Col. 3:15-16—To let the peace of Christ and the Word of Christ dwell in one is that to which a Christian has been called.
27. 1 Thess. 2:13—the Word of God was “at work” in the Thessalonian brethren which made them imitators of Jesus Christ.
28. 1 Thess. 4:1-8--To live as one has learned from the apostles is to be given the Holy

Spirit.

29. 2 Thess. 2:13-15--To be saved through sanctification by the Spirit is done by belief of the truth in the Gospel.
30. Titus 1:1-3--God gave his salvation to the world through the preaching of his Word.
31. Titus 2:11--The "grace" of God (The "Spirit of Grace") has appeared for the salvation of all men, training them.....
32. Titus 3:4-8--God saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit.
33. Heb. 4:12-13--The Word of God is living and active...piercing to the division of soul and spirit...and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
34. Heb. 10:26-31--To sin against the knowledge of the truth (the Gospel of Christ) is to do despite unto the Spirit of Grace.
35. James 1:18-- God gave us spiritual birth through the Word of Truth.
36. James 1:21--The "implanted" word is able to save our souls.
37. 1 Pet. 1:22-23--We purify our souls by obedience to the truth...and are born anew of imperishable seed which is the living and abiding Word of God, the Gospel.
38. 2 Pet. 1:2-4--We partake of the divine nature (the Spirit of God) through the knowledge of Christ (found only in the written Word) and his precious and very great promises (also found only in the Word).
39. 1 Jn. 1:1-4--We are called to the same "fellowship" the Spirit of God and Christ as the apostles had by our knowledge and faith in the apostles testimony.
40. 1 Jn. 2:3-6--We may be sure we are in Christ when we keep his commandments.
41. 1 Jn. 2:14-17--The Word of God abides in believers and they overcome the world.
42. 1 Jn. 2:24--If the apostolic doctrine abides in us then we abide in the Son and the Father (and the Spirit).
43. 1 Jn. 3:23-24--All who keep his commandments abide in him, and he (in the Spirit) abides in them.
44. 1 Jn. 4:1-6--We know the Spirit of Christ vs. the spirit of falsehood only by the

apostolic written Word.

45.1 Jn. 4:15—Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of god, God abides in him, and he in God.

46.1 Jn. 5:1—Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child (born of the Spirit) of God.

47.1 Jn. 5:6-12—Whoever believes in the Son of God has the “testimony in himself.” And we have the Son in us when we receive the testimony of the apostles.

48.1 Jn. 5:10—We are in him who is true...the Son of God, when we understand what God has said about his Son.

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 16:1-33

Jesus forewarned the disciples, more than once, that if they committed themselves to him and his doctrines, they would be persecuted! Forewarned is forearmed (hopefully)! Peter wrote to Christians, “do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you” (1 Pet. 4:12). Jesus had warned them earlier when he sent the 12 and the 70 out on evangelistic tours (Matt. 10 and Lk. 10) that they would be persecuted for preaching in his name. Jesus kept predicting that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer death and be resurrected and they (the disciples) would be scattered. They had seen the malice which the Jewish rulers held for Jesus and had seen several groups of the Jews take up stones to kill him. They had seen what the Pharisees did to some who openly testified to faith in Jesus (e.g., the blind beggar in John ch. 9). **HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW OFTEN IN THE GOSPELS JESUS WARNS WOULD-FOLLOWERS OF THE COST IN SERVING HIM?** He tells the apostles that those who would later try to kill them would be thinking they were doing God a service. Remember what Paul said about his persecution of the church—“I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 16:9). “...I acted ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Tim. 1:13). After Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, the apostles remembered! And it kept them from falling away! **AND THE WARNINGS OF THE SCRIPTURES TO ALL CHRISTIANS ABOUT INEVITABLE SUFFERING FOR HIS NAME SHOULD KEEP CHRISTIANS FROM FALLING AWAY!**

Jesus did say all these things very early in his association with the Twelve—**HE SAID THEM, BUT THEY WEREN’T LISTENING!** They did not want to hear what he was saying about the humiliation and eventual “going away” of the Messiah (himself)—**SO THEY DIDN’T HEAR!** And isn’t that very much the mind of the flesh— and so often with each of us? Indeed, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak (Matt. 16:41). God’s incarnate presence was a hindrance to their understanding. They could not conceive of his going permanently away from them, so they expected him to be around to take care of defending them against his (and their) enemies—**WASN’T HE CONSTANTLY ABLE TO SAVE HIMSELF FROM THOSE WHO HAD BEEN TRYING TO KILL HIM?** They expected him to continue to do so—and they would fight with him to the death to make it so (they proudly boasted). Their spiritual sight had not yet come—all they could see was flesh. Their faith was infantile—it would not begin maturing until he “goes away.” So, no matter how often Jesus had said all this before, they weren’t listening!

Jesus’ “going away” or “being gone” from the earth, in fleshly form is advantageous to believers, whether they comprehend it or not. He would say to “doubting” Thomas a few days later, ““Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed (happy) are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” (Jn. 20:29). Remember the statement of Peter, “Without having seen him you love him though you do not now see him you believe in him

and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. As the outcome of your faith you obtain the salvation of your souls.” (1 Pet. 1:8-9). If Jesus were here in the flesh today our tendency would be to walk by sight—we would never trust him unless he were constantly present so we could see him with the human eye— so his being away is essential to the maturation of our capacity to believe—to trust. Faithfulness is an attribute of God—so if we are to “partake of the divine nature” we must cultivate our faithfulness. God, in a sense, has trusted us (with his creation, with his redemptive work, with his church). **WE MUST GROW IN FAITHFULNESS!** Jesus exercised and exhibited faithfulness in his incarnate mission on earth. He trusted the Father with all that was his; his mission, his life, his disciples, his needs. Jesus’ earthly presence, per se, was no guarantee that everyone who saw him with their eyes would trust him enough to commit themselves to him as their Lord and Savior (Lk. 13:22-30). He had to “go away” to (1) present his death and resurrection as our atonement; (2) become our eternal Intercessor before the Father; (3) send back the Holy Spirit to establish the church and dwell in believers through his intimate, powerful, sanctifying Word.

The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment through the preached (or read) Word of God. I see no other way the Spirit can do so if he is to act with impartiality and act convincingly to all people of different languages, cultures, geographical locations, etc. If he does not act through the Word, there could be no standard or norm for all alike. If he does not act through the Word, there would always be doubt, even in the person acted upon, whether what happened to him was from God or some other source! A person is not convicted of sin (or righteousness, or judgment) until he is convinced there is a standard between right and wrong that is absolute. But he is not convinced of any standards except his own until he is convinced there is a Divine Person who has authority to set an Absolute, Divine, Standard. The Word alone provides that **AUTHORITY**, by its authenticated testimony of the miraculous powers of Christ and his Spirit; by its authenticated documentation of fulfilled prophecies. This is precisely the approach the Holy Spirit used on the day of Pentecost. First, He proved the deity of Jesus from OT prophecy and eye-witnessed facts of the resurrection. It was only then that sinners were convicted of their sin and cried, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” It was only then that the Holy Spirit, through Peter, told them what to do to become “righteous” and escape the judgment, “Repent and be immersed, everyone of you, in the name (authority) of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins” (Acts 2:38). The Holy Spirit speaks today, in the New Covenant Scriptures (the New Testament) exactly what the apostles, under his guidance, spoke verbally convicting men of their sin, of Christ’s graciously imputed righteousness, of how men may live righteously, and of the judgment to come. **WE MUST REPEAT IT OVER AND OVER—THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY RELIABLE SOURCE FOR CONVICTING THE WORLD OF SIN, RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUDGMENT.** Any other source is vulnerable to being used by the devil for deception—and usually is! No one knows the mind of God except the Spirit of God, and the Spirit’s propositional, verbal revelation was given to mankind **ONLY** through the “**WORDS**” of the apostles in the New Testament (1 Cor. 2:9-13). That is what Christ promised (Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:18; John 20:22-23) and what the apostles’ claimed (1 Cor. 2:6-16; 2 Pet. 1:16-21; 1 Jn. 4:1-6) and they have given it to us in “**WORDS**” (human language—1 Cor. 2:13)—this Word of the Holy Spirit is able to (1) pierce into the soul and discern thoughts and intentions (Heb. 4:11-13); (2) instruct unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15); (3)

teach, reprove, correct, train believers in righteousness and equip them for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17); (4) help us escape the corruption that is in the world and make us become partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4); (5) build us up and give us an inheritance among the saints (Acts 20:32); (6) check the indulgence of the flesh (Col. 2:20—3:15); (7) purify our souls (1 Pet. 1:22); (8) do all the things the law of God can do to convict of sin and righteousness and judgment enumerated in Psalm 119; (9) **AND THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT THE WORD OF THE SPIRIT DID TO FELIX WHEN PAUL PREACHED IT TO HIM** (Acts 24;25); (10) give us new birth by the word which is the seed (1 Pet. 1:22-23)—see previous special notes.

The persons to whom Christ made promise in John chapters 12 through 16 to “guide into all truth” are (clearly indicated in the context) the apostles with him that night (Judas had already gone out to betray Jesus Jn. 13:30). Of course, the “all truth,” i.e., complete, final, perfect truth into which Jesus guided the apostles, is **NOW AVAILABLE TO ALL PEOPLE EVERYWHERE THROUGH THE PRINTED AND SPOKEN WORD OF GOD!** The New Testament is the final, complete, perfect TRUTH to this world lost in sin. God is not going to speak again about sin, righteousness and the judgment to come (1 Cor. 13:10; 2 Cor. 11:1-6; 2 Thess. 2:13-15; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 John 4:1-6; Jude 3, etc.). The scripture passages cited in question #4 state that the Holy Spirit came with the mind of God and Christ exclusively to the apostles Jesus chose 2000 years ago. Anyone else claiming to come with a new revelation should be anathema—even if it is an angel from heaven (Gal. 1:8-9). One of the most serious warnings in all the Bible is to beware of false apostles and false teachers who come claiming to bring a revelation from God. “The faith” (meaning “the doctrine unto salvation”) has been delivered once for time all unto the saints through the apostles (Jude 3). Paul wrote. 1 Cor. 13:10-- that “when the perfect (Gr. to teleion, neuter article to, and neuter noun teleion) that which is complete or has reached its goal had come, the imperfect (Gr. to ek merous, neuter article and neuter noun) “then that which is partial or in part would be taken away” (Gr. katargethesetai). Paul used this word merous rather than the negative of teleion (which would have been ateleion), to emphasize that what the church had at the time Paul was writing 1 Corinthians was only the “partial” knowledge and prophetic word of Christ. Paul uses the same Greek words ek merous, when he says, “Now I know in part.” To teleion is neuter gender and literally means, “the perfect thing.” Had he been speaking of Christ’s second coming here he would certainly have used the masculine noun, and most probably would have said, “When Christ comes again....” It is also significant that when Paul says in 1 Cor. 13, “Now we see in a mirror dimly...” he uses the Greek word aingimati which is translated into English, “dimly” but is the word from which comes the English word, enigmatic. You can imagine the enigma existing in the early church when they had only portions of the writings of the NT, and not many of those at that. Take a look at the enigmas any of the churches to whom Paul wrote epistles—take a look at the enigmatic problems of the 7 churches of Asia Minor (Rev. chs. 2-3). The complete NT canon could not have come before A. D. 95-98 when John wrote all 5 of his books (Gospel, I, II, III John, and Revelation). **TWO, MAYBE THREE**, of Paul’s 13 epistles had been written before he wrote 1 Corinthians! Mark’s gospel, written about A. D. 50-55 and Matthew’s gospel written about the same time, were the only two gospel accounts committed to writing before Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. The only NT book probably written before 1 Corinthians is James. **SO ONLY FIVE OR SIX**

OF THE TWENTY-SEVEN BOOKS OF THE NT WERE IN EXISTENCE (AND THOSE IN VERY LIMITED COPIES, NO DOUBT) WHEN PAUL SAID, “NOW WE KNOW IN PART...NOW WE SEE ENIGMATICALLY...” Usually, when the apostolic writings refer to “scriptures” it means the OT! And that definitely was in “part” and “enigmatic” without the complete NT. Jesus was going to send the Holy Spirit back to the apostles after his ascension to “guide them into all truth” but it would take a while for that to “reach its goal” or come to perfection—it would take, in fact, more than 60 years from the time Jesus promised it. James, Peter, and Paul would never live see the completion of the NT canon—they “saw” it by revelation and by faith. SO WE, NOW, AS “CHILDREN” OF THE APOSTLES BY FAITH, DO HAVE THE COMPLETE, FINAL, PERFECT REVELATION OF GOD TO MAN ABOUT SALVATION, SANCTIFICATION AND ETERNAL LIFE TO COME! WE NEED NO OTHER! WE HAVE BEEN “GUIDED INTO ALL TRUTH” BY THE COMPLETE TRUTH THE HOLY SPIRIT GAVE THE APOSTLES!

The world would rejoice when Jesus “went away” because his perfect, sinless life and teaching condemned the world (remember John 15:21-27). Jesus told the apostles that the world would persecute them (and all subsequent believers) on account of Jesus. The world cannot “stand” Jesus—either it must surrender to him or “get rid of him”—there’s no in between (you either “gather” with Jesus or you “scatter” with the devil—Matt. 12:30). Charlton Heston was quoted by the Joplin Globe, 1/12/2000, p. 7c, as saying, “Political correctness (i.e., indiscriminate toleration) is just tyranny with manners.” How true, Charlton! The world demands everyone tolerate everything, every idea, every person, every “belief,” and every action—except intolerance! The world’s hatred of Jesus is directed upon those who love and believe in him. The obsession of the mind of the flesh is to take over this world from God and run it for selfish ends. If God is here in the flesh the world is inhibited. So long as God stays invisible and “wholly other” and “out of this world” (they delude themselves) they feel secure to do as they please and expect to get away with it. The parable of the wicked husbandmen in the vineyard (Matt. 28:28-46) vividly illustrates this—“This is the heir; come let us kill him and have his inheritance.” In the Revelation, the beast attacks the “two witnesses” (i.e., the church and the Bible) and thinks it has “slain them” so it has a party and rejoices (“makes merry and exchanges presents”), BECAUSE THESE TWO HAD BEEN A TORMENT TO THOSE WHO DWELL ON EARTH” (Rev. 11:7-13)—but God resurrected the two witnesses!! And the two witnesses will be here in this world until God judges this world. Even the gates of Hades cannot prevail against them!

Jesus said the disciples would see him again in a little while (16:16), thus he would see them again in a little while (16:22). What Jesus meant was that after his resurrection when he would appear to them in a recognizable bodily state, they would see him again “in a little while.” All he had been saying was enigmatic. The disciples were puzzled, confounded and scared. (Remember Paul’s use of the word enigmatic in 1 Cor. 13:12—“now we see in a mirror dimly”). These apostles were “dim-witted.” They were seeing “dimly.” How could they understand why they were to “see him again” when they didn’t understand that he was “going away?” They had already declared they would not believe he was to be crucified. It would require that they see (more than once) the empty tomb and the resurrected, ascending

Christ. Their problem was “spiritual cataracts!” Jesus may also have been including the idea that they would “see him again” by eyes of faith after his ascension when they would behold the works of the invisible Holy Spirit in the establishment of the church, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and the wonders, signs and miracles of their ministries, and the proclamation of the gospel throughout the civilized world of their day.

Jesus promised the apostles here (remember! context!) that anything they ask of the Father it would be given them. Actually, this same promise is extended to all believers 1 John 5:13-15. But even here, what the apostles ask must be qualified by the limitations of “whatever you ask in my name.” “In the name of Jesus” means, within the will of Jesus, or “by the authority” of Jesus. No one, not even an apostle, is going to get anything he asks from God if it is outside the will of Jesus, or in opposition to Jesus’ authority. No true apostle, nor true believer, would dare to deliberately ask anything in opposition to the will and authority of Jesus! Most apostles and most believers, however, have or will ask unwittingly for that which is not the will of Jesus. We have at least one occasion where an apostle asked God for something which was refused him (as he asked it). God did hear and answer Paul’s prayer (2 Cor. 12:7-10), but not with what Paul asked for! On another occasion, Paul and Timothy wanted to “speak the word in Asia” but were “forbidden” to do so by the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:6-10). NOW IF APOSTLES DO NOT ALWAYS GET WHAT THEY ASK FROM GOD, MAY WE PRESUME TO BE TREATED DIFFERENTLY? Should we not rather make every effort to ask only “in the name of Jesus”—in the will of Jesus? The imperative question, then, becomes where do I find the will of Jesus so I may know what to ask! CLEARLY IT IS NOT FROM WITHIN OUR OWN SELVES (Jer. 17:9-10; Num. 15:39; Rom. 7:13-25). “Trust the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight” (Prov. 3:5). Trust the Lord----where? WE MUST DILIGENTLY SEARCH THE WORD OF GOD AND ASK ONLY WHAT WE MAY DISCERN TO BE HIS REVEALED WILL! THERE IS ENOUGH FOR BELIEVERS CLEARLY TAUGHT ABOUT HIS WILL IN THE BIBLE THAT WE SHOULD HAVE NO DIFFICULTY FINDING MATTERS ABOUT WHICH TO ASK!

Jesus questioned the affirmation of faith made by these apostles because: (1) they had boldly declared belief in him before (Matt. 16:16; Jn. 6:68-69; Matt. 16:26-35) and had faltered; (2) they had for 3 ½ years manifested numerous ways their belief left a lot to be desired; (3) they did not believe what he said about his imminent death; (4) they couldn’t cast out a demon because of their unbelief; (5) they didn’t know how he was going to feed the 4000 after he had just fed 5000; (6) they did not trust all he had said about “greatness” in the kingdom; (7) they did not believe the kingdom was spiritual; AND WHAT ABOUT US, TODAY? WOULD HE SAY, WERE HE HERE, “DO YOU NOW BELIEVE?” Isn’t our belief clearly ambivalent at times? What can we say—but, “Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief!” YES! FAITH ALWAYS HAS ROOM FOR GROWTH! Now abides faith, hope and love—and the greatest of these three is love. Love covers the deficiencies of faith! That is why Jesus could entrust his kingdom to these eleven men who were even then struggling with believing him, struggling with spiritual maturation----BUT THEY LOVED HIM SINCERELY AND FORTHRIGHTLY! Such love could eventually fill up the deficiencies in

their faith and give that faith such a growth that it could conquer the “beast” and the “harlot” and the “false prophet.”

PEACE —what is it? A look at your English dictionary will tell you that peace is: “Freedom from strife; freedom from disorder; freedom from disagreement; an undisturbed state of mind; absence of mental conflict; serenity; tranquillity; harmony; concord.” Jesus promises that REAL PEACE is found ONLY “in him” (16:33), because “in the world you have tribulation.” The peace that is “in Jesus” is different from any “peace” one may find in the world because such worldly peace will be constantly disrupted by “tribulation.” The peace that is “in Jesus” consists mainly of reconciliation with God and as a result reconciliation with God’s creation, including other people (Eph. 2:11-22). Peace “in Jesus” centers exclusively on faith in God and in God’s Son (both in the OT and the NT). The Bible is glaringly realistic about a world fallen in sin—Jesus said numerous times that believers must expect “tribulation, war, temptation, and persecution” in such a world. And this is because all human beings are not reconciled to God through faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ. Peace with God makes it possible for the believer to be free from strife, disorder, mental and spiritual conflict and guilt, because being reconciled to God gives the believer the victory over the world. James says it is the sinful desire to gratify the flesh that produces all war and strife. Peace with God brings the believer into serenity, tranquillity, harmony and concord with God’s creation and his fellow man because the sinful desire to gratify the flesh has been put to death! **AND RECONCILIATION WITH GOD IS THE ONLY THING THAT WILL MAKE REAL PEACE POSSIBLE IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCE OR PLACE—EVEN IN HEAVEN!** Heaven with unreconciled sinners would be hell!

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 17:1-26

One must “know” God as God has defined and qualified the word “know.” John used the Greek word, *ginoskosin*, which is in the subjunctive mood, meaning eternal life is based on the supposition that the recipient would KNOW God. The obverse would also be true, that Jesus would suppose those who do NOT know God would NOT have eternal life. In other words, it is axiomatic (a “given”) that to have eternal life, one would have to KNOW God. How else would one presume to have eternal life—by knowing oneself?—by knowing one’s neighbor?—by knowing the Encyclopedia Britannica by memory? ONE MUST GO TO THE SOURCE OF ETERNAL LIFE TO GET IT! But the all important issue is to “KNOW” God—how does one do that? Is there any information or guidance on that issue? Since nature itself provides sufficient evidence that God exists (and only a fool would deny it *Psa. 14:1; 53:6*), perhaps that’s all we need to “know” to have eternal life. No! All that nature tells us is that the God who is There, is angry with his creation and that creation (including physical man) is “subjected to futility” dissolution, decay, death. The Law of Entropy (2nd law of thermodynamics) is inexorable—everything in this universe is going from order to disorder—from life to death. Also, the “natural” law of the human conscience tells man that he is guilty, condemned, and unable by any philosophical or psychological ingenuity or cunning to erase that guilt. All humans, if they are honest, admit a sense of alienation from their Creator! If the God who is There is to let us KNOW him for the purpose of having eternal life, HE MUST REVEAL HIMSELF AND HIS PROGRAM OF REDEEMING THE CREATION WHICH HE HAS CONDEMNED TO DEATH, AND HIS METHOD FOR ERASING OUR GUILT. WELL—THERE IS GOOD NEWS! God has revealed himself, in a human being—Jesus Christ; God has revealed his program of redemption; God has revealed his method for erasing our guilt. But THERE IS MORE GOOD NEWS! God has given in our own language, HIS LIVING WORD IN THE FORM OF FACTS TO BE BELIEVED, COMMANDS TO BE OBEYED, AND PROMISES TO BE RECEIVED! And through these three responses of the mind/heart, human beings come to “KNOW” God as completely as he may be known this side of heaven! These are the 3 elements (facts, commands, promises) John uses to define and qualify the word “know” that he uses so often in his Gospel and his three Epistles. Notice, this is the very proposition Jesus prays about?—that his apostles “know” him through God’s “word” (“Truth”) which the Holy Spirit will reveal unto the apostles—and the world “knows” him through God’s “word” (the apostolic doctrine)! Look how many times Jesus refers to “word” (17:6,8,14,17,20) not counting the words, “speak” and “truth.” And in every one of these verses, except 8, John uses the Greek word *logos* (“reason, thought, mind, expression, mentality”) or one of its derivatives. In other words, Jesus gave the apostles the “mind, thoughts, and reasoning” of God the Father and God the Son—and they, in turn, gave it to the world in “words” In fact, John calls Jesus the personification of God’s mind (God’s “beingness”), because John calls Jesus, the LOGOS become flesh, 1:14. John uses the word *logos* often in his Epistles.

The apostles had whole-heartedly, but weakly, falteringly, immaturely, and sometimes stupidly, pledged allegiance to Jesus of Nazareth as God's Anointed One. They believed he was the fulfillment of the OT Scriptures; they believed he was the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. And when Jesus gave them a command, they obeyed, again, sometimes weakly, immaturely and stupidly. While they made some egregious errors and were carnal minded about a number of things, still they were (except Judas Iscariot) teachable, correctable, and devoted to Jesus as their Lord and Master. They believed Jesus was sent from God (not from the devil, as the Pharisees, and so many others of their race swore). **THEY RECEIVED WHAT JESUS TAUGHT THEM—AS FROM GOD—AND KEPT IT! THEY HAD NOT REJECTED IT, OR THROWN IT AWAY! THEY JUST DIDN'T HAVE IT ALL YET** (He was not yet risen from the dead). What they had, they were hanging on to for dear life—"Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life" Jn. 6:68.

We must "receive" every word of God given to us with the same kind of allegiance to him as displayed by the apostles. Their initial spiritual immaturity develops into spiritual maturity by their total self-sacrificing consecration and loyalty to Christ's word after the resurrection. But of course, even then, they sinned (i.e., Peter's problem with the Gentiles, Gal. 2:11; Paul's problems with doing the will of God, Rom. 7:13-24). But the crucial characteristic necessary to become one whom Jesus calls, "mine," is teachableness, or, as Jesus said it, "unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). We must become "good soil" which hears the word and understands it (Matt. 13:23); accepts it (Mark 4:20); and holds it fast in an honest and good heart, and brings forth fruit with patience (Lk. 8:15). With this kind of willingness to be taught by God and transformed by God, when we sin and fall short, Christ is willing to extend his grace to bring us to God's goal for us—perfection. When we make ourselves teachable and transformable, we sanctify ourselves unto Christ. And "by a single offering he (Christ) has perfected for all time those who are sanctified." (Heb. 10:14).

"Kept" is a translation of the Greek word *tereson*, used 74 times in the NT with numerous meanings, i.e., "keeping watch, guarding, obeying, retaining, imprisoned, to marry, to sustain, maintain, preserve, reserve, store up." I think Jesus was praying for the Father to "watch over, guard, sustain, preserve" his apostles. He asked the Father to sustain the apostles in the Father's "name" which means, "by the authority of, or in the character of." One's "name" is supposed to be synonymous with one's "character" or "clout" (authority). You've heard of the practice of "name dropping"—done to let others know that you know someone whose "character" or "clout" is authoritative and famous. Such a practice is not always from ulterior motives. Old marriage vows read, "...and keep thee only unto him/her so long as ye both shall live"—THUS, INTIMACY, FOSTERED BY FAITHFULNESS IS THE MEANING OF "BEING KEPT." To be "kept in the name of God" means one is on intimate terms with God, venerates and verbalizes (drops God's name among those who want and need to hear it) the character of God, is trying to emulate the character of God and is faithfully reserving oneself for God alone. **GOD CAN'T KEEP ANYONE IN HIS NAME UNLESS THAT PERSON WANTS TO BE KEPT BY HIM. HE WOULDN'T KEEP JUDAS ISCARIOT AGAINST HIS OWN WILL!** So, then, what is God's part in keeping us? Divine

Providence (sustaining life long enough for us to choose his “keeping”); and Divine Disclosure (revealing his wrath, his justice, his faithfulness, his absoluteness, his mercy, his love, his will—all of which should motivate us to want to be kept by him). Our part in being kept is wanting to be kept, and deciding or choosing to be kept on the terms of the ONE DOING THE KEEPING! That is the key issue! Oneness depends upon the harmony between the KEEPER and the “kept.” This harmony is attained by faithfulness to one another, truthfulness to one another, mental accord with one another, striving to please one another—in effect, SURRENDER TO ONE ANOTHER. God covenants with us; we covenant with God. WE KNOW HE WILL KEEP HIS COVENANT—the question is, will we keep ours.

The first thing that must be settled is what does the Bible mean by “of” the world? John used the Geek words *ho kosmos*, for “the world.” *Kosmos* means “adorning arrangement, order.” So, what is the “adorning arrangement, or order” of this “cosmos”? IT IS MATTER, MATERIAL, i.e., THE PHYSICAL, ARRANGED IN DIVINE ORDER! While there is nothing intrinsically evil about matter, it is not the ultimate of existence. Matter is amoral, *per se*! It was created “good” by God, but what human beings did (and still do) with matter—matters! Man takes matter and makes it into his “god.” Matter becomes Creator, Sustainer, and is venerated and served (i.e., “Mammon”). But matter is “passing away” (Rom. 8:20-21; 1 Jn. 2:17); matter, in its very essence or elemental form is going to be dissolved (2 Pet. 3:10) by its Creator. MATTER IS NOT GOD! We are not to be *suschematizesthe*, “schematized or conformed” to this age or world, but we are to be *metamorphousthe*, “metamorphosed, transformed, changed” by the renewing of our minds by proving to ourselves what the good, well-pleasing and complete will of God is, Rom. 12:2. THERE IS THE KEY! The will of God will keep us from being “shaped” or “blue-printed” and arranged, ordered and adorned as being nothing but MATTER and keep us from worshipping MATTER as our God. The will of God will “transform” or “change” us to be arranged, ordered, and adorned as being SPIRITUAL, HOLY (separated from that which is passing away), ETERNAL, GOOD, AND RIGHTEOUS (i.e., “RIGHT”). God wants us to be of the essence of that which is to be kept and not destroyed as matter will be. Matter is not of eternal value to God—SPIRITUAL MAN IS! Matter is not in the likeness of God—SPIRITUAL MAN IS! We must not live our lives, relate to others, determine our destiny, and seek our God in matter. When we do, we degrade, debase and displace ourselves. We lose ourselves, we destroy ourselves and dethrone ourselves. GOD MADE US TO RULE OVER MATTER—TO HAVE DOMINION OVER IT ALL! HE MADE US TO USE MATTER TO WORSHIP AND SERVE HIM HERE! We must not LOVE the world with *agapate*, LOVE, 1 Jn. 2:15 (a mental, willed, choosing love). *Agapate* is more than emotions or infatuation—it is the love of God—all caring, obsessing, adoring, divine love and is to be directed toward God! If we are not “kept” in the will of God, serving him, we will be “kept” in the clutches of materialism (“Mammon”), serving it! THE SECRET TO BEING “KEPT” BY GOD IS REPENTANCE FROM WORLDLINESS, just as Paul wrote the Colossians, “Put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge” (Col. 3:10), or be “renewed in the spirit of your minds” (Eph. 4:23).

That which is called “sanctification” is not an experience—it is a status. Jesus

declares in John 17:17, that BEING IN THE TRUTH is the qualification for the status of sanctification. Sanctify is from the Greek word *hagiason* in John 17:17, which means, “to set apart from everything else, to devote exclusively to, to purify, to hallow, to consecrate, to dedicate.” Christians are “sanctified” or devoted to, set apart from everything else, by God unto Christ and his will. It is a word that can be used of something God may “set apart” to be destroyed or cursed. Christian sanctification is a life-style which is willed and revealed by God in his Word—it is a status diametrically opposite that of the heathen and unbelieving (1 Thess. 4:1-8). It is accomplished as Jesus says in his prayer, through the truth—and his word is truth! APART FROM GOD’S REVEALED WORD, THERE IS NO CHRISTIAN SANCTIFICATION. Lots of people are “sanctified” to lots of ideas and things—but one is sanctified to God only through his word of truth! God sanctifies us when we believe and obey his commandments. That puts a person in the status of sanctification which is really, salvation. Now that may give one an experience of joy and peace, but the experience does not precede nor provide the status. And believing and obeying is a FIRST WORK OF GRACE, AND THE ONLY WORK OF GRACE DONE FOR THE CHRISTIAN. Sanctification, a corollary (effect) of salvation, is initiated once. Of course, the Christian may grow and develop in his devotion, his consecration, his sanctification to Christ—just as married people grow in their devotion to one another, but they only get into a marriage status once. Our sanctification is not accomplished by our perfect faith, our perfect obedience, our experience—it is accomplished by the divine decree of God having had his wrath satisfied by the vicarious death of Christ. We permit his decree to accomplish our sanctification by our faith and love and loyalty to him.

Jesus prayed for the “oneness” of all who believe on him through the apostolic word. The Greek phrase 17:21 is *hina pantes hen osin*, “in order that they all one (hen), may be” is interesting because the syntax puts the emphasis on “one.” The apostolic word becomes the parameter (“measure”) of whether there is Christian unity or not. Ecumenism is not the defining word for Christian unity. Ecumenism by definition means “all inclusive, non-circumscribed.” Apostolic doctrine is circumscribing! It is discriminating! It is revealed and authoritative. It proscribes limits to thinking, believing and behavior. But how can there be unity or “oneness” in a world of human beings when there are limits placed on what they may think, believe, and do? Human beings may have “oneness” in Christ and his Word because his Word is ABSOLUTE! Reason dictates that is the only one way “oneness” can ever be accomplished. It is practiced in nearly every facet of our lives, nearly every day. There can be no unity or “oneness” in the military unless there is an absolute—can you imagine trying to carry out the mission of a military unit without a commander who has the final “say-so”? Imagine the chaos in a home or a school, or an operating room, if every member has equal authority to determine how everyone else shall function and when. There would be only uncertainty, hesitation, confusion and discord. The church of Jesus Christ is a kingdom, not a republic or a democracy. There is one King whose word is final and absolute. Even in a human government there has to be a final authority. In our American system, it is supposed to be our Constitution—not the Supreme Court. This was the idea of the “laws of the Medes and the Persians.” No one could change them—not even the king. Thus the only dictator was the law—not an individual. With America and Persia, then, it became imperative that the law was righteous and just and according to the truth. In the kingdom of God we have the

Law of the Creator who is all righteous, all just, and all truth. That is why Paul says in Rom. 7:12-14 that the Law of God was holy, just, good, spiritual—the problem was never with God’s Law but with man who let his carnal nature rule him instead of God’s law. So how does God solve the problem of the carnal nature? He expects to conquer it through the love of Christ on the cross and his resurrection (1 Cor. 5:143ff). How did the incarnate Christ maintain his oneness with the Father? By keeping the Father’s word! **AND THAT IS HOW WE MAINTAIN ONENESS WITH GOD AND CHRIST—NOT BY ECUMENISM!**

“Oneness” could hardly be better defined than in the incarnation of Christ. Jesus prayed for believers to be one as he and the Father were one. Jesus said only what the Father would say; Jesus trusted only what the Father told him to trust; Jesus did, on every occasion, only what God the Father would do. It is declared that Jesus became incarnate **ONLY** to do the Father’s will (Heb. 10:5ff). Jesus declared, “I do nothing on my own authority but speak this as the Father taught me” (Jn. 8:18). Does “oneness” with God take away our individuality? Did it take away Jesus’ individuality? Did it take away the individuality of the apostles? No! “Christian oneness” does not mean we must be robots. Does “oneness” in a family rob the members of their individuality? No! Paul speaks to this issue in several places. The clearest is 1 Cor. 12 where he uses the human body to show there can be characteristic and functional diversity and oneness in the same body. So with the body of Christ—Christians will have different characteristics, and perform different functions, but they are **ONE BODY**. And they are one body because they all get their orders from and obey the one head—Jesus Christ. Christian oneness has to do with the goals, purposes, and ends Christ has for his body. Functions and characteristics of the members and the means Christ ordains members to use to attain that goal may be diverse. But that will not destroy the oneness so long as the **HEAD GIVES THE ORDERS! THAT IS THE ONE ESSENTIAL TO CHRISTIAN UNITY....WHO IS THE HEAD...WHO IS THE AUTHORITY.** Let there be no mistake, that issue has to be settled before any unity of Christendom may ever be accomplished.

Christian “oneness” is to accomplish the evangelization of the world. Jesus said it this way, “...that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (Jn. 17:21). Christendom has built its own “tower of Babel” with denominationalism. Denominational Christendom speaks nothing but chaos, anarchy, usurpation of Christ the Absolute Head. And even the “world” knows that is not what Christianity is all about. Divisions over doctrine have been the most damning divisions of all! Divisions over methods and “non-essentials” can be conquered with love and forbearing—but to conquer divisions over doctrine takes teaching the word of Christ in the Spirit of Christ—it takes surrender to the authority of the word and the word only in matters of faith and practice. It would involve the deconstruction of thousands of non-Biblical doctrines and interpretations as well as the amelioration of thousands of customs, habits, and practices. That can only come when Christians in every denomination are willing to “speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent.” Or, refreshingly, as Harold Fowler put it, “be silent where the Bible speaks, and speak where the Bible is silent.” **UNTIL THAT IS DONE, THE WORLD MUST WAIT TO BELIEVE THAT CHRIST WAS SENT BY THE FATHER FOR THE REDEMPTION OF ALL MANKIND!** All those claiming to

belong to the head (Christ) are not following his orders! Oneness in Christ can never be shown to the unbelieving world in a Christendom divided upon fundamental doctrines of the apostolic Word. All those claiming to belong to the head (Christ) are not seeking the same goal. The ultimate goal of the body of Christ is other-worldly, heavenly, spiritual—IT IS NOTHING LESS THAN THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD IN THE NAME OF CHRIST. THERE IS NO OTHER NAME WHEREBY WE MUST BE SAVED (Acts 4:12)! Can we really expect the world to pay attention to the message of Christ when Christendom itself can't agree on what that message is???

Can we really expect the world to be attracted to Christ when Christendom itself fights and divides and devours one another—all in the name of Christ? CHRISTIAN UNITY SHOULD BE THE ONE GREAT IMPERATIVE OF ALL THOSE WHO CLAIM CHRIST AS THEIR KING!

What can be done to promote Christian unity? What can YOU do?

Pray for unity—Jesus did.

Make sure your congregation preaches and teaches the apostolic word as authoritative in faith and practice.

Love everyone as beloved of Christ and love them as those for whom he died.

Pray for unity—Jesus did.

Be obedient and faithful to the Head (Christ) yourself.

Understand that your membership and function in the body of Christ and the membership and function of every other member in the body of Christ is equally important.

Learn which things are “essential” to faith in Christ and which things are “not essential” and be willing and able to compromise on the “non-essentials” so long as you aren't asked to compromise on the “essentials.”

PRAY FOR UNITY—JESUS DID!

CHRISTIAN UNITY, JUST LIKE A LASTING MARRIAGE, HAS TO BE WORKED-AT---IT DOESN'T COME “NATURALLY.” IT WILL NEVER COME UNTIL CHRIST'S CHURCH “WORKS AT IT!”

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 18:1-40

Jesus knew his arrest was illegal and unjust. Pilate knew it—the Jewish authorities knew it—the Jewish multitudes knew it—EVERYBODY KNEW IT! His enemies simply ignored the illegality of it! Jesus also knew (a) all that was to befall him 18:4; (b) that it was to fulfill all that he had spoken when he predicted his arrest, crucifixion and resurrection, Matt. 16:21; 17:22; 26:2; (c) that Judas was going to betray him with a kiss, Lk. 22:48; (d) that he could call to the Father and 12 legions (close to 10,000 Roman soldiers) of angels would be sent to rescue him if he wished, Matt. 26:53; (e) most importantly, Jesus knew that the will of the Father (Isa. 53:10), the “cup” of vicarious atonement (Jn. 18:11) and the scriptures must be fulfilled Matt. 26:54. Jesus surrendered because he loved the Father’s will above his own, and he loved mankind more than his own will and desires (Matt. 26:39). Thus, Jesus’s willing surrender to injustice and illegal force is not precisely a precedent for us to follow. The apostle Paul appealed, more than once, to civil authorities for reprisals against those who had perpetrated injustices and illegalities upon him (e.g. Acts 16:37-40; 25:10-12). God ordains civil governments for the purpose of maintaining physical peace and order (1 Tim. 2:1-4). When a society becomes corrupt and arrests, illegally tries, condemns and executes individuals for proclaiming the truth, as the Jews and Pilate did Jesus, it needs to be overthrown. That is what took place on this continent we call the USA 225 years ago in 1776 and the “Declaration of Independence” etc. Jesus’ willingness to give up self to serve the Father’s will IS A PRECEDENT for us to follow! But it is not God’s will that any of us become a vicarious atonement for the sins of all the world. And that is why Jesus asked for the release of his disciples. They had not been chosen to die for the sins of the world. They HAD been chosen to lay down their selfish ambitions and wear out their lives carrying the gospel of Jesus’ death and resurrection to the world of their day!

Peter got the sword from the upper room. Jesus had instructed the disciples, “let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one” (Lk. 22:36). They informed him they had “two” swords (Lk. 22:38) there in the upper room—Jesus said, “that is enough” (i.e., enough with which to defend themselves). Peter used the sword because he was willing to lay down his physical life for Jesus. Peter was no coward about physical combat. He was a rough, tough, fisherman. But Peter had dreams and ambitions about the “kingdom of God” which Peter thought was to be a political super-power. He believed Jesus was God’s Anointed to bring that kingdom into existence and he was not about to let Jesus die! Just a few hours prior to the arrest, Peter had vowed, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you” (Matt. 26:35). And earlier still, at the death of Lazarus, all the disciples had vowed to be willing to die with Jesus (Jn. 11:16). Peter had one of the two swords, drew it, and cut off Malchus’ right ear. Malchus was a slave in the house of the Jewish high priest. Jesus said to Peter, “No more of this!” (Lk. 22:51...Put your sword into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Matt. 26:52). Then Jesus “touched his ear and healed him” (Lk. 22:51). Did Jesus create a new ear, or put the old one back on? If he made a new one, what

happened to the old one? WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO KNOW? Sorry, no one thought it worthy of note in the Gospel accounts! Jesus reprimanded Peter for trying to protect him because: (a) the kingdom of God does not do its fighting with carnal weapons (2 Cor. 10:3-4; Eph. 6:10-20); (b) if earthly authorities are so corrupt as to pervert justice rather than enforce justice, then citizens of the kingdom of God will be called upon to suffer— they must not take the law into their own hands, i.e., if civil governments default, the kingdom of God does not take their place; (c) Jesus could have delivered himself with legions of angels had it been the will of God to do so; (d) “but how then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?” (Matt. 26:54).

In my opinion, Peter denied being a disciple of Jesus: (a) NOT because he was afraid of a violent physical encounter; (b) but rather, because he thought he could get into the court of the high priest along with John, and find some way to rescue Jesus—or at least find out what was going on; (c) because Peter felt that if he admitted he was a disciple of Jesus any hope he had of organizing a rescue attempt would be nipped in the bud by his arrest and imprisonment or death; (d) so, Peter, in denying to be one of Jesus' disciples for the purpose of trying to rescue Jesus by violence, is IN EFFECT, DENYING JESUS IN A MORE SATANIC WAY THAN BEING AFRAID OF PHYSICAL DEATH!; (e) remember, Jesus had already told Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men” when Peter rebuked Jesus for predicting his own death (Matt. 16:23); (f) so Peter is still denying the will of God and the love of Jesus in trying to prevent his substitutionary death, because Peter had strong ambitions for a physical kingdom and what he was going to get out of it; (g) this broke Jesus' heart more than it would have had Peter ran for his life out in the garden like a physical coward! PETER IS STILL REFUSING TO UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS ALL SPIRITUAL!

Annas (ironically, the name means, “Merciful”), was the son of Seth, appointed high priest A.D. 6 by the legate of Syria, Quirinius, and deposed A.D. 15 by the Roman Procurator Valerius Gratus. Annas had 5 sons and each of them had been high priest so he held control of the office (according to Josephus) all this time from A.D. 6 to 30 through his sons and son-in-law. Joseph Caiaphas, his son-in-law, holds the office from A.D. 18-37. Annas was the “Godfather” of the Jewish “mafioso” of that day! It was nothing new for the Jewish priests to be crooks—the OT prophets are full of such accusations in their days. The immense wealth of the Sadducees was due to the “booths of the sons of Annas” which monopolized the sale of all kinds of material—animals, coinage, and produce—for offerings and sacrifices in the temple. It was the sons of Annas who made the temple “a den of thieves and robbers.” Even the Jewish Talmud pronounces a curse—“Woe to the house of Annas, woe to their serpent-like hissing.” Annas was determined to question and indict Jesus for both political and economic reasons. He was afraid Jesus was about to destroy with the truth what he and his family had built over almost 30 years by falsehood and corruption. Try to put yourself in the body of a godly, righteous Jew, of that day—your country ruled over by an oppressive foreign “Gentile” army, the priesthood of your religion corrupt, carnal, unbelieving, your local rabbis so self-righteous they hardly tolerate you, and the most righteous, kind, caring, Jewish rabbi to come to Israel in centuries, who knew the

Scriptures and had no tolerance for hypocrisy and corruption was being slandered, plotted against. WHERE WOULD YOU STAND! WITH THE PERSECUTED RABBI OR THE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES?

Jesus' answer to Annas' questions about his disciples and his teacher was NOT impertinent—it was straightforward and truthful! Jesus answer was an appeal to corroborating evidence which is exactly what a judicial proceeding aims for! His answer, we know from the character of Jesus on many occasions, was a generous attempt to present the testimony of others in order to bring Annas to acknowledge the truth and keep him from committing the heinous crime he was planning----doing despite unto the Holy Spirit of God who stood before him in the person of Jesus! There can be only one attitude when the truth is being challenged----STAND FOR THE TRUTH, STRAIGHTFORWARDLY, FIRMLY, KINDLY, WITH ALL THE EVIDENCE POSSIBLE----BUT STAND IN SPITE OF ALL THE CONSEQUENCES TO THE CONTRARY!

Joseph Caiaphas, son-in-law of Annas, was appointed high priest by the Roman Procurator Valerius Gratus A.D. 18 (immediate predecessor of Pontius Pilate) and deposed by Vitellius, A. D. 37. There were 3 high priests between Annas and Caiaphas (Ishmael, son of Phabi; Eleazar, son of Annas; and Simon, son of Kami). Caiaphas was undoubtedly the "tool" of his father-in-law. He had no conscience or sense of justice or truth concerning the Law of Moses. Caiaphas' only concern was "our place (the ruling position of the Sadducees) and our nation (the status-quo of the Jewish nation)." The Sadducees cared little for the temple (except as a money-making institution) or little for the nation (except as they ruled with Roman support). Caiaphas had already decided that Jesus was to die to appease the Romans (Jn. 11:49)—not because Jesus had committed a crime. Jesus' death would preserve the "organization" (the Jewish mafia) and their power and money. WHY IS THE LOVE OF MONEY THE ROOT OF ALL KINDS OF EVIL? Why is money so important that innocent lives may be forfeited to gain it?—BECAUSE MONEY BRINGS POWER OVER OTHERS AND BUYS PLEASURES WITH WHICH TO GRATIFY THE FLESH! Caiaphas sent Jesus to Pilate because he wanted Jesus executed and the Jews could not do that without Roman sanction and permission. Furthermore, he could put the blame on Pilate if questions were asked later—either by Jews or Romans.

Pilate asked the Jews what "accusation" (Gr. kategorian, literally, "category") they had against Jesus. When the Jews brought him to Pilate, they accused Jesus of "perverting the Jewish nation and forbidding them to pay tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ (Messiah) an anointed King" (Lk. 23:1-2). That was a bare-faced lie (see Matt. 22:21) It was Pilate's duty to keep Judea subservient to Rome as one of Rome's provinces. If the accusation of the Jews was correct, Pilate's mandate from the Roman emperor was to destroy any attempts at revolt against the Roman rule by all means possible. There had been uprisings against Rome by Theudas (ca. 6 B.C.) and Judas (A.D. 5) the Galilean (Acts 5:36-39). There would be many uprisings after Jesus' crucifixion, especially ca. A.D. 66-70 a revolt led by Jewish zealots which brought the mighty power of the Roman army upon Judea. Rome destroyed Jerusalem and killed a million Jews and sent another million into exile and

slavery so that the land was no more the homeland of the Jews (just as Jesus predicted Matt. 21:43; 22:7; 23:37-39; Lk. 21:20-24). There is some indication that Barabbas, the one who could have died in Jesus' place, was just such a hot-headed rebel against the Roman rule. At least Pilate let Jesus speak for himself—something the Jewish rulers would not allow! After Pilate questioned Jesus and heard Jesus' answer (Jn. 18:33-38), he decided Jesus was not guilty of insurrection against Rome and said, "I find no crime in him." (This is the first acquittal of Jesus by Pilate—there will be about 7 more from Pilate: Lk. 23:14; 23:20; 23:22; Jn. 19:4; 19:6; 19:12; Matt. 27:24). **PILATE KNEW JESUS WAS INNOCENT OF THE CHARGES THE JEWS BROUGHT AGAINST HIM. PILATE ALSO KNEW WHAT AND WHY THESE JEWISH RULERS WERE DOING THIS!—ENVY AND JEALOUSY!**

After this first interrogation by Pilate, Jesus was sent to Herod (Antipas), tetrarch of Galilee, the one married to Herodias who was his sister-in-law as well as his niece. Pilate learned Jesus was a "resident" of Galilee so Herod provided Pilate a "way out." Pilate did not want to agitate Herod by encroaching on Herod's jurisdiction. It was not safe to have reports going back to the imperial palace in Rome that those who ruled Palestine couldn't get along! Pilate knew the history of paranoia and homicide surrounding the Herod family when it came to their position as "king of the Jews." He knew that the Herods had lived in the city of Rome for years and had "friends in high places" in the palace. He wanted to stay on the good side of Herod Antipas (because Pilate also knew what kind of woman Herodias was)! Why didn't the Jews take Jesus to Herod? Because Herod had shied away from executing religious leaders ever since he had beheaded John the Baptist and because Herod would only have Jesus stoned to death as a blasphemer. The Jews wanted Jesus to die by crucifixion as an insurrectionist, and the Jews hated Herod more than they hated Pilate! Crucifixion was the most ignominious form of execution possible in those days—it immediately stigmatized the victim as a criminal—and in the Jewish mind anyone crucified was totally outcast from all Judaism—he became worse than a Gentile. To the Jew, anyone crucified (or "hanged on a tree") was a shame to God (Heb. kilelath elohim Deut. 21:23) and cursed (Greek katara, "doomed" Gal. 3:13).

In their own trial, the Jews accused Jesus of claiming to be about to destroy their temple (Mk. 15:58; Matt. 26:60); then they accused him before Pilate as "an evil-doer" (Jn. 18:30); then they accused him of perverting the Jewish nation and forbidding Jews to give tribute to Caesar and saying that he is Christ a king. After the 6th acquittal by Pilate (Jn. 19:6), the Jews accused Jesus of "claiming to be the Son of God" (19:7) which was, to their way of twisting the scriptures and the evidence, blasphemy. Then they "accused him of many things" (Matt. 27:3). Pilate tried to release Jesus a 7th time (Jn. 19:12) and the Jews said, "If you release this man you are not Caesar's friend; everyone who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar." When Pilate heard this he brought Jesus, after having Jesus "scourged," out to the "Pavement" and tried an 8th time to release Jesus, "Here is your king!" The Jews cried "Away with him, away with him, crucify him." Pilate said, "Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered (lying in their teeth), "We have no king but Caesar." When Pilate saw that a riot was about to take place, he "washed his hands" of Jesus and gave him to the Jews with permission to "see to it yourselves." Then he released

to them a real insurrectionist, Barabbas! Jesus was executed, not for a crime against Rome, but for the accusation by the Jews that he had committed blasphemy. HE HAD PROVED CONCLUSIVELY THAT HE HAD EVERY RIGHT TO CALL HIMSELF THE SON OF GOD (fulfilled prophecy, miracles, and teachings which many of his accusers all saw with their eyes and heard with their ears—evidence to prove the claim beyond any reasonable doubt). The Roman government had no charges against Jesus; there were no witnesses with any evidence to dispute Jesus' claims of innocence; the Roman official found him innocent 7 or 8 times!

Certainly! The "kingdom of God" is NOW in the world. It is none other than the universal church of the Lord Jesus Christ. All human beings who have believed that Jesus is the Christ (God's Anointed), the Son of the living God, who have repented (changed their mind and will in surrender to Christ's commandments), and who have obeyed the command of Jesus and the apostles to be immersed in water for the remission of their sins, are members of that "kingdom"—the church—wherever they live, whatever their race or language or culture. Christ's kingdom is his rule over the minds, wills, feelings, values and actions of those who love and believe him! THUS, that "kingdom" which is IN this world, must not be OF this world! Christ's kingdom is not essentially carnal (material, flesh, matter, physical)—IT IS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD AND THE SPIRIT OF MAN RECONCILED BY THE REDEMPTIVE WORK OF CHRIST WHICH HE DID IN THIS WORLD, IN TIME AND IN HISTORY AT THE CROSS AND THE EMPTY TOMB. Therefore, Christ's kingdom in this world must have its orientation or focus out of this world. Members of Christ's kingdom must place its values, its ambitions, its hopes and its ultimate destiny away from this doomed cosmos to the life that is infinite and eternal which is yet to be consummated. Jesus' kingdom (the church) will not forever remain in this world; one day it will be taken out of this world into another one in which righteousness, justice, love, truth, and faithfulness will prevail. There fear, pain, trouble, death will be completely swallowed up by joy and life everlasting. Jesus' kingdom is not concerned primarily with securing territorial space and boundaries; not concerned with perpetuating ethnic cultures; not concerned with humans having power over other humans; not concerned with acquisition of things. IT IS CONCERNED WITH TRUTH, GOODNESS, LOVE, SERVING GOD AND GOD'S CREATURES! Pilate could not comprehend that—and millions of others living today cannot comprehend it. It can only be comprehended by FAITH! If Christ rules our spirit he rules every "thing" with which we have to do!

WHAT IS TRUTH? That has been THE question ever since the Garden of Eden! In that Garden, God said truth was what he told Adam and Eve; the devil said truth was what he told Adam and Eve—and Adam and Eve had to make the decision as to whether God's word was truth or the devil's word was truth. We know the story! Those chose the devil's word as truth. And the end of the story shows they were WRONG----TRAGICALLY, CATASTROPHICALLY WRONG! TRUTH IS WHAT GOD SAYS IT IS! TRUTH IS REVEALED, NOT DISCOVERED! Whenever human beings think they have discovered truth—lo! it was truth before they ever discovered it! Truth resides in a PERSON! TRUTH HAS ITS ORIGIN AND SUSTENANCE IN GOD, THE ALMIGHTY CREATOR AND FATHER

AND IN THE SON AND IN THE HOLY SPIRIT AND IN THE WORD (THE BIBLE). All “truth” wherever it is “found” must be in harmony with, coincide with, substantiate, and submit to the authority of God’s ETERNAL TRUTH NOW RESIDENT IN HIS REVEALED WORD!
“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my (Christ’s) words will not pass away” (Matt. 24:35; Mk. 13:31; Lk. 21:33). “The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord abides for ever. That word is the gospel which was preached to you” (Isa. 40:8; 1 Pet. 1:24-25). “Forever, O Lord, thy word is firmly fixed in the heavens” (Psa. 119:89). “The sum of thy word is truth; and every one of thy righteous ordinances endures for ever” (Psa. 119:160). See also Psa. 19:1-14. This PERSON who is TRUTH may be “discovered” “in the things that have been made” (Rom. 1:18-21) because in those “things” it is revealed that there is an eternal, divine, almighty, invisible PERSON who is the source and sustenance of truth! TRUTH IS WHAT GOD IS! God is love, God is holiness, God is judge, God is merciful, God is just, God is absolutely faithful—and all that adds up to TRUTH. What God IS, in his totality, cannot be “discovered” “in the things that have been made”—What God IS in his totality, so far as the finite mind can comprehend, has been revealed in the Incarnate Son of God and in the divinely revealed record of the preparation for and the actual advent of his incarnation—IN THE BIBLE! TRUTH WAS ASSAULTED AND PERVERTED AT THE TRIAL AND MURDER OF JESUS— BUT TRUTH WAS NOT DEFEATED! IN FACT, THIS PERVERSION OF TRUTH—THE VERY WORST THAT FALSEHOOD AND EVIL COULD DO TO PERVERT IT WORKED OUT TO THE REVELATION OF TRUTH TO HIS UTMOST! AT THE CROSS AND THE EMPTY TOMB WE SEE GOD, THE TRUTH, IN HIS TOTALITY —RIGHTEOUSLY VICTORIOUS OVER THE ULTIMATE FALSEHOOD

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 19:1-42

Pontius Pilate, Procurator of Judea, was the son of Marcus Pontius, a Roman army general. He was a friend of the famous royal prince, Germanicus. Pontius Pilate married Claudia Procula, granddaughter of Octavian (i.e., Caesar Augustus) and Octavian was the grand nephew of Julius Caesar. Pilate had “connections” but connections didn’t mean much during the reign of Tiberius Caesar! Tiberius Caesar ruled the empire when Pilate was procurator of Judea! You may read of Tiberius’s reign of terror in *The Twelve Caesars* by Gaius Suetonius. One of Pilate’s first acts upon taking office in Judea was to try to abolish all Jewish laws and customs. He secretly brought effigies of Tiberius Caesar into Jerusalem one night which almost caused a national rebellion. He built an expensive aqueduct to improve Jerusalem’s water supplies and forced the Jews to pay for it with temple funds. The Jews rioted. Pilate had many of them slain (Lk. 13) while they were worshipping. Pilate was under extreme political pressure to administer the Roman political system in Judea, one of the most volatile “satellite” provinces Rome had ever subjugated. He was a typical pagan Roman aristocrat and government official. He seems to have wanted to be a fair administrator. BUT THESE JEWISH RULERS WERE NOT GOING TO ALLOW IT! Pilate had already guessed or had advanced intelligence that the Jews were putting Jesus on trial illegally and without witnesses to any crime—he knew that the Jews had delivered Jesus to him for nothing but their own “envy” (Matt. 17:16). Some years later, Pilate ordered many Jews slain (A.D. 36—6 years after Jesus’s crucifixion) for trying to assault Mt. Gerizim and dig up the rumored tabernacle of Moses and its holy vessels. For this, Pilate was recalled to Rome, and banished to exile; tradition says he committed suicide somewhere in Gaul (France). Hatred between Pilate and the Jews was intense. Jews were looking for some reason to petition Tiberius for his removal.

The illegalities of the Jewish trial of Jesus: (a) arrested without a warrant, by a mob, on a feast day; (b) arraigned before someone (Annas) who had no official standing, interrogated and abused, and who disregarded Jesus’ call for evidence; (c) arraigned before an illegal gathering of the Sanhedrin (at night); not yet officially accused; no witnesses; his guilt and sentence already predetermined by this council; (d) bribed witnesses to testify; (e) the bribed witnesses contradicted one another in their testimony; (f) Jesus was adjured to testify against himself; (g) his claims and appeals to evidence were never introduced into any proceedings; (h) arrested for one allegation; condemned for a different one; (i) abused, mocked, reviled, physically assaulted with permission of civil officials; (j) tried in two other courts (Herod and Pilate) which should not have had jurisdiction; (k) finally, brought before the Jewish council, convened on a Friday (which was illegal) and given a guilty sentence without cross examination of witnesses (illegal), and given a guilty sentence without evidence of any criminal behavior (illegal).

“Scourging” was severe “flogging.” Flogging was a legal preliminary to every Roman execution; women, Roman senators and soldiers were exempt. The culprit was stripped, tied in a bending position to a post or stretched on a frame. The usual instrument was a short whip (flagellum) with several arm-length braided leather thongs into which small iron balls or sharp pieces of sheep bones were tied at intervals. The back, buttocks, and legs were flogged by 1 or 2 soldiers who alternated positions. It was intended to weaken the victim to a state just short of collapse or death. Such a flagellum would cause deep contusions, cutting into the skin and subcutaneous tissues. As the flogging continued the lacerations would tear into the underlying skeletal muscles and produce quivery ribbons of bleeding flesh. Pain and blood loss set the stage for circulatory shock. The Greek word Peter uses (1 Pet. 2:24) of Jesus’ “wounds” is *molopi* and means “deeply lacerated wounds”—possibly so deep as to expose rib bones. Romans used flogging as a “court of last resort.” Just before execution of anyone sentenced to die, they would “scourge” them to try to get a confession of guilt. Sometimes if a person could muster a claim to innocence after scourging, they were acquitted of guilt and released. It was Roman law; and it was Jewish law (40 stripes less one) (Deut. 25:1-3; 2 Cor. 11:24). Jews used a whip of 3 leather thongs lashing the culprit 143 times on the bare chest and 13 times on each shoulder. Public flogging was administered in the USA as a punishment not too long ago, and was not considered “cruel and unusual punishment by our Constitutional forefathers. After flogging Jesus severely, the Romans continued, like dogs with half-dead prey, to torment and abuse Jesus. Psa. 22—“Yea, dogs are round about me.”

For the 5th time Pilate brought Jesus out from his judgment hall to the “clean” Jews who would not go in lest they be defiled, and said, “...I find no crime in him.” (Jesus had been acquitted by “the court of last resort”—flogging). Pilate said in Latin, *Ecce homo*, “Behold, the man.” Chief priests and temple officers cried, “Crucify him!” But Pilate said for the 6th time, “Crucify him yourselves...I find no crime in him.” Pilate knew they could not crucify him—only the Roman procurator had the authority to execute a criminal. The first Jewish accusation of Jesus before Pilate (Lk. 23:2) was “we found this man perverting our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ a king.” That didn’t work so they said, “We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.” Pilate was afraid when he heard that! His fear was born either of pagan superstition or that Tiberius might hear from the Jews that he was indifferent and indecisive toward administering the justice demanded by Jewish law—or BOTH! It does appear from Pilate’s wife’s dream (Matt. 27:19) that either God was warning Pilate about Jesus’ innocence, or superstition would play a part in his attempt to divest himself of the “problem” before him. Even a pagan polytheist would be afraid to try to kill a “god!”

Pilate threatened Jesus, “Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?” Jesus answered (paraphrase) “No, Pilate, you are wrong—you are doing this not because your Roman empire is all-powerful, but because it is God’s will to allow it. I do not expect you to understand me, Pilate, but these Jews should know who I am and understand what is happening!” Pilate would not be exonerated from his own sin simply because the Jews had greater sin. But the Jews had a greater sin because they sinned

against all their knowledge, against all their privileges, against their own law, and against their consciences. Paul said of the Jews, “They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ” (Rom. 9:4-5). God had preached the “gospel” beforehand to Abraham (Gal. 3:8). “And that servant who knew his master’s will, but did not make ready or act according to his will, shall receive a severe beating. But he who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, shall receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand more.” see Luke 12:47-49 and Numbers 15:29-30 (sin with a high hand Deut. 25;2-3; Lk. 8:18; 19:26). Just moments later these Jews shrieked, His blood be on us and on our children!” Daniel predicted they would “cut off” their Messiah and thus “finish the transgression”—Jesus predicted they would “fill up” the measure of their forefathers and upon that generation would come “all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah...” (Matt. 23:33-36; Lk. 11:49-51. YES! THEY WERE “CHRIST-KILLERS”—ONE MUST CONTRADICT THE BIBLE TO SAY THEY WERE NOT! But that in no way excuses any one else’s sins against God and Christ!!! Peter accuses the Jews of killing Jesus (Acts 2:23; 3:14); Paul accuses the Jews of killing Jesus (Acts 13:28; 1 Thess. 2:14-15). In Revelation 11:8, John symbolically lays the blame for the crucifixion of Christ upon the “great city”—Rome!

Pilate tried EIGHT TIMES to release Jesus, each time declaring him INNOCENT: (a) John 18:38—sends him to Herod; (b) Luke 23:15—after Jesus’ return from Herod; (c) Luke 23:20—again he tries to release Jesus; (d) Luke 23:22—again Pilate states he finds no crime in Jesus and offers to “chastise” him and release him; (e) John 19:4—after having scourged Jesus he tries to release him; (f) John 19:5—Pilate says, “Take him yourselves and crucify him, I find no crime in him.”; (g) John 19:12—after Jesus warned Pilate of his sin, Pilate again seeks to release Jesus; (h) Matthew 27:24—Pilate tries to convince himself that he has released Jesus as an innocent man and he would be free of the guilt of what would subsequently happen to Jesus. This certainly shows how determined the Jews were to put Jesus to death! It also shows that most politicians will almost always go with what is in their own best interests when “the chips are down.”

Jews were not all that loyal toward the Roman conquest and occupation of their land! Roman taxes were a “thorn in their flesh” taking some 30% of everyone’s income and that was in addition to 30% they paid in Jewish and Herodian taxes. Romans also instituted the “publican” system of taxation, farming out the collecting of taxes to the highest bidder, who in turn had to extort every way possible enough tax money plus raking in enough extra to make it worth while to the collector—like waitresses who make most of their wages from “tips.” The paganism of Roman soldiers and other Romans who lived in Judea was a terrible defilement to the Jewish “kosher” way of thinking. The despised Herods, descended from Arabs and Edomites, had been appointed by Rome to rule the Jews and the Herods knew how to “smooz” the Romans. Jews had suffered foreign domination and recurring holocausts by heathen empires from Babylon to Rome for 600 years, enduring genocidal holocausts from the Seleucids (Syrians) and Ptolemies (Egyptians) who tried to force the Jews to

worship idols and adopt pagan culture (see 1 & 2 Maccabees). Eventually, in A.D. 66, 36 years after they crucified Christ, the Jewish terrorists (Sicarra) precipitated open rebellion; they slaughtered one another and devastated their own holy city, Jerusalem, and died from starvation and violence by the hundreds of thousands during the four-year Roman siege and final assault upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70—all according to the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 and the prophecy of Jesus and the apostle Paul in Matthew 24:1-34; Mark 13:1-31; Luke 21;1-36; Hebrews 8:13; 10:23-25; 12:25).

Pilate took water and washed his hands before the crowd, proclaiming for the 8th time that Jesus was innocent, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.” Pilate sinned against his own conscience and condemned himself (Rom. 2:12-16; 14:22-23). The Jews cried, “His blood be upon us and upon our children.” Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released unto them a man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder—Barabbas. For a 3rd time the soldiers took Jesus, mocked him and abused him. Then they led him away to crucify him. The Hebrew word for the place of crucifixion is *gulgoleth*, in English, *Golgotha*, which means, “bald, round, skull-like mound or hill.” The Latin word *Calvaria*, (i.e., *Calvary*) is a rendering of the Greek *Kranion*, which means “skull or cranium.” My research leads me to believe Jesus was crucified directly north of the city, just outside the wall from the Tower of Antonio (where Pilate and his soldiers were quartered during their occasional residence in Jerusalem—where the *Pritw, rion*, *Praetorium* was, a place called *Lithostroton*, or “Pavement” (a raised stone floor where Pilate sat in judgment Jn. 19:13) called in Hebrew *Gabbatha*, “raised up.”) where Pilate sat in judgment. Crucifixion as a method of execution may be traced to the Phoenician, Carthaginian, Assyrian, Persian, Syrian, and Greek civilizations. It was barbaric. It was used because of the unparalleled suffering it inflicted upon the condemned and the spectacle it presented (Simeon predicted the infant Jesus would die a “spectacular” death, Lk. 2:34-35—Greek *semeion antilegomenon*, “a sign spoken against.”). Crucifixion was an effective deterrent to widespread crime and sedition. At the defeat of the slave rebellion led by the famous Greek slave *Spartacus* (about 75 B.C., the Romans lined the Appian highway for many miles with crucified slaves. At the destruction of Jerusalem A.D. 70, they crucified 500 Jews per day—so many they ran out of wood to build crosses. Jews would “crucify” a dead corpse (“hang on a tree” Deut. 21:22-23; Gal. 3:13) to signify the curse of God was upon him—but never would they execute by crucifixion—their method of execution was stoning the offender to death. **THEY WANTED JESUS CRUCIFIED TO SIGNIFY THAT GOD HAD CURSED HIM!** Usually the prisoner had to bear his cross to the place of crucifixion; the rabble of the streets would scream oaths at him, pelt him with rocks, and spit upon him. At the place of execution the soldiers would throw the usually pleading, resisting criminal down roughly upon his cross, with cold-blooded detachment begin pounding the huge seven-inch-long spikes through the wrist just above the hand, and having bent the person’s legs into a crouched position, they would hammer a wooden cleat with a larger spike through the arches of both feet, one placed on top of the other. The ringing hammer against nail, mingled with shrieks of pain of the prisoner, produced a chilling revulsion in the bystanders (only the very blood-thirsty or very compassionate would have the fortitude to watch). Then, with a dull thud, and more screams from the crucified, the cross was dropped into the hole prepared for it. **ALL THAT REMAINED WAS TO WAIT, SOMETIMES 3 OR 4 DAYS, FOR DEATH.** The pain of tearing

flesh and muscle-cramps became unbearable. Flies, mosquitoes, and other insects buzzed around and lit upon the helpless body hanging there. Birds came and pecked at the open flesh. Severe inflammation of open wounds brought on extreme fever. Exposure to the dehydrating heat in daytime and cold chilling at night, sunshine and rain, mocking and stones thrown by bystanders created an excruciating agony beyond comprehension. The arteries of head and stomach were bursting with blood creating unbearable headaches, stomach cramps, and psychological trauma. Tetanus and the attendant convulsions usually set in. Death rarely came before 36 hours. NINE DAYS is the longest record of such torturous execution. But most torturous for Jesus was the fact that he suffered THE SECOND DEATH, the “anathema” or “curse” upon all the sin of the world for all mankind (Gal. 3:13; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. chs. 9 & 10). All those who have taken part in the “first resurrection” (baptized into his death, raised to walk in his resurrection) over them, the second death has no power, Rev. 20:6.

Pilate wrote a title for Jesus’ cross—in three languages which was standard operating procedure for crucifixions: Greek Basileus ton Ioudaion, “King of the Jews.” Hebrew melek yehudim, “King of the Jews.” And Latin, REX JUDAEORUM, “King of the Jews.” Pilate found one more sarcastic way to express his contempt and spite toward these Jews who were ruining his political career. He probably was also “covering all bases” and doing this as a matter to go into the Roman record since “blasphemy” of a foreign god would not be a capital crime to be reported back to Rome. And, it would be a solemn warning to any other hot-headed passerby as to the fate of anyone claiming to be a “king” without Rome’s permission! He would also exert his authority by denying their request and show these Jews who was in charge!

Jesus was crucified about 9:00 a.m. on the morning of Paraskeue, or “Preparation” which was the Jewish way of saying “Friday”. Paraskeue meant “the day one prepares for the Sabbath or a holy day.” John 19:14 (see also John 19:42; Luke 23:54; Matthew 27:62). From 12 o’clock noon until 3:00 p.m. there was darkness and silence. Luke describes it as the “sun’s light failing” (Gr. eklipontos, “eclipse”—but it was no “natural” eclipse since it was “full-moon” time at Passover. It was a “supernatural” darkness. At the conclusion of the “seven words from the cross,” the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom a great earthquake, rocks split, and tombs opened and “bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs went into the holy city and appeared to many. Apparently the “risen saints” appeared in the city after his resurrection.” Jesus only remained on the cross a little more than six hours. God mercifully took his spirit before he would suffer at length like others did for 3 or 4 days. His dead body was claimed by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus FRIDAY evening before sunset, and placed in Joseph’s rock-hewn tomb near the place of crucifixion. The women followed to see where he was buried, returned to prepare burial ointments, and went again to the tomb early, at sunrise on the first day of the week (Sunday). AND THEY FOUND JESUS’ BODY GONE AND AN ANGEL SITTING IN THE TOMB WHO ANNOUNCED TO THEM HIS RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

The absence of interpretative statements about Christ’s death in the four Gospels is

deliberate. The Gospels are “good news.” “News” is not supposed to be interpreted like is done by our modern “anchormen and women reporters” on TV. News is simply to be reported (take notice NBC, CBS, ABC & FOX). The Christian religion is based upon facts. It is not a mystical philosophy filled with pedantic, sophisticated aphorisms and complex rationalizations. Paul said it succinctly in 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. That is what the apostles preached according to the Acts of the Apostles—THE FACTS OF JESUS DEATH AND RESURRECTION. Seldom did they give any interpretation, but left their hearers to interpret what the facts meant. As Paul told the Athenian philosophers, “God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world by that man, and he has given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-32). WE HAD BETTER REPENT!

The OT prophets gave the divine interpretation or meaning of the death of the Messiah hundreds of years before it came to pass. THAT IS WHY SO MANY PROPHECIES ARE QUOTED IN THE GOSPELS AND EPISTLES IN CONNECTION WITH JESUS’ DEATH. Also, the prophecies are to PROVE HIS DEATH WAS BE SUPERNATURALLY DECREED AND CARRIED OUT BY ALMIGHTY GOD. The Gospels are also a factual account of the claims and promises Jesus made. Those also are not really interpreted—just stated. SO, HIS DIVINELY DECREED DEATH, FACTUALLY ACCOMPLISHED AND RECORDED—HIS DIVINELY PREDICTED RESURRECTION, FACTUALLY ACCOMPLISHED AND RECORDED—AUTHENTICATE, SUBSTANTIATE, AND VALIDATE THE ABSOLUTE SURETY OF HIS CLAIMS AND HIS PROMISES. We do not need these facts interpreted to produce in us wholehearted faith in Jesus—we just need them testified to by eyewitnesses in a record we can be assured has come to us from their pens. We probably wouldn’t understand the fullness of the Divine mind and meaning behind them even if told! We do know they mean that God loves us with an infinite love. BUT EVEN THAT WE KNOW BECAUSE JESUS SAID HE DID, AND THEN PROVED HIS WORD TO BE ABSOLUTELY TRUE BY THE DEEDS HE DID! You see, even his love is a “matter of fact!”

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 20:1-31

This is the schedule of events after the burial of Jesus' body in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb:

1. Friday evening—"the Sabbath was beginning" Lk. 23:54; Mary Magdalene and Mary (mother of Joses) saw the tomb and "how his body was laid."
2. Friday evening—they returned to their abode and prepared spices, Lk. 23:56a
3. Friday after sunset and up to sunrise Saturday—the women (and men disciples) rested "according to the commandment" Lk. 23:56b.
4. Saturday before noon—Jewish rulers & soldiers secured the tomb—sealed it and set a guard, Matt. 27:62-66.
5. Saturday night, before sunset—Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb (the Greek word *Oye*, *Opse*, is translated, "after" in the RSV, but should be translated "late", Matt. 28:1)
6. Saturday, after sunset, they purchased additional spices (Sabbath ended at sunset on Saturday) and probably returned home.
7. Sunday, before sun-up, the women started for the tomb—Lk. 24:1 uses the Greek word *batheos*, which means, "deeply early, or very, very early" Mk. 16:2, and John's Greek *proi skotias*, means "early darkness", Jn. 20:1.
8. Sunday morning, sunrise, Nisan, April 17, AD. 30—a great earthquake; Jesus arose from the dead; an angel rolled back the stone; the soldiers fell down as if dead, then ran off to report to their superiors, Matt. 28:2-4.
9. Sunday morning, Nisan, April 17, A.D. 30, just after sunrise—the women arrived at the tomb. The Greek verb *erchontai*, used in John 20:1 should be translated "came" and the Greek verb *erchontai* used in Mark 16:2 should be translated, "went." The women "went" toward the tomb very, very early, in the darkness, and "came" to the tomb just as the sun was rising but it was still somewhat dark.
10. Sunday morning, still early—the women saw the tomb already opened, Mk. 16:3-4; Lk. 24:2; Jn. 20:1b.

11. Sunday morning, still early—Mary Magdalene is shocked, thinking Jesus' body has been stolen—she runs to tell Peter and John (John 20:1a mentions only Mary Magdalene as going to the tomb; not a contradiction since John does not say she is the only woman who went; John mentions her specifically because she is the one who ran to him and Peter with the report of the empty tomb; the Synoptic Gospels were already in existence when John wrote so he simply adds this little bit of information which they do not).
12. Sunday morning—an angel appeared to the other women (Mary Magdalene absent); calmed their fear; announced Jesus' resurrection from the dead; invited them into the tomb to see, told them to go tell his disciples they would see him in Galilee, Matt. 28:5-8.
13. Sunday morning—the women entered the tomb and another angel was in there. They looked at the empty burial clothes, were exceedingly frightened, and hurried away with fear and yet with great expectancy of joy. There appears to be some lapse of time before they told the disciples. They were afraid to tell anyone at first Mk. 16:5-8; Lk. 24:3-8; Matt. 28:8. This lapse of time would explain how Mary Magdalene could run away to tell Peter and John, run back to the tomb with them, have Jesus appear to her there, and still be found with the group of women later when Jesus appeared to the group.
14. Sunday morning—Peter and John, having been told by Mary Magdalene that Jesus' body was missing, ran to the tomb. Peter entered, found the facial cloth rolled up neatly apart from the rest of the wrappings. John then entered, saw, and confirmed for himself that the body was gone. **TO THAT POINT NEITHER THEY, NOR THE WOMEN, WERE CONVINCED JESUS WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD!**

NO!—neither the women nor the men disciples were eager to believe that Jesus was alive! Not that they didn't want it to be true—it is just that they couldn't believe it! They had no evidence, no reason, to believe it. The disciples were **NOT CREDULOUS, GULLIBLE, DUPES OR DOPES WHO WOULD BELIEVE ANYTHING ANYONE TOLD THEM.** They were not the kind of people who believe something just because someone else said it was so. So far, Mary Magdalene had seen only an empty tomb; Peter and John had only the word of an almost hysterical, frightened woman; the other women saw only an empty tomb and some men who frightened them. These fishermen were hard-headed men who refused to believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, except on more evidence than the report of the women even after they have seen Jesus (Lk. 24:11, 41). And Thomas was more stubborn than all the rest, requiring to see the nail prints in Jesus' hands—not even taking the word of all his fellow disciples. The fact that these men wrote of themselves that they were skeptical about what the women told them until they could have evidence for themselves is one more solid rock of evidence that the Gospels are factual history and not

mythological. Had they been concocting a myth they would have said of themselves that they immediately believed what the women said.

John, “the “other disciple,” “saw and believed; for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.” WHAT DID JOHN BELIEVE? I tend to think he “believed” only that the body of Jesus was gone. At this time that is all he had been told. Mary Magdalene and the other women after they have all seen the risen Lord came to where the men disciples were, back at their dwelling in the city were weeping and mourning. Peter and John had seen only the empty tomb (Mk. 16:10-11; Lk. 24:9-11; Jn. 20:18). The women told the men, “We have seen the Lord”—BUT THESE WORDS SEEMED TO THE MOURNING MEN DISCIPLES AN IDLE TALE, AND THEY WOULD NOT BELIEVE IT! It appears, ironic as it may seem, the guards at the tomb and the chief priests believed Jesus was risen from the dead BEFORE THE DISCIPLES BELIEVED IT!

Mary did not recognize Jesus at once because (a) she had been distracted, confused, frightened, and agitated trying to think about what might have happened to the body of Jesus—AND WHAT SHE MIGHT DO ABOUT IT; (b) she was weeping and had tears in her eyes which blurred her vision; (c) it may have been foggy or misty that early in the morning; (d) she was some distance away from the person who was speaking to her; (e) she may have had her vision obscured by some bushes, etc.; (f) SHE WAS NOT EXPECTING TO SEE JESUS! This is the most significant reason she did not know who spoke to her; (g) Once again, it is proof that the followers of Jesus HAD TO BE CONVINCED THAT HE HAD RISEN FROM THE DEAD; (h) THEY WERE CERTAIN HE HAD DIED! NO QUESTION ABOUT THAT! AND ALL THEIR EXPERIENCE SAYS HUMAN BEINGS DO NOT COME BACK TO LIFE AND COME OUT OF THEIR GRAVES; (i) BUT THEIR EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE IS ABOUT TO GET A JOLT!—THEIR EYES, HANDS, AND THEIR EARS ARE ABOUT TO “EXPERIENCE” THE REALITY OF A HUMAN RISEN FROM THE DEAD! (Acts 2:32: 1 Jn. 1:1-4); (j) How significant that Jesus FIRST APPEARED (Mark 16:9) TO A WOMAN, Mary Magdalene (formerly demon possessed; perhaps the same woman of Lk. 7:37—a woman of ill repute)—and that a woman was the first to bear the good news to the apostles that Jesus was risen!

Let's review the bodily appearances of the resurrected Jesus:

1. Jn. 20:11-17—Sunday, to Mary Magdalene, alone in the garden
2. Matt. 28:9-10; Lk. 24:9-11; Mk. 16:10-11; Jn. 20:18—Sunday, to the group of women returning from the tomb to Jerusalem, with Mary Magdalene who had caught up with them from telling Peter & John
3. 1 Cor. 15:5—still on Sunday, to Peter, apparently alone somewhere in Jerusalem.
4. Mk. 16:12; Lk. 24:13-35—Sunday afternoon—to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus.
5. Jn. 20:19-20; Mk. 16:13-14; Lk. 24:33-43—Sunday evening, late—to the apostles and disciples in Jerusalem, Thomas absent. They all disbelieved for joy! This was Jesus' first appearance to the apostles as a group.
6. Jn. 20:26-29—One week later, on Sunday—Jesus appears to the apostles again, Thomas present—his second appearance to the apostles as a group.
7. Jn. 21:1-25—day unknown, early in the morning at breakfast time, apostles fishing in the Sea of Galilee. This is the third appearance of Jesus to the eleven apostles.
8. Matt. 28:16-20; Mk. 16:15-16—day and time unknown—Jesus appeared a fourth time to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee and gave them the Great Commission.
9. 1 Cor. 15:6—unknown day and time—Jesus appeared to “five hundred brethren at once” many of whom were still alive when Paul wrote to the Corinthians about 30 years after the event.
10. 1 Cor. 15:7—at Jerusalem, time unknown, Jesus appeared to James, probably his step-brother, and leader of the Jerusalem church.
11. Lk. 24:44-49—in Jerusalem, day and time unknown, perhaps near the end of the 40 day time lapse between his resurrection and ascension—Jesus appears a fifth time to the eleven and reiterates his “Great Commission.”
12. Lk. 24:50-53; Acts 1:12—Bethany, on the Mount of Olives, at the end of the month of May, A.D. 30—he appears the sixth time to the eleven, and while he was blessing them, he parted from them and was taken up into heaven. And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.
13. Acts 1:3—it is possible that Jesus appeared to the eleven many more times than this since Acts 1:3 says, “To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God.”

The appearance we deal with in John 20:19-23 is also reported in Mark 16:13-14 and Luke 24:33-43. It is his fifth appearance but his first to the apostles as a group. One should read the Luke account to get all the details of this encounter. The two who had walked unawares with Jesus to Emmaus and dined with him there, had returned to Jerusalem, probably on the run, on the evening of the Resurrection Sunday. They found the apostles, and the women gathered in a room with all the doors and windows shut “for fear of the Jews.” When they arrived, those in the room said, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon.” Then the two new arrivals told everyone in the room what had happened to them “on the road” and how Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of bread.” But some in the room “did not believe them.” SUDDENLY—no sooner than the words of disbelief were in their mouths—JESUS STOOD AMONG THEM! They were startled and frightened and thought they were seeing a pneuma or “spirit.” And, of all things, Mk. 16:14 “...he upbraided (Greek word is oneidisen, “chided, taunted, reproached, disgraced”) them for their unbelief and hardness of heart because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen” (Mk. 16:14). Remember, Jesus had said to the two on the road to Emmaus, “foolish (Greek word is anoetoi, “mindless, stupid, unthinking”) men and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke” (Lk. 24:25). JESUS ABIDES NO EXCUSES, ACCEPTS NO EQUIVOCATIONS, FROM THOSE WHO HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF GOD’S WORD AND EVIDENCE IF THEY DO NOT QUICKLY RESPOND BY ACKNOWLEDGING HIS LORDSHIP. He had been with them three and a half years, worked amazing miracles (even raising people from the dead); he had taught them that the prophets of old predicted the Messiah must suffer, die and be raised again; he had predicted all the events of his life to this point—even the details of the crucifixion; he had appeared four times prior to their fellow disciples, and they have told the apostles—STILL THEY WILL NOT BELIEVE HE IS ALIVE! So, what does Jesus think of so many in this blessed land, this day, who disbelieve both intellectually and by manner of life? Think of all the advantages Americans today have which were brought here and used (churches, Christian universities, Bibles by the millions) by our forefathers as the very core of our civil constitution?

Finally, as Luke records the “upbraiding” session, Jesus began by saying, “Why do questionings (Greek, dialogismoi, “doubting-disputations, questioning-dialogs”) rise in your hearts? —See, my hands and my feet, that it is I myself.” Jesus said, MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT—I AM THE JESUS YOU SAW DIE ON THE CROSS! He showed them his hands and his feet. And still they “disbelieved for joy.” They were ecstatic with joy—they could see the nail prints—but they still wondered and disbelieved—is this the same Jesus we knew in a fleshly body, or is it Jesus having died and come back to us as a “ghost?” So, Jesus asked, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of “fish” and he took it and ate it before them. THEN THE DISCIPLES WERE GLAD WHEN THEY SAW THE LORD (Jn. 20:20). Finally, they acknowledge, “YES!” this is the same Jesus who died—that same Jesus is risen from the dead. IT TOOK THEM A LONG TIME TO BELIEVE! THEY DIDN’T IMMEDIATELY JUMP FOR JOY WHEN THE WOMEN TESTIFIED OF THEIR EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE; THEY DIDN’T EVEN ACCEPT THE WORD OF TWO MEN DISCIPLES WHO HAD SEEN HIM WITH THEIR OWN EYES! AND THEY DIDN’T BELIEVE WHEN THEY SAW THE NAIL PRINTS IN HIS HANDS---- NOT UNTIL HE ATE FISH DID THEY “BELIEVE!” Hugh Schonfield, in his Passover Plot, and other critics would have the world

believe that the disciples were so desperately credulous, gullible, and neurotic they invented a resurrected Jesus. Schonfield and his ilk need to be “upbraided.” These disciples, had they invented their story, would not have put themselves in such bad light. And they would not have laid life and property on the line for an invented story. **NO OTHER RELIGION IN THE WORLD HAS BEEN SO INSISTENT THAT ITS CLAIMS BE TESTED AND VERIFIED—NOR HAS ANY OTHER RELIGION OFFERED SUCH INDISPUTABLE EVIDENCE FOR SUCH VERIFICATION!**

Jesus was giving the apostles a “symbolic” prophecy of the special baptism of the Holy Spirit they were to receive on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:1ff. This was not the actual special baptism (immersion) they would later receive. He wanted them to know that the “baptism” later on would come from none other than himself (remember his promise in John 14:17 that the Comforter would be none other than himself!). Incidentally, Jesus did not give the apostles any personal, autonomous authority to “absolve” any person’s sins. The Greek words used by John 20:22-23 are *aphientai...and....kekrantentai*. They are translated in English, “...they are forgiven,” and “...they are retained.” Both Greek verbs are perfect tense. In Greek the perfect tense means action completed in past time which has a continuing result. In other words, Jesus promised the apostles, “...whose soever sins you forgive, they have already been forgiven and whose soever sins you retain, they have already been retained.” The same Greek idiom appears in the promise Jesus made to the apostles in Matt. 16:19 and 18:18—perfect tense verbs. What Jesus is saying here is that the apostles are merely messengers of a decree from God in heaven. God alone forgives sin (Mark 2:1-12). What the apostles preach, “repentance and forgiveness of sins...” in the name of Jesus, has been done and could not be done again (Heb. 9:25; 10:12-18)—sins cannot be forgiven by any mortal because they have already been forgiven. They would be guided by, inspired by, kept inerrant by the special empowerment of the Holy Spirit which Jesus himself would give them so that they could preach the message that sins had been forgiven and was available to all who would believe and be immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:28).

Apparently Thomas was absent when Jesus gave the apostles their first appearance, late Sunday evening in the room with the doors shut and locked. Thomas had been there earlier, no doubt, but did not believe the testimony of the women—just like the others who did not believe. Then, Thomas must have gone somewhere by himself—maybe to try to confirm or disprove the testimony of the women. If so, he certainly should not be characterized as more skeptical than the other disciples. He was willing to be persuaded with some evidence—but he must have evidence. After all, the women could offer nothing but an empty tomb and a statement from Mary Magdalene that in the very early morning mists she had seen Jesus and talked with him, and the other women who also said they had seen him in the early morning hours. Why couldn’t Thomas, upon having returned to the company of the other 10 apostles, believe what they told him, “We have seen the Lord?” Perhaps Thomas, having been out to find evidence and having found none, was in no frame of mind to believe just because his colleagues said they had seen Jesus. Maybe Thomas thought these men had finally been persuaded, against their reason, without evidence, by the women

who had first come with their “idle tale.” Whatever his reasons, he simply had to see for himself! And we are the benefactors of Thomas’ insistence upon empirical evidence. For the Lord Jesus patiently acceded to his demand and invited him to “bring his daktulon, “finger” and behold (Gr. ide, “look, see”—not “touch”) my hands; and “thrust” your hand in my side; do not be faithless, but believing.” THOMAS BELIEVED! But blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed, said Jesus (see 1 Pet. 1:8). Hope that continues to be realized is no longer hope. Faith that cannot trust unless it continues to see is not faith. The Lord let the apostles see him to validate their testimony to the rest of the world. Once Jesus ascended back into heaven, even the apostles had to fulfill the rest of their lives in faith. And when you contemplate it, having once been convinced with the eyewitness evidence handed down to us by the apostles, and then having to challenge the world with the visible evidence no longer visible, may take more faith than we have to exercise!

The Gospels were written to induce belief and trust in the One of whom they testify. They were not written to entertain or mystify. They were not intended to be ignored. They do not permit indifference. They demand a decision. As John says, they were not intended to be a total account of everything Jesus said and did. He apparently did many “signs” which were never recorded. We know of one saying he made not recorded in the Gospels (Acts 20:35) “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Apparently there were numerous “proofs” and “speaking(s) of the kingdom” Jesus made with his disciples during the 40 days he was with them before his ascension (Acts 1:3). What is written is historically and factually accurate. The brevity of the accounts in no way denies their historicity any more than an abbreviated newspaper account (or TV telecast!) denies its historicity.

R. C. Foster’s statement is classic: “The narratives of the life of Christ are condensed in order to be the more effective. They are sufficient for the purpose of presenting adequate evidence, extensive enough to challenge a lifetime of study, and yet not so voluminous as to overwhelm the reader with a mass of unnecessary records (e.g., the Winston Churchill account of WWII; U.S. Grant’s autobiography, et al). The brevity of the scriptures is one of the foremost proofs of their divine inspiration. Contrast the gospel narratives with any biography in print, whether of Napoleon, Lincoln, or any other famous person.”

Is it necessary that you know about his childhood to believe he is the Son of God? Would it make any difference in your trust or love for him if you knew more details of what he said and did? Though some of the life of Jesus is omitted from these 4 biographies, enough has been written that one may believe thoroughly enough to have the eternal life he has obtained for us. And, there is no other way to believe in him than through these four gospels! “How are men to call upon 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 a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent?...So faith comes by what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ” (Rom. 10:14-17). Paul also says in 2 Thess. 2:13-14 that we are “...saved through...belief in the truth...and to this we have been called through the gospel.”

TEACHER'S NOTES

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

JOHN 21:1-25

While this appearance in John 21 is Jesus' seventh appearance, it is only the third appearance to the eleven apostles as a group. We do not know precisely when this appearance took place. **WE DO KNOW WHERE—AND THAT IT WAS NO ILLUSION!** It was at the Sea of Tiberius, the Roman name for the Sea of Galilee (also called the Lake of Gennesaret). Present were Peter, Thomas Didymus ("Twin"), Nathanael (or Bartholomew) of Cana, James and John, and two other disciples (not necessarily apostles)—all together, 6 men, who were fishing. They had fished all night and caught nothing—a "water-haul." Peter knew the Lord was risen from the dead—why did he (and the 6 others, for they said "we will go with you") go fishing? Was Peter not interested in the greatest event in the history of the world? Had he lost interest in the "kingdom of the Messiah" now that he knew it wasn't going to be physical? Was Peter afraid now to be seen with Jesus? In the first place, Jesus had told them to go to Galilee and wait for him to meet them there. Apparently Jesus wished to meet with them away from Jerusalem so as to avoid any confrontation with his enemies or "friends" who would hinder what he wanted to do with them for 40 days alone to speak concerning the things of the kingdom" (Acts 1:3). After that, he would return with them to Jerusalem and there ascend back into heaven. In the second place, Peter had a family to support! His bank account was probably "over-drawn." He needed to "ply his trade" of fisherman, put a little aside for his wife and mother-in-law. He had been "on the road" for a considerable time—**AND HE WAS GOING TO BE "ON THE ROAD" AGAIN ERE LONG!** The same was probably true of the other men, especially James and John. Clearly, Jesus did not chasten them for "going fishing." In fact, he supplied them with a miraculous catch. Paul, calling upon a fundamental law of God from Deut. 25:4, said that those who labor full-time for the Lord deserve to be financially supported by those who are recipients of their ministries (see 1 Cor. 9:9ff; 1 Tim. 5:18; Gal. 6:6). But Paul also pleads for the alternative—self-supporting ministries. It may be that Peter and the others were both supported and self-supporting in their ministries. Peter was not yet as fully prepared to be a "fisher of men" and a "feeder of sheep" as the Lord wanted him. So he would "show himself by many proofs, and speak concerning the kingdom of God" for 40 days before sending these hard-headed, hard-working fishermen out to "catch men."

There may be any number of reasons the fishermen couldn't recognize Jesus: (a) Day was just beginning to "break" and it may have been still too dark to identify objects barely visible; (b) they may have been looking into the rising sun; (c) there might have been a fog or mist rising from the sea; (d) they may have been so far out upon the sea that they couldn't determine who the person was; (e) they were busy, focused primarily on what they were doing; (f) they were tired, frustrated, and in no mood to engage in guessing games; (g) but, they should have been expecting him to come to Galilee; (h) this shows, however, we are dealing with an authentic document. If John had set out to compose a myth, or a novel, he would probably have the fishermen recognize Jesus immediately and ask him to work a

miracle for them.

It seems strange that since they didn't know the man on the beach was Jesus they would follow his instructions to cast on the right side of the boat! Jesus yelled, "Lads, you don't have any fish, do you?" Perhaps they thought he was a local fisherman who knew where the best fishing was. Maybe they were like most fishermen—don't give up—try one more time. Perhaps they were chagrined at having to confess they had no fish and decided to give anything a try. Don't forget, Jews are very superstitious people—they may have said, "Maybe the right side is the lucky side!"

Wow! When they did what the man on the beach said, they had a catch in their net so voluminous and heavy they could hardly haul it in! This was more than luck! This was supernatural! It "rang all kinds of bells" in their heads! There was a similar event (Lk. 5:1-5) when Jesus got them into Peter's boat and took them out upon the sea to fish, after they had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. They caught so many fish their nets were "breaking." That was when Jesus first called them to "become fishers of men." There were the two incidents of feeding thousands of people with a few loaves and fish. There was the incident when he calmed the raging storm upon the sea and Peter thought to walk on the water. John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" was quick to react and respond with recognition of the power of his Lord and Master, Jesus. Peter, when he heard this girded (Greek, diezosato, wrapped) his coat (Greek ependuten, outer cloak) around him because "he was naked." It is doubtful that Peter was in his "birthday suit" but he had taken off his "outer tunic" leaving only his under garments on. He "girded" his outer tunic around his waist (i.e., tucked it into the girdle or belt of his under garments) and jumped into the water. They were only about 100 yards off shore and the water was probably shallow enough to wade to shore. Either way, I think the outer tunic probably got wet. But what did Peter care—he had probably been wet all night. Peter was eager to see his Master—especially in light of this, another miracle.

Why didn't Peter wait and come ashore in the boat with the others? Why knows why Peter did the things he did? Peter was an impulsive "reactor." He often did and said things and thought about them later! How would you have reacted? We are all different in temperament and reactions. Again, these men were real men—not robots or the idealistic characters of fiction. They were as different in personality as we. We have here an authentic account of authentic people!

How could Peter haul in a net by himself with 153 fish in it? Note first that the disciples in the boat had hauled the net up to the shore (verse 8). But it was Peter who went on board the boat that was beached and brought the net full of 153 large fish (the fish in the sea of Galilee were not nearly as large as the fish we think of today) to where Jesus was standing beside a charcoal fire with fish already cooking upon the fire. How did those fish get there? Well, this Jesus was known for making fish appear when there were none! It was another miracle—one of the "many proofs"! Peter had to be a very strong man—unless he got someone to help him and John simply does not record the helper's name.

John recorded the precise number of fish—153. I imagine the apostles wanted to count them to compare with other catches they had made. Perhaps Jesus also wanted the apostles to know the exact number to emphasize the magnitude of the catch—so large and still it did not break their net. It was one of the “many proofs” mentioned in Acts 1:3. And it testifies once gain to the authenticity of the account. John had to have been an eyewitness to this event. And 60 years later, as he writes of it, he wants his readers to know he was there and knows exactly how many fish there were in the net!

Why didn't the apostles dare to ask Jesus who he was? They remembered his “upbraiding” down in Jerusalem when they showed their “unbelief and hardness of heart”! They were, at that moment, overwhelmed with his majesty and they were awed with his omnipotence. Not one of them dared ask him who he was, how he knew where to cast the net, what he was doing there, where the fish already on the fire came from—they asked him NOTHING! They all knew! They knew who he was; they knew what he had accomplished; they knew this was the same Jesus they had known all along; they knew how he got the fish on the fire! So, they ate breakfast with their Lord and Master that early morning on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. I do think there must have been some cogitating going on—some wondering—but no questions!

Jesus startled Peter with a question! “Simon, son of John, do you really love me with more devotion than these others?” Jesus was not asking Peter about his love for boats, nets, and fish. There's nothing wrong with fishing—the 3-fold questioning parallels the 3-fold denial Peter had mouthed just a few weeks earlier—and Peter's reply was not, “Yes, Lord I love you more than these ‘things’”—Peter's reply was, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Peter had fallen into the trap of pride when he made the proud boast (Matt. 26:31-33; Mark 14:27-29; Luke 22:31-33; John 13:37)—“If all these leave you, I will never leave you, even if I must go to my death with your Lord.” This was on the night of the Last Supper. It was at that very moment Jesus prophesied that before the cock crowed, Peter would deny him 3 times. You might call this Peter's “rededication.” In the light of Peter's misapprehension of the nature of the Messiah's ministry and kingdom, and Peter's denials, Jesus wants to know if Peter is still so cock-sure of himself and his determination to make Messiah's kingdom into one of human ambition and glory. Peter professes a warm personal, intimate brotherly-love for Jesus. In Jesus' first two questions, John uses the Greek word *agapas* (love by choice and will in spite of emotions). Peter answers both times with *philo* (love of emotion—brotherly love). Finally, on Jesus' third question, Jesus uses the word *phileis* toward Peter, and Peter replies as before, only more emphatically. Apparently, at this early point in Peter's relationship with the Lord, he is still on the level of *phileo* association—a comradeship kind of relationship. It is interesting that years later, Peter uses the Greek word *agapate* when writing, “Without having seen him you love him” (1 Pet. 1:8). So Peter eventually grew in his level of love for Jesus!

What has feeding the Lord's sheep to do with loving Jesus? In 21:15 & 17, John used the word *boske* (“give them fodder”); but in 21:16 he used the word *poimaine*, (“shepherd, protect, lead, care for sheep”). In verses 16 & 17 John used the word, *probata*,

“grown sheep”); but in verse 15 he used the word *arnia* (“little lambs”). The little lambs, the unsophisticated, the totally dependent ones, the young, weak ones, are to be tenderly nurtured FIRST! The only way to love Jesus is to feed, lead, protect, nurture his flock (Acts 20:28-35; John 10:1ff; 1 Peter 5:1-11; Eph. 4:11-17). We might paraphrase 1 John 5:1 —“Everyone who loves the Good Shepherd, loves the sheep.” If we cannot love those in need and physically present all around us, (sheep without a shepherd) how can we love the invisible Master who bought them with his perfect blood? Five times in his first epistle, Peter says, “Love the brethren.” And in conclusion Peter writes, “Tend the flock of God.” So Peter learned what Jesus was saying here!

It is the calling of those who desire to give their full-time to the ministry to “feed” the flock. There is clearly a place in the church for those who want to “tend, feed, lead, care for, protect” God’s flock. Jesus called 12 men out of the multitude of those who followed him for this purpose (Acts 6:4). Paul delineates what “feeding the flock” entails in several places (Eph. 4:11-17; 1 Cor. 9; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 & 2 Tim., Titus). Those who minister to God’s flock are to feed them the Word of God (Acts 20:32; 2 Tim. 3:16-17, etc.). NOTHING LESS, NOTHING MORE! What else does the flock of God need to be fed? The church cannot take the place of the family, or the civil government, or the school—the “flock tenders” within the church will have all they can do if they structure and carry out a thorough, complete, intensive, feeding of the Bread of Life!

Peter’s destiny was predicted by Jesus. Peter was to be “girded” when he became old and “taken where he would not wish to go.” The phrase, “you will stretch out your hands” may refer to death by crucifixion, or to being arrested and bound as a prisoner to be led off to die in prison or in a Roman arena. Whatever the circumstances of Peter’s death, Jesus predicted its consequence would be a glorification of God. But a more crucial issue is Peter’s question about another of the apostles—John, the disciple whom Jesus loved. Peter wanted to know what was to happen to John. So, Peter missed the mark again! Peter got out of focus again. He was “comparing himself by others” (see 2 Cor. 10:12). Jesus replied as he had to his mother and to the whole group of disciples at his ascension, “It is none of your business to know this...if it is my will that John remain alive even until I come again (in contrast to your death which will be before I come again), it is my affair and not yours. The destiny of this other disciple is minor; the major task for you is to follow me.” When the Lord gives orders he solicits no suggestions or even questions from us. We are to have the faith necessary to simply say, “I will, with your help, do it.” The Lord has told us all we need to know in his revealed word (Deut. 29:29). “The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

There is good evidence that the last two verses of the Gospel of John were not a part of the original text:

Sinaiticus manuscript (A.D. 350) omits it

Bodmer II papyrus (A.D. 250) omits it

P75 papyrus (A.D. 200) omits it

Even if it might be authentic, it simply corroborates the statement in John 20:30-31

We have all the information necessary in the four Gospel accounts to believe beyond a reasonable doubt that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, so that by faith and obedience to him we may rest in the assurance that he will give us eternal life.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN LEAVES NO DOUBT OR UNCERTAINTY, TO ANYONE WHO IS HONEST AND OPEN TO KNOWING THE TRUTH, THAT JESUS OF NAZARETH IS GOD'S "ANOINTED"—GOD'S ONLY UNIQUE SON, WHO IS "THE BREAD OF LIFE—THE WATER OF LIFE—THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE—THE WAY THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE—THE GOOD SHEPHERD—THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP—AND NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER BUT BY HIM!

Introduction to Paul T. Butler Th.D

Paul was born in Springfield Missouri and graduated from Conway High School prior to enlistment in the US Navy. He began serious bible study with correspondence courses from San Jose Bible College. He later enrolled in Ozark Bible College and acquired his Bachelor of Theology degree June of 1961. He received a Master of Biblical Literature degree from Ozark in May of 1973. He received a Doctorate of Theology from The Theological University of America in October of 1990.

Paul taught at Ozark Christian College from 1960 to 1997. He also served many years as registrar for the college.

Introduction to the Sound Bible Study project.

The Sound Bible Study project is a cooperative effort of Christian educators and Jordan Media Enterprises LLC to provide the serious examination of the Scriptures for the conscientious student. All the teachers are experienced educators who have spent countless hours in the classroom on both sides of the lectern. The audio recordings and written notes are made available for those who wish to learn God's Word at a collegiate level but have been unable to matriculate. There is no intention to compete with the many faithful Bible schools, but rather to serve along side and strengthen both the student and the teacher for a stronger and more effective Kingdom of God that knows how to properly divide the Word of God.

