

# The Gospel Of John



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# The Gospel Of John

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# The Pre-Existence Of Christ

## John 1:1-5

### INTRODUCTION

1. The gospel of John was written for a simple purpose...
  - a. To produce faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God - **Jn 20:30-31a**
  - b. To share the “life” that comes through such faith - **Jn 20:31b**
2. To encourage us to have faith in Jesus Christ...
  - a. John begins his gospel with a prologue - **Jn 1:1-18**
  - b. In which he makes several claims as to who Jesus was
    - 1) He refers to Jesus in this prologue as “the Word”
    - 2) That he refers to Jesus is evident from **verses 14-18**
3. The very first claim pertains to **the pre-existence of Christ**...
  - a. That He existed in the beginning, long before being born of Mary - cf. **Jn 1:1-2**
  - b. That His work in the beginning has great significance for us - cf. **Jn 1:3-5**

[John is not alone in proclaiming “**The Pre-Existence Of Christ.**” Elsewhere in the Scriptures we find...]

### I. EVIDENCE FOR THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

#### **A. FORETOLD BY THE PROPHETS...**

1. Micah prophesied of the pre-existence of the Messiah to come - **Mic 5:2**
2. Isaiah spoke of the King to come as “Everlasting Father” - **Isa 9:6-7**
3. Zechariah recorded the Messiah’s own promise to come - **Zech 2:10-11**

#### **B. AFFIRMED BY JESUS HIMSELF...**

1. In His claim to have existed in Abraham’s day - **Jn 8:56-58**
2. In His prayer shortly before His arrest and crucifixion - **Jn 17:4-5,24**
3. In the revelation He gave to John - **Re 22:13**

#### **C. DECLARED BY HIS APOSTLES...**

1. By John in his gospel, and also his epistle - **Jn 1:1-4; 1 Jn 2:14**
2. By Paul in his epistles
  - a. To the church in Corinth - **1 Co 10:1-4; 2 Co 8:9**
  - b. To the church in Philippi - **Ph 2:5-8**
  - c. To the church in Colosse - **Co 1:16-17**

#### **D. ILLUSTRATED BY THE CREATION...**

1. All things were created by Jesus - **Jn 1:3; He 1:2-3**
2. Necessitating His existence before creation - **Co 1:16-17**

3. Implying His own eternal power and divine nature - **Ro 1:20**

[These are remarkable claims concerning Jesus, even blasphemous if not true. Yet if true (and John's gospel is design to prove that it is), consider...]

## **II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST**

### **A. HE IS DEITY...!**

1. Especially when we consider the nature of His pre-existence
    - a. His going forths were "from everlasting" - cf. **Mic 5:2**
    - b. He was the eternal "I Am" - **Jn 8:58**; cf. **Exo 3:13-14**
  2. As made clear in John's prologue - **Jn 1:1-2**
    - a. He was "with" God (implying a personal communion with God)
    - b. He "was" God (explicitly stating His deity)
- **Thus He is worthy of our love and adoration - cf. Jn 20:28**

### **B. HE IS LIFE...!**

1. By virtue of being the Creator and the Sustainer of life
    - a. All things were made by Him - **Co 1:16**
    - b. All things are held together (NASV, NRSV) by Him - **Co 1:17**
  2. Again, as John makes clear in his prologue - **Jn 1:3-4**
    - a. Without Him, nothing was made
    - b. In Him was life itself
- **Thus He gives us hope for our own resurrection! - cf. Jn 5:21; 11:25**

### **C. HE IS LIGHT...!**

1. We live in a world of darkness...
    - a. Where people spend their lives stumbling in ignorance
    - b. Alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance - cf. **Ep 4:17-19**
  2. As the Creator and Sustainer of life itself...
    - a. Jesus is uniquely qualified to bring light into the world - **Jn 1:4**
    - b. He calls for us to believe that we might become "sons of light" - **Jn 12:35-36**
- **Thus Jesus offers us the "light of life" - Jn 8:12**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Sadly, many resist the life and light Jesus offers...
  - a. Some tried to destroy Him, but did not succeed - cf. **Jn 1:5** (NRSV)
  - b. Many try to avoid Him, knowing that it will mean changes to their lifestyle - cf. **Jn 3:19-20**
2. But for those willing to come to Jesus...
  - a. He offers us hope and guidance in this life - cf. **Mic 5:4-5a**
  - b. He is capable of fulfilling His promises - cf. **Mt 11:28-30**

For He is no mere man, whose existence began when born by Mary, but "*whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.*" - **Mic 5:2**

# Bearing Witness Of The Light

## John 1:6-8

### INTRODUCTION

1. In the prologue to his gospel, the apostle John introduces another man named John...
  - a. A man who was sent from God - **Jn 1:6**
  - b. A man who came to bear witness of the Light - **Jn 1:7**
  - This man, of course, was John the Baptist
2. John the apostle makes it clear that this other “John” was not the Light...
  - a. Not only here in the prologue - **Jn 1:8**
  - b. But also immediately following the prologue - cf. **Jn 1:19-20**
3. John the Baptist’s purpose in bearing witness of the Light...
  - a. That all might believe - **1 Jn 1:7**
  - b. The same reason John the apostle wrote his gospel - cf. **Jn 20:30-31**
4. John was not the only person to bear witness of the Light...
  - a. Others did before he came
  - b. Others have since he came

[Indeed, even we have a responsibility to bear witness of the Light! Before we consider how, let’s note those who have done so in the past...]

### I. THE FORERUNNERS OF CHRIST

#### **A. THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS...**

1. They foretold the sufferings of Christ, and the glories to follow - **1 Pe 1:10-11**
  - a. E.g., the prophet Isaiah - **Isa 7:14; 9:6-7; 53:4-6**
  - b. E.g., the prophet Micah - **Mic 5:2**
  - c. It has been estimated that there are more than 300 prophecies concerning Christ
2. Jesus reminded His disciples of this truth
  - a. To the two disciples on the road to Emmaus - **Lk 24:25-27**
  - b. Later to the apostles in Jerusalem - **Lk 24:44-47**

#### **B. JOHN THE BAPTIST...**

1. Foretold by Isaiah - **Isa 40:3**
2. Identified as such by Matthew, Mark, and Luke - **Mt 3:1-3; Mk 1:1-4; Lk 3:1-6**
3. John the apostle relates how John the Baptist bore witness of the Light
  - a. Declaring Jesus to be “The Lamb of God” - **Jn 1:29,35-36**
  - b. Declaring Jesus to be “The Son of God” - **Jn 1:34**

[Both the prophets and John bore witness to Jesus **prior** to His ministry. **During** the course of His

ministry, there was another One who bore witness of the Light...]

## **II. THE FATHER OF CHRIST**

### **A. HE BORE WITNESS THROUGH SIGNS...**

1. Through the miracles Jesus did - cf. **Jn 5:36-37; 10:25,37-38**
2. Even as Nicodemus and the man born blind realized - cf. **Jn 3:2; 9:32-33**

### **B. HE BORE WITNESS THROUGH HIS VOICE FROM HEAVEN...**

1. At the baptism of Jesus - **Mt 3:16-17**
2. At the mount of transfiguration - **Mt 17:5**
3. At Jerusalem during the last week - **Jn 12:27-30**

### **C. HE BORE WITNESS THROUGH RAISING JESUS FROM THE DEAD...**

1. Declaring Jesus to be the Son of God with power - **Ro 1:3-4**
2. Declaring Jesus to be One will judge the world - **Ac 17:30-31**

[When the Father raised Jesus from the dead, He was seen by select witnesses who in turn were commanded to add their witness of the Light (**Ac 10:40-43**). But not just the apostles; in some ways we can say that witnesses of the Light includes all...]

## **III. THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST**

### **A. THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST...**

1. They bore witness through their **eyewitness testimony**
  - a. In this they are very special witnesses - cf. **Jn 15:27; Ac 1:8; 5:30-32; 13:30-31**
  - b. Providing empirical evidence - cf. **1 Jn 1:1-2; 2 Pe 1:16-18**
2. They bore witness through their **lives and death**
  - a. Enduring great hardship for their testimony - cf. **1 Co 4:9-13**
  - b. Giving credence to the truthfulness of their testimony!

### **B. THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST...**

1. Their **unity** with one another bears witness - **Jn 17:20-23**
  - a. Through our unity we bear witness to the fact:
    - 1) Jesus was sent by God
    - 2) God loves the world
  - b. Should make one think how Jesus feels about congregational infighting, denominational division, etc.
    - 1) We know how Paul feels - cf. **1 Co 1:10-13; 3:3-4**
    - 2) We know what conduct is worthy of our calling - cf. **Ep 4:1-3**
2. Their **transformed lives** also bears witness
  - a. As evidence of the influence of Christ in their lives - cf. **2 Co 3:18; 4:6**
    - 1) Whose truth teaches us how to live in righteousness and holiness - cf. **Ep 4:17-24**
    - 2) Enabling us to “shine as lights in the world” as we reflect the glory of His light in our lives - **Ph 2:12-16**
  - b. Should make one think how we can be of much use if we are not being transformed

- 1) By failing to renew of our minds - cf. **Ro 12:1-2**
- 2) By failing to put on the new man (a Christ-like character) - cf. **Co 3:9-17**
3. Their **proclamation of the Word** bears witness
  - a. Our duty as the elect people of God is to proclaim His praises - **1 Pe 2:9-10**
    - 1) How He called us into His marvelous light
    - 2) How we obtained His mercy
  - b. Should make one think of how little use we are if we remain silent
    - 1) By not spreading the gospel - cf. **Ac 8:4**
    - 2) By not sounding forth the Word - cf. **1 Th 1:8**

## CONCLUSION

1. Those in the **past** faithfully bore witness of the Light...
  - a. The forerunners (the prophets and John the Baptist)
  - b. The followers (the apostles and early disciples)
2. What about us **today**...?
  - a. Do we bear witness of the Light by our unity with one another?
  - b. Do we bear witness of the Light through transformed lives?
  - c. Do we bear witness of the Light through proclaiming the Word?

The purpose of bearing witness of the Light is so others can believe (**Jn 1:7**). Do we **help** or **hinder** those around us to believe in Jesus?

Don't quench the Father's efforts, who would have each of us bear witness of the Light!

*“For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Co 4:6)*

*“For you were once darkness, but now [you are] light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.” (Ep 5:8)*

# Receiving The Light

## John 1:9-13

### INTRODUCTION

1. In the prologue to his gospel, John introduces Jesus as “the light”...
  - a. That shines in darkness - **Jn 1:5**
  - b. To whom John bore witness - **Jn 1:6-8**
  - c. Who gives light to every man - **Jn 1:9**
2. Yet John declares what becomes evident later in his gospel...
  - a. Not everyone was willing to receive the light, i.e., Jesus
  - b. Even His own people as a whole rejected Him
  - c. But for those who did receive Him, they were truly blessed!
3. The same remains true today...
  - a. Many people do not receive Jesus
  - b. Missing out on the wonderful blessings He offers!

[Why do people not receive Christ? How can we be sure to receive Him, and the blessings He offers as “The Light”? Let’s take a closer look at the text for our study...]

### I. MANY DID NOT RECEIVE THE LIGHT

#### **A. WHO DID NOT RECEIVE THE LIGHT...**

1. The world in general - **Jn 1:9-10**
  - a. Even though He gives light to every man! - cf. **Jn 1:4; 8:12; 12:46**
  - b. Even though the world was made through Him! - cf. **Jn 1:3**
2. His own people in particular - **Jn 1:11**
  - a. He had come into His own land, Palestine - cf. **Jer 2:7**
  - b. He had come to His own people, Israel - cf. **Deu 7:6**

#### **B. WHY THEY DID NOT RECEIVE THE LIGHT...**

1. They did not know Him - **Jn 1:10**
  - a. Even His own brothers at first, though they did after His resurrection - **Jn 7:5; Ac 1:14**
  - b. Familiarity often breeds contempt: “A prophet has no honor in his own country...” - **Jn 4:44**
2. Other reasons provided by John in his gospel
  - a. Some loved darkness more than light - **Jn 3:19-20; 5:42-43**
  - b. Some were afraid of what others thought - **Jn 7:13; 9:22**
  - c. Some were misinformed of the facts - **Jn 7:40-43**
  - d. Some were hardened by their traditions - **Jn 9:13-16**
  - e. Some loved the praise of men - **Jn 12:42-43**



[For similar reasons today, many people do not receive Jesus. Yet some did...]

## **II. SOME RECEIVED THE LIGHT**

### **A. THE BENEFITS OF RECEIVING THE LIGHT...**

1. The **right** to become children of God - **Jn 1:12**
  - a. The word “right” signifies both authority and ability (JFB)
  - b. Receiving Christ gives us the authority and ability to become sons of God
  - c. Which is wonderful manifestation of God’s love - cf. **1 Jn 3:1**
  - d. Making us heirs of God and joints heirs with Christ - cf. **Ro 8:14-17**
2. The **privilege** of being born of God - **Jn 1:13**
  - a. Not of blood - i.e., by virtue of physical descent
  - b. Not of flesh - i.e., by virtue of the lusts of the flesh
  - c. Not of the will of man - i.e., by virtue of power in a man’s will alone
  - d. But of God - i.e., a rebirth possible only by the Spirit of God - cf. **Jn 3:5; Ti 3:5**

### **B. THE MEANS FOR RECEIVING THE LIGHT...**

1. To receive Christ, we must believe in His name - **Jn 1:12b**
  - a. Which is to say we must believe in Him
  - b. The name of a person is often put for the person himself (Barnes) - cf. **Jn 2:23**
2. Believing in Him gives us power “**to become**” a child of God
  - a. Faith in Jesus **alone** does not “make” one a child of God
  - b. Many believed in Jesus, but did not become His disciples
    - 1) Only by abiding in His doctrine did they become His disciples - **Jn 8:30-32**
    - 2) Some believed, but were unwilling to confess Him - **Jn 12:42-43**
3. When faith moves us to obey Christ, then we become children of God
  - a. Faith makes us children of God when we put Christ on in baptism - **Ga 3:26-27**
    - 1) We become children of God through faith, yes - but how?
    - 2) By putting Christ on when we are baptized into Christ!
  - b. Jesus becomes the author of our salvation when we obey Him - **He 5:9**
    - 1) Such as obeying His command to be baptized - **Mk 16:16**
    - 2) Thereby born again of both water and the Spirit - **Jn 3:5; Ti 3:5**
4. Sadly, many misapply John’s words in **Jn 1:12**
  - a. Teaching that one becomes a child of God simply by receiving Christ in faith
    - 1) By saying “the sinner’s prayer” (which is nowhere taught in the Scriptures)
    - 2) Often appealing to **Re 3:20-21** (which is addressed to erring Christians, not lost sinners)
  - b. Yet receiving Christ in faith gives one “power to become”, not “makes one become”
    - 1) We must appropriate that power through the obedience of faith
    - 2) Such as confessing our faith, repenting of our sins - **Ro 10:9,10; Ac 17:31**
    - 3) Culminating our obedience by putting on (receiving) Christ in baptism - **Ga 3:27**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Jesus is the “True Light” who gives light to every man...
  - a. Bringing grace and truth to those in sin and error

- a. Providing the way of salvation through His blood
2. How sad that there are many in the world...
  - a. Who do not know Him
  - b. Who have not received Him
  - Who spend their lives stumbling in the darkness
3. But if you are willing to believe in His name...
  - a. You have the right to become a child of God!
  - b. You can be born of God!
  - Provided your faith is an obedient faith, willing to abide in the doctrine of Christ

Let the Word of God, and in particular John's gospel (cf. **Jn 20:30-31**), point you in the direction of the Light, that you might be saved and have life in His name!

# They Beheld His Glory

## John 1:14-18

### INTRODUCTION

1. In the last few verses of the prologue to his gospel, John identifies the Word...
  - a. Who was in the beginning with God, and was God - **Jn 1:1-2**
  - b. Through whom all things were made - **Jn 1:3**
  - c. Who was life, and the light of men - **Jn 1:4-5,9**
  - d. Who came into the world, though many did not receive Him - **Jn 1:10-11**
  - e. Yet those who received Him, were given the right to become children of God - **Jn 1:12-13**
2. The Word was Jesus Christ...
  - a. Who became flesh and lived among men - **Jn 1:14**
  - b. Who glory was seen by men - **Jn 1:14**
3. The word “glory” as used here...
  - a. Means “majesty, dignity, splendor” (Barnes)
  - b. Pertaining to Christ, it refers to His personal excellence or majesty

[John writes “**We beheld His glory**”. What majesty, dignity, or splendor did John and others see in Jesus when He walked in the flesh among men...?]

### I. THEY BEHELD HIS GLORY

#### **A. THE GLORY OF HIS DEITY...**

1. “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father” - **Jn 1:14a**
2. “The dignity which was appropriate to the only begotten Son of God” (Barnes)
  - a. “Such glory or splendor as could belong to no other, and as properly expressed his rank and character.”
  - b. “This glory was seen eminently on the mount of transfiguration” - **Lk 9:28-32; 2 Pe 1:16-18**
  - c. “It was also seen in his miracles, his doctrine, his resurrection, his ascension” - cf. **Jn 2:11**
- “All of which were such as to illustrate the perfections, and manifest the glory that belongs only to the Son of God.” (Barnes)

#### **B. THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE...**

1. “full of grace...grace for grace...grace and truth came through Jesus” - **Jn 1:14b,16-17**
2. “The word grace means favors, gifts, acts of beneficence.” (Barnes)
  - a. “He was kind, merciful, gracious, doing good to all, and seeking man’s welfare by great sacrifices and love;”
  - b. “so much so, that it might be said to be characteristic of him, or he abounded in favors to mankind.” (Barnes)

### **C. THE GLORY OF HIS TRUTH...**

1. “full...of truth...truth came through Jesus Christ.” - **Jn 1:14b,17**
2. “He was also full of truth. He declared the truth. In him was no falsehood.” (Barnes)
  - a. “He was not like the false prophets and false Messiahs, who were wholly impostors”
  - b. “Nor was he like the emblems and shadows of the old dispensation, which were only types of the true; but he was truth itself.”
3. “He represented things as they are, and thus became the truth as well as the way and the life.” - cf. **Jn 14:6** (Barnes)

### **D. THE GLORY OF HIS PREEMINENCE...**

1. “He who comes after me is preferred before me...” - **Jn 1:15**
2. As witnessed to by John the Baptist - cf. **Jn 1:27,29-30**
3. John the Baptist recognized His superiority, as did the apostle Paul
  - a. By virtue of His preexistence (“He was before me”) - cf. also **Jn 8:58; 17:5**
  - b. By virtue of His creative powers - cf. **Co 1:16-17**

### **E. THE GLORY OF HIS REVELATION...**

1. “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son...He has declared Him” - **Jn 1:18**
  - a. “This passage is not meant to deny that men had witnessed manifestations of God, as when he appeared to Moses and the prophets (cf. **Num 12:8 Isa 6:1-13**).”
  - b. “...it is meant that no one has seen the essence of God, or has fully known God.”
  - c. “The prophets delivered what they heard God speak; Jesus what he knew of God as his equal, and as understanding fully his nature.” (Barnes)
2. Jesus manifested or declared the Father as no one had done before!
  - a. As Jesus told Philip - **Jn 14:9**
  - b. As Jesus expressed in His prayer - **Jn 17:6,24**
  - c. As the apostles wrote in their epistles - **Co 1:15; He 1:1-4**
3. “This verse proves that, Jesus had a knowledge of God above that which any of the ancient prophets had, and that the fullest revelations of his character are to be expected in the gospel.” (Barnes)
  - a. “By his Word and Spirit he can enlighten and guide us, and lead us to the true knowledge of God;”
  - b. “There is no true and full knowledge of God which is not obtained through his Son.”

[What a wonderful experience it must have been to behold the glory of God’s only begotten Son! It undoubtedly transformed the life of John and others who saw Him. By the grace of God, it also possible that...]

## **II. WE CAN BEHOLD HIS GLORY**

### **A. IN THIS LIFE...**

1. We can behold His glory...
  - a. The glory of His deity, grace and truth!
  - b. The glory of His preeminence and revelation!

2. How? Through the words of His eyewitnesses!
  - a. Who made known the power and coming of our Lord - cf. **2 Pe 1:16-18**
  - b. Who declared what they heard, saw, even handled, that we might share with them in their fellowship with the Father and Son - cf. **1 Jn 1:1-4; 5:11-13**  
-- Through their gospels, their letters, their inspired writings, we can behold His glory!
3. Indeed, we must behold His glory to be transformed!
  - a. Our transformation is fundamental to true discipleship - cf. **Ro 8:29; 12:1-2**
  - b. Our transformation is gradual, occurring as we behold His glory - cf. **2 Co 3:18**
  - c. Our transformation involves renewing the mind, a mind set on things above where Christ is - cf. **Ro 12:1-2; Co 3:1-2**

#### **B. WHEN HE COMES AGAIN...**

1. We will behold His glory...
  - a. When He appears - **Co 3:4**
  - b. When He comes again, to be glorified in His saints - **2 Th 1:10**
2. Indeed, every one will behold His glory...
  - a. For every eye will see Him - cf. **Re 1:7**
  - b. For every knee will bow, and every tongue confess Him - cf. **Ph 2:9-11**

#### **CONCLUSION**

1. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory...” - **Jn 1:14**
2. We may not have seen Jesus in the flesh, but we can still behold His glory...
  - a. Even now, through the testimony of His apostles and the Word of God
  - b. Even then, when Jesus comes again to be revealed in His glory
3. What will we do with the glory of Jesus as declared by His apostles...?
  - a. We should let it transform our lives as we behold the glory of the Lord - **2 Co 3:18**
  - b. Then when Christ comes, we will be glorified together with Him! - **2 Th 1:10**

Here is Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians...

*“Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Th 1:11-12)*

May his prayer be fulfilled in our lives, along with this prayer from Jude...

*“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.” (Jude 24-25)*

# The Testimony Of John The Baptist

## John 1:19-34

### INTRODUCTION

1. In the prologue to John's gospel, we were introduced to John the Baptist...
  - a. A man sent from God - **Jn 1:6**
  - b. Who came to bear witness of the Light - **Jn 1:7-8**
  - c. Who bore witness to the preeminence and preexistence of the Light - **Jn 1:15**
2. As John begins the narrative portion of his gospel, he starts with John the Baptist...
  - a. His testimony to priests and Levites from the Pharisees in Jerusalem - **Jn 1:19-28**
  - b. His testimony the next day when he saw Jesus - **Jn 1:29-34**

[What did John the Baptist testify concerning Jesus? What lessons might we glean from his testimony? We note first of all that John the Baptist proclaimed...]

### I. I AM NOT THE CHRIST

#### **A. HIS TESTIMONY ABOUT HIMSELF...**

1. He confessed he was not the Christ - **Jn 1:19-20**
  - a. Many people wondered if he were the Christ - cf. **Lk 3:15**
  - b. John clearly asserts that he was not the Christ
2. He was not literally Elijah as foretold by Malachi - **Jn 1:21a**
  - a. Some thought Elijah would return in person, which John denies - cf. **Mal 4:5**
  - b. John did fulfill the prophecy, which was figurative
    - 1) As foretold by the angel Gabriel - cf. **Lk 1:17**
    - 2) As testified by Jesus - cf. **Mt 11:11-15; Mt 17:10-13**
3. He was not the Prophet foretold by Moses - **Jn 1:21b**
  - a. Moses foretold a Prophet like him would come - cf. **Deu 18:15-18**
  - b. Many people were anticipating the arrival of this Prophet - cf. **Jn 6:14; 7:40**
  - c. This Prophet was indeed Jesus, not John - cf. **Ac 3:22-26**
4. He was the one foretold by Isaiah - **Jn 1:22-23**
  - a. The voice of one crying in the wilderness - cf. **Isa 40:1-3**
  - b. Sent to prepare the way of the Lord - cf. **Lk 1:16-17; 2:76-79**

#### **B. LESSONS FROM HIS TESTIMONY...**

1. John's example is a powerful one for all Christians, especially ministers
2. As followers of Christ, our task is similar to his role as forerunner
  - a. To deflect attention away from ourselves, and point people to Christ!
  - b. Let us never forget, no matter how honored we may be, we are not the Christ!

[As John continues with his testimony, he proclaims concerning Jesus...]

## **II. HE IS PREFERRED BEFORE ME**

### **A. HIS TESTIMONY ABOUT CHRIST...**

1. Given in response to those from the Pharisees - **Jn 1:24-25,28**
  - a. Why did he baptize, if not Christ, Elijah, or the Prophet?
  - b. For he had been baptizing in Bethabara (or Bethany) beyond the Jordan
2. The One coming after him is preferred before him - **Jn 1:26-27**
  - a. Even One who was in their midst as he spoke!
  - b. Whose sandal strap not even John was not worthy to loose!
3. The reason Jesus was preferred before him?
  - a. “For He was before me” (i.e., because of His preexistence) - cf. **Jn 1:15,30**
  - b. “Who is mightier than I” (i.e., because of His power) - cf. **Mk 1:7**
4. John would later reaffirm Jesus' preference over himself
  - a. “He must increase, but I must decrease” - **Jn 3:30**
  - b. He is “above all” - **Jn 3:31**

### **B. LESSONS FROM HIS TESTIMONY...**

1. We should not hesitate to exalt Jesus over self - cf. **Lk 9:23-24**
  - a. He is preferred before us
  - b. While we may be the body of Christ, He is the head! - cf. **Ep 1:22-23**
2. Jesus deserves our humble service and adoration
  - a. Because of His power - cf. **Co 1:16**
  - b. Because of His preexistence - cf. **Co 1:17**
  - c. Because of His headship over the body, the church - cf. **Co 1:18**

[On the next day, John the Baptist had another opportunity to testify concerning Jesus, in which he declared...]

## **III. BEHOLD! THE LAMB OF GOD**

### **A. HIS TESTIMONY ABOUT CHRIST...**

1. Declaring Jesus as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” - **Jn 1:29**
  - a. As foretold by Isaiah - cf. **Isa 53:4-7,10-12**
  - b. As later proclaimed by the apostles - cf. **1 Co 15:3; 1 Pe 2:24; 1 Jn 2:2**
2. Identifying Jesus as the “Man who is preferred before me” - **Jn 1:30**
  - a. Because He was before John (i.e., His preexistence)
  - b. Even more so now as the Savior of the world!

### **B. LESSONS FROM HIS TESTIMONY...**

1. We should never forget the basis of our salvation!
  - a. We are not saved on the basis of our good deeds - cf. **Ti 3:5**
  - b. We are saved by the blood of the Lamb! - cf. **Re 1:5; 5:9; Ro 5:1**
2. We should ever point the world to Jesus!
  - a. He is their only hope for forgiveness of sins! - cf. **1 Ti 2:5-6**
  - b. We should proclaim Jesus Christ and Him crucified! - cf. **1 Co 2:2**

[If Jesus is truly “preferred before” us, we will never hesitate to offer Him as the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Finally, we note John’s testimony concerning Jesus that...]

#### **IV. THIS IS THE SON OF GOD**

##### **A. HIS TESTIMONY ABOUT CHRIST...**

1. **“I did not know Him” - Jn 1:31,33**
  - a. Though related, Jesus lived in Nazareth, John in the Judean desert
  - b. Even if there had been a casual acquaintance, John did not know Jesus as the Messiah
  - c. Yet John came baptizing with water
    - 1) That the Christ might be revealed to Israel
    - 2) For upon whom the Spirit would descend, would be the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit - cf. **Mt 3:11**
2. **“I saw the Spirit descending...and He remained upon Him” - Jn 1:32**
  - a. Just as John was told to anticipate - **Jn 1:33**
  - b. Which occurred when Jesus was baptized by John - cf. **Mt 3:16**
3. **“I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.” - Jn 1:34**
  - a. John saw the Spirit descend upon Jesus like a dove - cf. **Mt 3:16**
  - b. John testified to the same truth as spoken from above: “This is My beloved Son” - cf. **Mt 3:17**

##### **B. LESSONS FROM HIS TESTIMONY...**

1. We must be willing to confess Jesus as did John - cf. **Mt 10:32-33**
2. We must confess Him to be the Son of God
  - a. As did Nathanael - cf. **Jn 1:49**
  - b. As did Peter - cf. **Jn 6:68-69**
  - c. As did Martha - cf. **Jn 11:27**
3. We must believe Jesus to be the Son of God in order to be saved
  - a. As John declares in his gospel - **Jn 20:31**
  - b. As the Ethiopian eunuch confessed in order to be baptized - cf. **Ac 8:37**

#### **CONCLUSION**

1. Jesus would later describe the testimony of John...
  - a. He bore witness to the truth - **Jn 5:33**
  - b. He was the burning and shining light - **Jn 5:35**
  - c. In which some were willing to rejoice - **Jn 5:35**
2. Are we willing to rejoice in the testimony of John...?
  - a. Knowing that John was not the Christ?
  - b. Understanding that Jesus is preferred above John and all others?
  - c. Accepting Jesus to be the true Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world?
  - d. Willing to confess along with John that Jesus is the Son of God?

If we are willing to accept the testimony of John the Baptist and obey the Son of God, eternal life can be ours! - cf.. **Jn 3:36; He 5:9; Mk 16:16**



# The First Disciples

## John 1:35-51

### INTRODUCTION

1. The ministry of John the Baptist was to prepare the way to Jesus...
  - a. He came to bear witness of the Light, that all might believe - **Jn 1:6-8**
  - b. John indeed did bear witness of Jesus
    - 1) As the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world - **Jn 1:29**
    - 2) As the Son of God who baptizes with the Holy Spirit - **Jn 1:32-34**
2. Due to the testimony of John the Baptist, Jesus began to attract disciples...
  - a. The first disciples were those who had been disciples of John - **Jn 1:35-36**
  - b. Because of John's testimony, they began to follow Jesus - **Jn 1:37-39**

[In his gospel, John the apostle describes those who were “**The First Disciples**”, beginning with...]

### I. TWO BROTHERS

#### **A. ANDREW...**

1. His background
  - a. From Bethsaida of Galilee - cf. **Jn 1:44**
  - b. Brother of Simon Peter, sons of Jonah - cf. **Jn 1:42**
  - c. A fisherman - cf. **Mt 4:18**
2. His call to discipleship and then apostleship
  - a. He was first a disciple of John the Baptist, who pointed him to Jesus - **Jn 1:35-40**
    - 1) This happened in Bethabara beyond the Jordan - cf. **Jn 1:28**
    - 2) Some think the other disciple was John the apostle
    - 3) He stayed with Jesus that day and then found his brother Simon - **Jn 1:39-41**
  - b. Later, Jesus officially called them to be His disciples - **Mt 4:18-20**
    - 1) This occurred by the Sea of Galilee
    - 2) After John the Baptist was cast into prison - cf. **Mt 4:12**
  - c. Then he was selected to be one of the twelve apostles - **Mt 10:2**
    - 1) Pointed Jesus to the lad with five loaves and two fish - **Jn 6:8-9**
    - 2) Assisted Philip in introducing some Greeks to Jesus - **Jn 12:20-22**
    - 3) Among those who questioned Jesus about the destruction of Jerusalem - **Mk 13:1-4**
    - 4) Listed among those in Jerusalem after the ascension of Christ - **Ac 1:12-13**
3. According to apocryphal (doubtful) literature (cf. ISBE)
  - a. His mother was Joanna, and was of the tribe of Reuben
  - b. Like Thomas, compelled to believe in the resurrection of Jesus by touching His feet
  - c. Various sources attribute missionary work in Bithynia, Scythia, Greece, Ephesus
  - d. Thought to have been crucified in Greece, on a cross in the form of an X

-- **A disciple first of John the Baptist, then of Jesus, reveals his spiritual character as**

## one devoted to serving the will of God

### B. SIMON...

1. His background
    - a. From Bethsaida of Galilee - cf. **Jn 1:44**
    - b. Brother of Andrew, sons of Jonah - cf. **Jn 1:42**
    - c. A fisherman - cf. **Mt 4:18**
  2. His call to discipleship and then apostleship
    - a. Introduced to Jesus by his brother Andrew - **Jn 1:40-42**
      - 1) In Bethabara beyond the Jordan - cf. **Jn 1:28**
      - 2) Jesus named him “Cephas” (Aramaic), “Peter” (Greek), meaning “a rock”
    - b. Later, Jesus officially called him to be His disciple
      - 1) As he was fishing by the Sea of Galilee - **Lk 5:1-9**
      - 2) Along with his partners, James and John - **Lk 5:10-11**
    - c. Then he was selected to be one of the twelve apostles - **Lk 6:13-14**
      - 1) His prominence evident by his name mentioned first in the lists
      - 2) Included among the “inner circle” - cf. **Mt 17:1-2; 26:37**
      - 3) Known for his denial of Christ, and subsequent restoration - cf. **Jn 18:25; 21:15**
      - 4) A key figure in the first half of the book of Acts
  3. According to apocryphal (doubtful) literature (cf. ISBE)
    - a. Supposedly died a martyr at Rome about 67 AD
    - b. Purported to have been crucified by Nero, upside down at his own request
- **The wealth of information about Peter in the Gospels and Acts reveal the power of the gospel to transform a simple, flawed man into a true rock of discipleship**

[With two brothers now as His disciples, Jesus next calls...]

## II. TWO FRIENDS

### A. PHILIP...

1. His background
  - a. From Bethsaida of Galilee - **Jn 1:44; 12:21**
  - b. Greek name suggests Greek connections - cf. also **Jn 12:20-22**
2. His call to discipleship and then apostleship
  - a. Initial call to follow Jesus occurs here in Bethabara beyond the Jordan - **Jn 1:43-44**
  - b. He immediately tells Nathanael about Jesus - **Jn 1:45-46**
    - 1) That he has found Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote
    - 2) Inviting skeptical Nathanael to “Come and see”
  - c. Selected to be one of the twelve apostles - **Lk 6:13-14**
    - 1) Asked by Jesus about bread in feeding the 5,000 - **Jn 6:5-7**
    - 2) Approached by Greeks who wished to see Jesus - **Jn 12:20-22**
    - 3) It was he who asked, “Lord, show us the Father” - **Jn 14:8**
3. According to apocryphal (doubtful) literature (cf. ISBE)
  - a. Supposedly of the tribe of Zebulun
  - b. Some identify him as the one who wanted to first bury his father - cf. **Mt 8:21**
  - c. Spent latter part of his life in Phrygia, crucified there

-- **Philip's invitation for Nathanael to "Come and see" is an illustration of personal evangelism**

**B. NATHANAEL...**

1. His background
    - a. Of Cana in Galilee - **Jn 21:2**
    - b. Probably a fisherman also - cf. **Jn 21:1-3**
  2. His call to discipleship, and (possibly) apostleship
    - a. Approached by Philip, who told him of Jesus - **Jn 1:45**
    - b. Nathanael was at first skeptical, because Jesus was of Nazareth - **Jn 1:46**
      - 1) "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"
      - 2) Cf. "Will the Christ come out of Galilee?" - **Jn 7:41**
      - 3) Cf. "Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee" - **Jn 7:52**
        - People were not expecting anything good coming from Nazareth of Galilee
    - c. Jesus convinces Nathanael - **Jn 1:47-51**
      - 1) Identifying him as an Israel in whom is no deceit
      - 2) Telling how He saw him under the fig tree before Philip called him
        - Perhaps Jesus saw him engaged in private devotion
    - d. Prompting Nathanael to proclaim...
      - 1) "Rabbi, You are the Son of God!" - cf. **Mt 14:33**
      - 2) "You are the King of Israel!" - cf. **Mt 21:5; 27:11**
        - Nathanael is convinced that this teacher (Rabbi) is the Messiah
    - e. Jesus Promises Nathanael greater blessings due to his faith
      - 1) Greater evidences of His Messiahship
      - 2) E.g., heaven opening and angels of God ascending and descending upon Him
        - a) An allusion to Jacob's dream? - **Gen 28:12**
        - b) An implication that Jesus was the way (ladder) to heaven? - cf. **Jn 14:6**
        - c) A reference to the day of Judgment, when Jesus comes with His angels? - cf. **Mt 16:27; 25:31; 26:64; 2 Th 1:7**
          - Note that Jesus refers to Himself as "the Son of Man" (which the gospel writers never do), emphasizing His humility and humanity
    - f. Nathanael may have been Bartholomew, one of the apostles - cf. **Mt 10:3; Lk 6:14**
      - 1) Cf. Bartholomew's connection with Philip in the apostolic lists
      - 2) The synoptists never mention Nathanael, and John never mentions Bartholomew
      - 3) Bartholomew ("son of Ptolemy") is not a proper name; perhaps it was Nathanael
        - Leading many to conclude they are one and the same
  3. According to apocryphal (doubtful) literature
    - a. He was Simon, son of Cleopas (not Bartholomew), and one of the Twelve (ISBE)
    - b. He was the bridegroom at the marriage of Cana, to which he belonged (Faussett's Bible Dictionary)
- **The call of Nathanael reveals more about Jesus than Nathanael himself (see below)**

**CONCLUSION**

1. **"The First Disciples"** offered their testimony concerning Jesus...

- a. "We have found the Messiah" - **Jn 1:41**
  - b. "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote" - **Jn 1:45**
  - c. "You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" - **Jn 1:49**
- **As they continued to follow Jesus, their initial affirmations of faith would be confirmed**
2. From His initial contacts with these new disciples, we learn...
    - a. That Jesus knows the heart of men - cf. **Jn 2:25**
    - b. That if we have faith in Jesus, it will be continually strengthened; the evidence will grow brighter and brighter - cf. **Jn 1:50-51**
    - c. That if we believe his word, we shall yet see full proof that his word is true - cf. **Jn 7:17**

Does anyone wonder if Jesus is truly the Son of God, and that His words are true? Perhaps the best response one can offer to the honest skeptic is the invitation offered by Philip: "***Come and see.***"

Come to Jesus as revealed in the gospels and see who He is...!

# The Water Turned To Wine

## John 2:1-12

### INTRODUCTION

1. John's purpose in his gospel was to produce faith - **Jn 20:30-31**
  - a. Which he sought to accomplish by recording the "signs" done by Jesus
  - b. Not all of them, but enough to produce faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God
2. The "signs" Jesus performed were miracles...
  - a. Expressions of supernatural, divine power
  - b. Designed to attest His unique relationship with God - cf. **Ac 2:22**

[The first sign recorded by John took place shortly after Jesus had acquired His first disciples...]

### I. THE SETTING

#### **A. IN CANA OF GALILEE...**

1. On the third day - **Jn 2:1**
  - a. The third day after Jesus made two more disciples (Hendriksen)
  - b. Taking two days to reach Galilee from Judea (JFB)
2. In the city of Cana - **Jn 2:1**
  - a. Cana was about 4 miles NE of Nazareth, and SW of the Sea of Galilee
  - b. Jesus had wanted to go to Galilee - cf. **Jn 1:43**
  - c. Nathanael was from the city of Cana - cf. **Jn 21:2**

#### **B. AT A WEDDING FEAST...**

1. The mother of Jesus was there - **Jn 2:1**
2. Likewise Jesus and His disciples, who had been invited - **Jn 2:2**
  - a. Jesus and His disciples were not ascetics - cf. **Mt 9:14**
  - b. He came eating and drinking - cf. **Mt 11:19**

#### **C. WHERE THE WINE HAD RUN OUT...**

1. As noted by the mother of Jesus - **Jn 2:3**
  - a. She appears to have some role of responsibility and authority - cf. **Jn 2:5**
  - b. The invitation to Jesus and His disciples may have been a last minute thing
  - c. Running out of wine would have been an embarrassment to Mary, if she were in charge
  - d. She tells Jesus; perhaps hinting a request? (RWP)
2. Jesus responds to His mother - **Jn 2:4**
  - a. **"Woman"**
    - 1) Not a term of disrespect in those days - cf. **Jn 19:26; 20:15**
    - 2) Though a subtle hint may be implied by its use instead of "Mother" that their relationship of mother and son was changing
  - b. **"What does your concern have to do with Me?"**

- 1) Perhaps a mild rebuke for her anxiety
- 2) Perhaps too much like Martha? - cf. **Lk 10:41**
- c. **“My hour has not yet come.”**
  - 1) This suggests that Mary’s request was more than just a desire for a gift of wine
  - 2) Perhaps she wanted a supreme manifestation of Him as the Messiah
  - 3) That event would come later, with His death and resurrection - cf. **Jn 2:18-19; 12:23,27; 17:1**
  - 4) His mother sought for a supreme sign, but at that time only a secondary sign could be fittingly given
  - 5) I.e., the triumph at Pentecost was not to be achieved at Cana (McGarvey)

[Despite the subtle rebuke, Mary evidently sense a willingness on Jesus’ part to do something. So she instructed the servants to do whatever He says (cf. **Jn 2:5**). This leads us to...]

## II. THE MIRACLE

### A. THE WATER TURNED TO WINE...

1. Beginning with six empty water pots - **Jn 2:6**
  - a. Normally used for the Jewish rituals of purification - cf. **Mk 7:3-4**
  - b. Capable of holding twenty or thirty gallons (two or three firkins, KJV) each
2. Filled with water - **Jn 2:7**
  - a. As instructed by Jesus
  - b. Filled to the brim
3. A sample drawn and taken to the master of the feast - **Jn 2:8**
  - a. As instructed by Jesus
  - b. Carried out by the servants
  - c. Apparently what was drawn was still water; it became wine before reaching the guests - cf. **Jn 2:9**

### B. THE IMPACT ON THOSE PRESENT...

1. Upon the master of the feast - **Jn 2:9-10**
  - a. He tasted the water that was made wine
  - b. Not knowing where it came from, he called the bridegroom
  - c. Telling him that he kept the good wine for last, contrary to normal custom
2. Upon the disciples of Jesus - **Jn 2:11**
  - a. It was the beginning of signs Jesus did in Galilee - cf. **Jn 4:54**
  - b. In which Jesus manifested His glory - cf. **Jn 1:14**
  - c. Their faith in Jesus was even more strengthened

### C. THE IMPACT ON US TODAY...

1. It should not be to justify the custom of social drinking
  - a. The word “oinos” can refer to fermented wine, but not necessarily
  - b. Alcoholic drinks today are much stronger than those in Bible times
  - c. The Bible is filled with the dangers of drinking - cf. **Pro 20:1; 23:29-35**
  - d. We do well to consider the influence of our example - cf. **Ro 14:21; 1 Co 10:31-33**
2. This miracle of turning water to wine reveals Jesus as:

- a. One who honors the bond of marriage by His presence at the wedding
  - b. One who bestows His gifts lavishly; if in the physical realm, how much more in the spiritual?
  - c. One whose infinite love is made effective by His equally infinite power
  - d. One who, accordingly, is the Son of God, full of grace and glory
- William Hendricksen, New Testament Commentary

## CONCLUSION

1. After this miracle in Cana, Jesus went down to Capernaum - **Jn 2:12**
  - a. Capernaum, a city on the northwestern shore of Galilee, visited frequently by Jesus
  - b. Together with His mother, His brothers (cf. **Mt 13:55**), and His disciples
  - c. Though they did not stay many days - cf. **Jn 2:13**
  
2. The disciples of Jesus must have been excited...
  - a. They had heard the testimony of John the Baptist concerning Jesus
  - b. They had borne their own initial testimony as to Jesus
  - c. Now they had seen this “sign” that Jesus was truly what they believed Him to be!

More signs to come would increase their faith in Jesus. They can have a similar affect in us as we continue to read and study the gospel according to John...

# The Cleansing Of The Temple

## John 2:13-25

### INTRODUCTION

1. It is common to think of Jesus as a gentle, peace-loving man...
  - a. He certainly presented Himself as such on most occasions - e.g., **Mt 11:28-30**
  - b. People felt comfortable in bringing their children to Him - e.g., **Mt 19:13-14**
2. Yet on occasion Jesus displayed strong righteous indignation...
  - a. Such as when He visited Jerusalem during the Passover at the beginning of His ministry
  - b. As He drove the moneychangers and merchandisers out of the temple - **Jn 2:13-15**

[What prompted this outburst of anger? What gave Jesus the authority to do this? What lessons might we glean from this event? As we seek to find the answers let's first note...]

### I. THE REBUKE OF THE LORD

#### **A. MERCHANDISING HIS FATHER'S HOUSE...**

1. The Lord's rebuke reveals the reason for His outburst - cf. **Jn 2:16**
  2. The sellers of oxen and sheep, along with the moneychangers, had turned the temple into a house of merchandise
  3. It was to be a house of prayer, they had turned it into a den of thieves - cf. **Mt 21:13**
- **The Lord was angered by the manner in which some used religion to make money**

#### **B. MIGHT WE BE GUILTY OF A SIMILAR OFFENSE...?**

1. What if we attend church simply as a form of "networking", to make business contacts?
  2. What if we take advantage of our relationship as brethren to further a multilevel marketing business, a home-based business, or any other financial enterprise?
- **The Lord's temple today is the church, we must be careful lest we defile it as well (cf. 1 Co 3:16-17)**

[The Lord has ordained that those who preach the gospel be supported (**1 Co 9:14**). But He is angered by those who view the Lord's temple (people) as a way to get rich. Next, we note that His anger was prompted by...]

### II. THE ZEAL OF THE LORD

#### **A. ZEAL FOR HIS FATHER'S HOUSE...**

1. The disciples were reminded of an Old Testament prophecy - **Jn 2:17**; cf. **Psa 69:9**
  2. Jesus had zeal (fervor) for God's house, for its intended purpose (a house of prayer)
- **His great zeal for His Father's house moved Him to action**

#### **B. HOW IS OUR ZEAL FOR THE LORD'S HOUSE...?**



1. Remember, today the Father's house is the church - cf. **1 Ti 3:15**
  2. Do we have great zeal for the church?
    - a. That it fulfill it's intended purpose (to make known God's will)? - cf. **Ep 3:10-11**
    - b. That we are troubled when we see people try to turn it into something else, such as social club, or a purveyor of entertainment?
- **If we have zeal for the Lord's house, we will not rest silent when others pervert its purpose**

[Of course, the action we take may not be the same as what Jesus did. Indeed, He took up "a whip of cords." What right did He have to use such a display of force? That's what the Jews wanted to know...]

### **III. THE AUTHORITY OF THE LORD**

#### **A. THE SIGN THAT PROVES HIS AUTHORITY...**

1. They wanted to know what sign (miracle) He could offer to prove His right to cleanse the temple - **Jn 2:18**
  2. Jesus offered His ability to rise from the dead as the ultimate proof - **Jn 2:19-22**
    - a. Later, He would restate His claim to have this ability - **Jn 10:17-18**
    - b. His resurrection proved that He was the Son of God - cf. **Ro 1:4**
- **He has been given the authority to exercise such judgment as cleansing the temple - cf. Jn 5:22,26-27**

#### **B. WE DO NOT HAVE THE SAME AUTHORITY...**

1. We are to judge with righteous judgment - **Jn 7:24**
    - a. At times we must distinguish between "hogs" and "dogs" - **Mt 7:6**
    - b. We can distinguish between good and bad fruit - **Mt 7:15-20**
  2. But our authority to judge is limited - **Mt 7:1-5**
    - a. There are things we cannot judge in this life - **1 Co 4:3-5**
    - b. There are people we are not to judge - **1 Co 5:11-13**
    - c. Vengeance in particular belongs to the Lord - cf. **Ro 12:17-19**
- **While Jesus is our example (cf. 1 Pe 2:21), there are some "steps" that He took that we cannot take**

[The reason we cannot emulate the Lord in every case becomes evident as we consider...]

### **IV. THE POWER OF THE LORD**

#### **A. THE POWER THAT JUSTIFIES HIS ACTION...**

1. John mentions how many came to believe in Him because of His signs - **Jn 2:23**
  2. John also makes note of His unwillingness to commit Himself to others at this time
    - a. He had no need to, because he knew all - **Jn 2:24**
    - b. He had no need to, because he knew what was in man - **Jn 2:25**
- **Jesus is revealed as one who can discern the hearts of men - cf. Mt 9:4; Re 2:23**

#### **B. WE DO NOT HAVE THE SAME POWER...**

1. We cannot discern the hearts of men like the Lord can; note these comments:
  - a. “Our Lord knew all men, their nature, dispositions, affections, designs, so as we do not know any man, not even ourselves.”
  - b. “He knows his crafty enemies, and all their secret projects; his false friends, and their true characters.”
  - c. “He knows who are truly his, knows their uprightness, and knows their weaknesses.”
  - d. “We know what is done by men; Christ knows what is in them, he tries the heart.”  
-- Matthew Henry Commentary
2. Since we cannot read the hearts of men, we must be careful
  - a. We are unable to always know the motives of others
  - b. We must approach those in opposition with humility - cf. **2 Ti 2:24-26**
  - c. We must approach brethren overtaken in a fault with gentleness - cf. **Ga 6:1**

## CONCLUSION

1. In contending for the faith (which is a solemn duty, **Ju 3**)...
  - a. Some often use the example of Jesus cleansing the temple to justify their behavior
  - b. As they lash out in anger (righteous indignation?) towards those teaching error
2. Is it right to appeal to Jesus’ example in this case...?
  - a. Can we appeal to every example of Jesus?
  - b. If so, are we justified to use a whip of cords as well?
3. The immediate context offers reasons to answer carefully...
  - a. Jesus possessed **unlimited authority to judge man**, proven by His resurrection from the dead
  - b. Jesus possessed **divine power to read the hearts of men**, we sometimes cannot even discern our own hearts
4. There are times for righteous indignation...
  - a. But some things must be left to the Lord, the righteous Judge
  - b. We must avoid what might actually be “self-righteous” indignation!

While we may not always be able to emulate **the Lord’s prerogative to judge**, we should certainly strive to copy **His zeal for His Father’s house**. Is our zeal for His church what it ought to be...?

# The New Birth

## John 3:1-21

### INTRODUCTION

1. A commonly used phrase is “born again Christian”...
  - a. Often in the context of distinguishing between Christians who are “born again” and those not
  - b. Which is a really an incorrect distinction, for all true Christians have been “born again”  
-- But what does it mean to be “born again”?
2. The Bible uses the expression “born again” only a few times...
  - a. Jesus in His conversation with Nicodemus - **Jn 3:3,5,7**
  - b. Peter in his first epistle - **1 Pe 1:3,23**  
-- Although the idea of being “born” of God is used many times - e.g., **Jn 1:13; 1 Jn 5:1**

[In His discussion with Nicodemus, Jesus reveals much about being “born again.” With His comments as the basis of our study, let’s examine what the Bible reveals about “**The New Birth.**” After we are introduced to Nicodemus (cf. also **Jn 7:50; 19:39**), we observe Jesus emphasizing...]

### I. THE NECESSITY OF THE NEW BIRTH (1-3)

#### **A. NECESSARY TO SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD...**

1. Unless one is born again, he cannot see (enter) the kingdom - cf. **Jn 1:3,5,7**
2. What is the kingdom of God? In brief...
  - a. The rule and reign of God in the person of Christ - cf. **Mt 28:18; Ac 2:36; Re 1:4**
  - b. A spiritual kingdom not of this world - cf. **Jn 18:36; Lk 17:20-21**
  - c. A kingdom made up of faithful subjects (i.e., the church) - cf. **Co 1:13; Re 1:6,9**
  - d. A kingdom both present and future - cf. **Mt 13:41-43; 1 Co 15:24-26**  
**-- Do you wish to be in the kingdom now and hereafter? You must be born again!**

#### **B. NECESSARY TO BE SAVED...**

1. To be in the kingdom is to be saved from the powers of darkness - cf. **Co 1:13**
2. Salvation requires a rebirth, a regeneration - cf. **Ti 3:5**  
**-- Do you wish to be saved from your sins? You must be born again!**

[Nicodemus is confused, assuming that Jesus has in mind a physical birth. So Jesus explains...]

### II. THE NATURE OF THE NEW BIRTH (4-5)

#### **A. INVOLVES BOTH WATER AND THE SPIRIT...**

1. Note carefully: one birth involving two elements - water and the Spirit
  - a. Not two births (born of water and born of the Spirit)
  - b. But one birth (born of water and the Spirit)
2. Compare Paul’s description - cf. **Ti 3:5**

- a. A washing of regeneration (water)
- b. And renewing of the Holy Spirit (Spirit)
- 3. An obvious reference to baptism
  - a. “There can be no doubt, on any honest interpretation of the words, that gennethenai ek hudatos (born of water) refers to the token or outward sign of baptism, gennethenai ek pneumatatos (born of Spirit) to the thing signified, or inward grace of the Holy Spirit. All attempts to get rid of these two plain facts have sprung from doctrinal prejudices, by which the views of expositors have been warped.” - Alford (Greek Testament)
  - b. “By water, here, is evidently signified baptism.” - Albert Barnes
  - c. “Baptism by water, into the Christian faith, was necessary to every Jew and Gentile that entered into the kingdom of the Messiah.” - Adam Clarke
  - d. “There is not any one Christian writer of any antiquity in any language but what understands it of baptism....I believe Calvin was the first that ever denied this place to mean baptism. He gives it another interpretation, which he confesses to be new.”  
- William Wall (History of Infant Baptism)
- **The new birth occurs when one is baptized, for in that simple act of faith they are born not only of the water out of which they arise, but also born of the Spirit (regenerated) by the working of God at that moment - cf. Co 2:12-13**

#### **B. INVOLVES THE WORD OF GOD...**

- 1. One is born again by the Word - **1 Pe 1:23**
  - a. The incorruptible Word that is preached - cf. **1 Pe 1:25**
  - b. The instrument through which the Spirit convicts the sinner - cf. **Jn 16:7; Ep 6:17**
  - c. Which includes the command to be baptized - cf. **Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; 22:16**
- 2. Jesus sanctifies and cleanses His church by the washing of water by the word - **Ep 5:26**
  - a. The “washing of water” is another allusion to baptism - Jameison, Fausset, Brown
  - b. Yet baptism must be administered in conjunction with the Word of God to be of benefit
- **The new birth involves several elements (water, Spirit, Word of God), all coming together when one responds to the gospel in baptism - e.g., Ac 2:37-39**

[While there is evidence that one is born of water as they rise from the watery grave of baptism, the evidence of their being born of the Spirit comes later...]

### **III. THE EVIDENCE OF THE NEW BIRTH (6-8)**

#### **A. SEEN BY THE EFFECT OF THE SPIRIT...**

- 1. We should expect that what the Spirit produces is spirit (i.e., spiritual) - **Jn 3:6**
- 2. Like the wind (the same Greek word as Spirit), we do not see the Spirit itself but the effect that it produces
- **Has one been truly born of the Spirit (i.e., born again)? With time there should be clear evidence that a change has occurred - e.g., 1 Jn 3:14**

#### **B. SEEN BY THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT...**

- 1. Paul describes the fruit (evidence) of the Spirit - **Ga 5:22-23**
- 2. Which comes not only being born of the Spirit, but walking in the Spirit - **Ga 5:16,25**
- **Where the fruit does not appear, either there was never any rebirth or one is**

**walking after the flesh, not the Spirit! - cf. Ga 5:17**

[As the **discussion** continues (**Jn 3:9-13**), it soon turns into a **discourse** (**Jn 3:14-21**), the latter in which Jesus describes...]

#### **IV. THE BASIS FOR THE NEW BIRTH (14-18)**

##### **A. THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST...**

1. Jesus compares His eventual crucifixion to Moses' lifting up of the serpent - **Jn 3:14; Num 21:4-9**
2. So people would be saved from perishing by believing in Jesus - **Jn 3:15**  
-- **Without redemption from sin, regeneration would be meaningless; the new birth provides both! - cf. Ac 22:16; Ti 3:5**

##### **B. THE LOVE OF GOD...**

1. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that those who believe might have everlasting life (i.e., enter the kingdom of God) - **Jn 3:16**
2. God does not want anyone to perish or be condemned, but to be saved - **Jn 3:16b-17**  
-- **God's love for man is what makes Christ's sacrifice and the new birth possible! - cf. 1 Jn 4:9-10**

##### **C. THE FAITH OF MAN...**

1. Those who believe in Jesus will not perish, but have everlasting life - **Jn 3:15-16**
2. They will not be condemned, unlike those who do not believe - **Jn 3:18**  
-- **The new birth requires faith in Jesus; without faith, being born of water is meaningless, and born of the Spirit impossible - cf. Mk 16:16; Jn 8:24; Ac 8:36-37**

[Christ's sacrifice and God's love, in cooperation with man's faith, makes the new birth possible. Yet many remain condemned for lack of faith in Jesus. Why? Jesus offers one reason for...]

#### **V. THE REJECTION OF THE NEW BIRTH (19-21)**

##### **A. MANY LOVE DARKNESS MORE THAN LIGHT...**

1. Light (Jesus) has come into the world - **Jn 3:19a; 1:5,9; 8:12**
2. There are those who love the darkness instead, because of their evil deeds - **Jn 3:19b**  
-- **Their love for things of the world cause them to reject the light of Jesus - e.g. Lk 16:14**

##### **B. MANY DO NOT WANT TO BE EXPOSED BY THE LIGHT...**

1. They know that coming to Jesus will expose their evil deeds - **Jn 3:20; cf. Ep 5:13**
2. But those willing to obey (does the truth), do not fear the light - **Jn 3:21**  
-- **Unwilling to give up their evil deeds, they are unwilling to submit to the new birth which acknowledges one's sinfulness and requires repentance - e.g., Ac 2:36-38**

#### **CONCLUSION**

1. In His conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus reveals much about being born again...
  - a. The **necessity** of the new birth (one cannot be a Christian unless “born again”)
  - b. The **nature** of the new birth (a birth involving both water and the Spirit, i.e., baptism)
  - c. The **evidence** of the new birth (observable by its effects, i.e., the fruit of the Spirit)
  - d. The **basis** of the new birth (Christ’s sacrifice, God’s love, man’s faith)
  - e. The **rejection** of the new birth (why many refuse to submit to it)
  
2. What about you? Have you been born again...?
  - a. Born of water and the Spirit (i.e., a washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit)?
  - b. Born through the Word of God (i.e., by responding to the gospel message)?
  - c. Responding to God’s love and Christ’s sacrifice by expressing your faith in baptism?

Remember the words of Jesus...

***“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” (Mk 16:16)***

***“Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’” (Jn 3:7)***

# Seven Principles Of Personal Evangelism

## John 4:1-26

### INTRODUCTION

1. Most Christians want to share the gospel of Christ with others...
  - a. Yet many often feel awkward in their attempts to talk with others
  - b. Or they simply don't know how to establish contacts for a Bible study
  - Causing many to experience frustration that discourages them from trying again
2. Perhaps we learn some things from Jesus, the master teacher...
  - a. Who often engaged in personal evangelism as well as public preaching
  - b. For example, His conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well - **Jn 4:1-26**

[Observing Jesus in action, it is possible to glean “**Seven Principles Of Personal Evangelism**” that we would do well to remember in our own efforts to teach others. One such principle is to...]

### I. CONTACT PEOPLE SOCIALLY

#### **A. WE MUST HAVE SOCIAL CONTACT...**

1. The import of Jesus passing through Samaria - **Jn 4:1-6**
  - a. Many Jews, because of their disdain for Samaritans, avoided Samaria
  - b. Jesus and His disciples chose to pass through Samaria, assuring contact
  - c. A similar example of Jesus making social contact - cf. **Lk 5:29-32**
2. When people aren't coming to Christ, it's because we are not going to the people!
  - a. We can't be fishers of men by fishing in a barrel; if the fish won't come to the barrel, then we must go where the fish are!
  - b. The problem with sowing the seed is not that there is not good ground to be found, but that the seed is still in the barn! - cf. **Hag 2:19**

#### **B. DO NOT CONFUSE SEPARATION WITH ISOLATION...**

1. Yes, we must be separate - **2 Co 6:14-18**
2. But this does not mean we are to isolate ourselves
  - a. Note the prayer of Christ - **Jn 17:15**
  - b. Note the command of Paul - **1 Co 5:9-11**
3. Withdrawing ourselves from those who have not heard or obeyed the gospel in contrary to the will of the Lord!

#### **C. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL CONTACT...**

1. At **school** with fellow students
  - a. Don't think you are too young to be involved in leading others to Christ
  - b. Young Christians often possess the greatest opportunities to teach others
  - c. How you serve now will likely be an indication of how you will serve later in life
2. At **work** with fellow employees or employers

- a. We spend much of our life with these people
- b. We have the greatest potential to influence them, especially by example
3. At **home** with neighbors, friends, and family
  - a. Do we even know our neighbors?
  - b. Those closest to us can be difficult sometimes, but are reachable - e.g., **Mt 13:54-58; Jn 7:5; Ac 1:14**

[Remember, Jesus said “*Go into all the world...*” (**Mk 16:15**). We must go where the people are! Another principle we can glean from Jesus’ conversation with the woman is...]

## **II. ESTABLISH A COMMON INTEREST**

### **A. COMMON INTERESTS CREATE A BRIDGE...**

1. Note Jesus’ first words to the woman - **Jn 4:7-8**
  - a. She had come to draw water
  - b. He was thirsty
  - c. His first words centered around their common interest (water)
2. Realize the need to build rapport
  - a. Meaningful dialogue is not easy, especially involving spiritual matters
  - b. A common interest allows opportunity for meaningful dialogue
  - c. Once a bridge for communication has been established, it will be easier to discuss God’s word with another person

### **B. COMMON INTERESTS ARE MANY...**

1. They include **family** (such as children, grandchildren)
2. They include **activities** (such as work, community projects, hobbies)
3. They include **shared experiences** (such as travel, or even tragedies)

[Don’t feel that you must immediately begin talking about spiritual matters. Take time to nurture common interests. Yet at some point we want to reach the next stage, which leads to our third principle...]

## **III. AROUSE SPIRITUAL INTEREST**

### **A. THROUGH YOUR ACTIONS...**

1. The example of Jesus - **Jn 4:9**
  - a. As a man He speaks to her, a woman
  - b. As a rabbi He speaks to her, an immoral woman
  - c. As a Jew He speaks to her, a Samaritan
  - He aroused interest by simply speaking to her
2. Regarding our actions
  - a. We can arouse spiritual interest by our example
  - b. By showing kindness and compassion to all, even the evil and wicked
  - c. By not harboring racial or social prejudices to those who are different
  - d. By our own example of faith and hope - e.g., **1 Pe 3:1-2,15**



## **B. THROUGH YOUR WORDS...**

1. The example of Jesus - **Jn 4:10-14**
  - a. Jesus' statement shifted their conversation to spiritual matters
  - b. He led them into a discussion on a common spiritual interest (living water!)
2. Regarding our words
  - a. We can raise questions or make statements that shift conversations to spiritual matters
    - 1) E.g., "What do you think our world is in such a mess?"
    - 2) E.g., "Would you be interested in what the Bible says about...?"
  - b. The discussion should first involve matters of common agreement
    - 1) Start with things upon which you agree, to build rapport and instill confidence
    - 2) This was the practice of apostolic preaching - e.g., **Ac 13:16-22**

[Once spiritual interest has been aroused, another principle can be gleaned from Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman...]

## **IV. DON'T GO TOO FAR, TOO FAST**

### **A. GIVE A PERSON WHAT THEY ARE READY FOR...**

1. Note Jesus' discussion with the woman - **Jn 4:15-16**
  - a. She wanted the "living water", but did she really understand?
  - b. Jesus saw the need to slow her down and provide the proper ground work
    - 1) She needed faith in Him as the Messiah
    - 2) He needed to provide evidence that He was the Messiah
  - c. So instead of giving her the "living water"..
    - 1) He tells her to get her husband
    - 2) Which will result in her conviction of Him as a prophet
2. Sometimes people don't realize what they need first
  - a. They'll want to talk about a particular subject
  - b. But they really need something else first

### **B. SOME EXAMPLES...**

1. Some want to study Revelation, when they need to be grounded on the rest of the Bible first
2. Some want to discuss issues related to church organization, work, worship, etc., when they ought to focus on the "first principles" of the gospel
3. It is important that a person not choke on the "meat" of the Word - cf. **1 Co 3:1-2**

[There is another principle of evangelism that takes into consideration the need of the prospect...]

## **V. DON'T CONDEMN UNNECESSARILY**

### **A. THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS...**

1. He could have dwelt on her being an adulteress - **Jn 4:17-18**
2. As stated elsewhere, He came to save the world, not to condemn it - cf. **Jn 3:17**
3. Not to say He will not one day judge the world, but that the primary purpose of His first coming was to offer salvation - cf. **Jn 12:46-48**

## **B. IN OUR EVANGELISTIC EFFORTS...**

1. Though we preach against sin, our primary purpose is to save, not judge - **1 Co 5:12-13**
2. Our focus should be to inform others of the forgiveness God offers - cf. **2 Co 5:18-20**
  - a. God seeks reconciliation with sinners
  - b. Ours is a ministry of reconciliation

[Another important principle in evangelism to remember is...]

## **VI. STICK WITH THE MAIN ISSUE**

### **A. IN THE CASE OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN...**

1. She turned the subject away from herself to where one should worship - **Jn 4:19-20**
2. Jesus answered her question, while effectively turning the conversation back to the original subject: Who He is and what He offers - **Jn 4:21-25** (cf. **Jn 4:10**)

### **B. REMAIN STEADFAST TO YOUR OBJECTIVES...**

1. If seeking to establish a common ground of agreement, avoid jumping ahead
2. As you move from common to uncommon ground...
  - a. Take one step at a time
  - b. Do not go on until agreement at each step has occurred
3. If your objective is simply to obtain consent for a home Bible study, avoid getting into a detailed discussion at that time - cf. **Pro 15:28**

[One last principle in evangelism gleaned from Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well...]

## **VII. CONFRONT DIRECTLY**

### **A. JESUS' EXAMPLE THEN...**

1. Finally, Jesus confronted the woman with His identity - **Jn 4:26**
2. This came after He had laid the groundwork

### **B. EXAMPLES FOR TODAY...**

1. In trying to set up a home Bible study
  - a. Take advantage of social contacts
  - b. Develop common interests
  - c. Be open to comments that indicate a spiritual interest, while demonstrating your own faith through actions and words
  - d. Avoid fruitless arguments, emphasize instead common beliefs
  - e. Praise their good points and encourage them in the right direction
  - f. Have one primary objective: to encourage them to study the Bible even more
    - a. Ask if they would like to learn more about Jesus, the Bible, His church
    - b. Note the example of Aquila and Priscilla with Apollos - **Ac 18:24-26**
  - g. **Confront them directly with the opportunity to study the Bible**
2. During the course of a home Bible study
  - a. Continue to develop the social contact
  - b. Continue to establish common interests

- c. Take time to accentuate common ground you share in your spiritual interests
- d. Go from common ground to uncommon ground carefully
- e. Stress the gospel message; don't obsess on their individual shortcomings
- f. Have one primary objective: to help them understand their need and gospel plan of salvation - **Mk 16:15-16**; cf. **Co 1:5-6**
- g. **Confront them directly with the invitation to obey the gospel of Christ**; for example, by asking...
  - 1) "Does this make sense?"
  - 2) "Is there anything I have said that you do not understand?"
  - 3) "Have I been teaching you anything other than what the Bible teaches?"
  - 4) "Would you like to obey Christ now and be baptized for the remission of your sins?"

## CONCLUSION

1. The result of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman was the conversion of many people in the city of Sychar - **Jn 4:39-42**
2. This demonstrates the potential of personal evangelism...
  - a. Who knows whether the one person you teach may in turn bring many to Christ?
  - b. That one person may be like a seed from which seeds may come forth

Realizing this potential, we can better appreciate the words of Jesus:

***"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and [then] comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" (Jn 4:35)***

Perhaps by following the example of our Lord, we can be more useful in His service...

# The Gift Of Living Water

## John 4:10-14

### INTRODUCTION

1. When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well, He spoke of “living water”...
  - a. He approached her for a drink on His way to Galilee - **Jn 4:3-8**
  - b. She was amazed that He, a Jew, would speak to her, a Samaritan woman - **Jn 4:9**
  - **Jesus used the opportunity to tell her about “living water” - Jn 4:10-14**
  
2. Questions abound about **“the gift of God”** and **“living water”** in this passage...
  - a. What is “the gift of God”?
    - 1) Many say it refers to Jesus
    - 2) Others believe it refers to the salvation He offers
  - b. What is the “living water” Jesus offers?
    - 1) Many say it is a figure for salvation or eternal life
    - 2) Others apply it to the Holy Spirit, because of **Jn 7:37-39**
  - **Are they two different things, or one and the same?**
  
3. Like others, I believe **“the gift of God”** and **“living water”** are one and the same...
  - a. “Now it is quite clear that our Lord means the same thing, whatever it may be, by the two expressions, ‘the gift of God’ and ‘the living water.’” - Maclaren
  - b. “When Jesus spoke about ‘the gift of God,’ He meant ‘living water.’” - Hendriksen
  - **Though I can appreciate why many believe “the gift of God” is Jesus - cf. Jn 3:16**
  
4. Like others, I tend to think **“living water”** in this passage may refer to the Holy Spirit...
  - a. “By this living water is meant the Spirit...” - Matthew Henry
  - b. “From [**Jn 7:37-39**] it is plain, that our Savior here by the living water he speaks of understood the Holy Spirit.” - Poole

[That “living water” in **Jn 4:10-14** may be an allusion to the gift of the Holy Spirit comes from examining the nature of this “living water” described by Jesus both here and in **Jn 7**. For example...]

### I. THE LIVING WATER MUST BE DRUNK

#### **A. AS EXPRESSED BY JESUS...**

1. “...whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst” - **Jn 4:14**
2. “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink” - **Jn 7:37**

#### **B. DO WE “DRINK” THE HOLY SPIRIT...?**

1. Yes, upon our conversion
  - a. Those who repent and are baptized receive the gift of the Spirit - **Ac 2:38-39**
  - b. Those who are baptized are made to “drink” of the Spirit - **1 Co 12:13**
2. Yes, as we continue to seek to be filled with the Spirit

- a. We are not to be drunk with wine, but filled with the Spirit - **Ep 5:18-19**
- b. The implication may be that filling comes through “drinking”
- c. How do we continue to drink of the Spirit? I would suggest in these ways:
  - 1) Singing and making melody in our heart - **Ep 5:18-19**
  - 2) Feeding upon the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit - **Ep 6:17**
  - 3) Praying for strength through the Spirit - **Ep 3:16**; cf. **Lk 11:13**

[Thus we see a similarity between the “living water” of Jesus and what is said concerning the Spirit and the Christian. The similarity continues...]

## **II. THE LIVING WATER QUENCHES THIRST**

### **A. AS EXPRESSED BY JESUS...**

1. “but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst.” - **Jn 4:14**
2. “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.” - **Jn 7:37**

### **B. DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT “QUENCH THIRST”...?**

1. Yes, as prophesied by Isaiah - cf. **Isa 44:3**
2. Yes, if by quenching our thirst one means meeting our spiritual needs
  - a. Such as our need for the love of God - cf. **Ro 5:5**
  - b. Such as our need for our love for God - cf. **Ro 8:15**; **Ga 4:6**
  - c. Such as our need to mortify the flesh - cf. **Ro 8:12-13**
  - d. Such as our need to abound in hope - cf. **Ro 15:13**
  - e. Such as our need for inner strength - cf. **Ep 3:16**

[In many ways the Spirit quenches our spiritual thirst! As we continue to note the similarity between “living water” and the Spirit in the life of the Christian, we next observe...]

## **III. THE LIVING WATER IS IN YOU**

### **A. AS EXPRESSED BY JESUS...**

1. “the water that I shall give him will become in him...” - **Jn 4:14**
2. “out of his heart...” - **Jn 7:38**

### **B. IS THE HOLY SPIRIT “IN” US...?**

1. Yes, our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit - **1 Co 6:19**
2. Yes, for the Spirit dwells in us if we are Christ’s - **Ro 8:9,11**

[How the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian may be a mystery; that He does, there is no doubt. Note another similarity between “living water” and the Spirit in the life of the Christian...]

## **IV. THE LIVING WATER SPRINGS UP**

### **A. AS EXPRESSED BY JESUS...**

1. “a fountain of water springing up” - **Jn 4:14**
2. “will flow rivers of living water” - **Jn 7:38**

## **B. DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT “SPRING UP”...?**

1. Yes, by moving the Christian to “cry out” Abba, Father - **Ro 8:15; Ga 4:6**
2. Yes, by helping the Christian to “abound” in hope - **Ro 15:13**
3. Yes, by producing “fruit” in the life of the Christian - **Ga 5:22-23**

[The fruit of the Spirit truly refreshes the soul of the Christian as “living water” does the thirsty soul. Finally, note one more similarity between “living water” and the Spirit in the life of the Christian...]

## **V. THE LIVING WATER RESULTS IN ETERNAL LIFE**

### **A. AS EXPRESSED BY JESUS...**

1. “a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” - **Jn 4:14**
2. Note: the “living water” is not everlasting life itself, rather it results in everlasting life

### **B. DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT “RESULT IN ETERNAL LIFE”...?**

1. Yes, for through the Spirit we wait for the hope of righteousness - **Ga 5:5**
2. That hope, of course, is eternal life - **Ti 1:2**
3. By the Spirit whom God poured out on us abundantly through Jesus...
  - a. We are renewed and justified by God’s grace - **Ti 3:5-6**
  - b. Thus made heirs according to the hope of eternal life - **Ti 3:5-7**
4. And sowing to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life - **Ga 6:8**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. While the “living water” in **Jn 4:10-14** may pertain to salvation, I believe it has particular reference to the gift of the Spirit in the life of the Christian...
  - a. Salvation involves both justification and sanctification
  - b. The Holy Spirit certainly plays a role in both - cf. **1 Co 6:11; Ti 3:4-7**
  - c. And the Spirit is given to those who become Christians - **Ac 2:38-39; 5:32; Ga 4:6**-- **It certainly has such reference in Jn 7:37-39**
2. If so, then we might understand Jesus’ words to the Samaritan woman as follows...
  - a. **“If you knew the gift of God”** - If you knew what God is willing to give you (i.e., the Spirit)
  - b. **“...and who it is who says to you...”** - That He is the Messiah, the one who will pour out the Spirit on all flesh - cf. **Jn 1:33; Ac 2:33**
  - c. **“...He would have given you living water...”** - i.e., the Holy Spirit
    - 1) The same promise made to all believers in **Jn 7:37-39**
    - 2) Though not fully given until He was glorified (after His resurrection and ascension)
3. Are we enjoying the benefits of **“The Gift Of Living Water”** that Jesus offers...?
  - a. It begins by responding to Christ in baptism - cf. **Ac 2:38; 1 Co 12:13**
  - b. It continues by being careful not to “quench” the Spirit - cf. **1 Th 5:19; e.g., Ac 7:51**

May our attitude be like that of the Samaritan woman: **“Sir, give me this water...”** - **Jn 4:15**

# Worship In Spirit And Truth

## John 4:20-24

### INTRODUCTION

1. At Jacob's well, Jesus and the Samaritan woman discussed the matter of worship...
  - a. Samaritans and Jews differed as to where one should worship - **Jn 4:20**
    - 1) Samaritans believed they should worship on Mt. Gerazim
    - 2) Jews understood that it should be in Jerusalem
  - b. Jesus said the time was coming for a different kind of worship - **Jn 4:21-24**
    - 1) Where worship would not be defined by its location (though Jews had been right)
    - 2) Where true worshippers would worship the Father in spirit and truth
2. What does it mean to worship the Father in spirit and truth? Many say it means...
  - a. To worship God from the heart ("in spirit")
  - b. To worship God as He directs in His Word ("and truth")
3. Yet note the contrast made by Jesus...
  - a. The Jews had worshipped correctly by going to Jerusalem
  - b. But the time was coming when place would not be important

-- **A contrast is being made between OT worship and NT worship**
4. Somehow Old Testament (OT) worship had not been "in spirit and truth"...
  - a. Yet God required worship from the heart from the Jews - cf. **Deu 6:4-7; Isa 1:10-18**
  - b. And God required worship as directed by His Word - cf. **Deu 5:32-33**

[If "in spirit and truth" does not mean "from the heart and in harmony with God's Word", then what does it mean? Let's first consider...]

### I. WORSHIPPING GOD IN SPIRIT

#### **A. MEANS TO OFFER "SPIRITUAL" WORSHIP...**

1. In contrast to that which is mostly physical
  2. This explanation is in keeping with the context - cf. **Jn 4:24**
    - a. Jesus began by saying "***God is Spirit...***"
    - b. The worship of God is to be "in spirit" (i.e., spiritual)
  3. Note these comments:
    - a. "...men must offer a worship corresponding with the nature and attributes of God."  
- **J. W. McGarvey**
    - b. "Since he is Spirit, he must receive spiritual worship..." - **B.W. Johnson**
    - c. "A pure, a holy, a spiritual worship, therefore, is such as he seeks—the offering of the soul rather than the formal offering of the body—the homage of the heart rather than that of the lips." - **Albert Barnes**
- **A worship was coming that was more in keeping with God's nature!**

**B. AS OPPOSED TO “CARNAL” ORDINANCES...**

1. OT worship consisted of **carnal** (fleshly) ordinances - cf. **He 9:1-10**
  - a. A physical structure (tabernacle)
  - b. Special priesthood, clothing for priests
  - c. Lamp stands, burning incense
  - d. Instruments of music
  - e. Feast days
  - f. Animal and meal sacrifices

-- **All which appealed to the carnal or physical senses of man**
2. NT worship is geared more toward the spiritual side of man:
  - a. God's temple is now spiritual, made up of Christians - **1 Co 3:16; Ep 2:19-22**
  - b. All Christians are priests, offering up spiritual sacrifices - **1 Pe 2:5,9**
  - c. Our prayers are as sweet incense - **Re 5:8**
  - d. Our music is making melody with the **heart**, not the harp - **Ep 5:19**
  - e. The Lord's Supper - **Ac 20:7; 1 Co 10:16-17; 11:17-34**
  - f. Spiritual sacrifices of praise and service - **He 13:15; Ro 12:1-2**

-- **The emphasis is on the spirit of man, not his physical senses!**

[Physical ordinances of the Old Covenant were until “*the time of reformation*” (**He 9:9-10**), which occurred with the coming of the New Covenant. As Jesus proclaimed, the new worship is more in keeping with the nature of God (“*God is Spirit...*”), designed to relate more to the spiritual side of man. Now let's examine...]

**II. WORSHIPPING GOD IN TRUTH****A. MEANS TO OFFER “TRUE (REAL)” WORSHIP...**

1. To worship according to the commands of God?
  - a. Certainly we should do this
  - b. But this is no contrast to what God expected in the OT - cf. **Deu 5:32-33**
  - c. Jesus admitted that the Jews were right in their worship - **Jn 4:22**
2. What then is the contrast between worship that **was** and that which “*now is*”?
  - a. Not between true and false worship
  - b. But between that which is **true (real)** and that which had been **a shadow**

-- **A worship was coming that was more in keeping with truth and reality**

**B. AS OPPOSED TO “SHADOW (SYMBOL)” WORSHIP...**

1. Many elements of worship in the OT were simply a **shadow** or **figure** of that to come
  - a. The Tabernacle was a **symbol** - **He 9:8-9**
  - b. The Law with its worship was only a **shadow** of that to come - **He 10:1**
2. Christ is now in the **true** tabernacle (heaven)- **He 9:11-12,24**
  - a. We should expect the worship of the **true** to be different from that of the **shadow**
  - b. We have already seen that to be the case:
    - 1) Old Covenant worship, which was but a **shadow**, was **physical** in nature
    - 2) New Covenant worship is according to the **true** realities (God is Spirit, Christ in heaven) and is therefore more **spiritual** in nature



- **The emphasis is on that which is true (real), not which was a shadowy symbol of things to come**

[This explanation of worshipping God “*in spirit and truth*” is more in keeping with the immediate context. Since God is seeking “*true worshippers*” who worship Him accordingly (**Jn 4:23**), some thoughts about our worship **today** may be appropriate...]

### **III. WORSHIPPING GOD TODAY**

#### **A. NOT ALL WORSHIP IS ACCEPTABLE...**

1. There is **vain worship** - **Mt 15:7-9**
    - a. Based on traditions of men, while ignoring the commands of God
    - b. Offered without involving our “hearts” (spirits)
  2. There is **ignorant worship** - **Ac 17:22-23**
    - a. Ignorant of the true nature of God
    - b. Ignorant of the worship He desires
  3. There is **will worship** - **Co 2:20-23** (KJV)
    - a. Self-imposed, not God-directed
    - b. What we like, what we think is good
- **Just because we worship God, does not mean He is pleased with our worship!**

#### **B. MANY OFFER CARNAL WORSHIP...**

1. When they appeal to the OT for their authority for how they worship
    - a. For instrumental music, burning incense, clapping, etc.
    - b. They seek to justify that which appeals to the flesh (senses), not the spirit
  2. When they offer that which appeals to their fleshly nature
    - a. Preferring what is based on **how it sounds**
    - b. Preferring what is based on **how it feels**
- **Striving to be more spiritual, some revert to becoming more carnal, a reason to be concerned (cf. Ga 4:9-11)!**

#### **C. GOD SEEKS TRUE WORSHIPPERS...**

1. Who worship God “**...with their spirits**” - **Matthew Poole**
    - a. Seeking to engage the spirit (mind) more than the organs of the body
    - b. Content with the simplicity of worship that stresses the spiritual side of man
  2. Who worship God “**...according to the rule that he hath prescribed, in truth and reality.**” - **ibid.**
    - a. Not desiring to return to the carnal ordinances imposed until a time of reformation
    - b. Content with the worship ordained in the New Covenant
  3. Who can worship God anywhere, anytime, with true spiritual worship - e.g., **Ac 16:25**
- **God seeks such worshippers, who seek to worship Him in spirit and truth!**

### **CONCLUSION**

1. Matthew Poole offered this explanation of our text in his commentary...

**“God...is a spiritual Being, the Father of spirits, and requires a spiritual service proportioned to His being; and therefore those that pay a religious homage to him, must do it with their spirits, and according to the rule that he hath prescribed, in truth and reality.”**

2. How can we be sure to offer spiritual and true worship acceptable to God...?
  - a. Look to the New Testament for our authority in worship!
  - b. Worship in ways ordained by Christ and His apostles! - cf. **Ac 2:42**
  
3. As God is Spirit..
  - a. Our worship should be spiritual and not limited to special places
  - b. The emphasis should be on the spiritual (e.g., meaning of the words), and not the physical (e.g., how it looks, sounds, feels)

Remember...

***“...the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.”***  
***(Jn 4:23)***

# One Sows And Another Reaps

## John 4:35-38

### INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus, the Master Teacher, has much to teach us about winning souls...
  - a. By way of example, He teaches us the need for compassion - e.g., **Mt 9:35-36**
  - b. By way of instruction, He teaches the need for prayer - e.g., **Mt 9:37-38**
  - Many other things regarding evangelism can be gleaned from our Lord's example and words
  
2. On one occasion, Jesus taught His disciples an important principle of sowing and reaping...
  - a. In Samaria, following His discussion with the woman at the well - cf. **Jn 4:28-29**
  - b. Apparently as people from the city were making their way to see Jesus - cf. **Jn 4:30**
  - c. As the crowd was making their way, Jesus told His disciples:
    - 1) "Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest" - **Jn 4:35**
    - 2) "He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together." - **Jn 4:36**
    - 3) "For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.'" - **Jn 4:37**
    - 4) "I have sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors." - **Jn 4:38**
  
3. In our study, I want to focus on the "true saying" Jesus referred to...
  - a. I.e., "***One sows and another reaps***"
  - b. Which provides valuable insight into the process of winning souls

[From Jesus we learn that...]

### I. WINNING SOULS INVOLVES BOTH SOWING AND REAPING

#### **A. THE PROCESS OF SOWING...**

1. In agriculture, sowing involves preparing the soil and planting the seed
2. In winning souls to Christ, sowing likewise involves preparation and planting
  - a. In which hearts are being prepared to receive the gospel
  - b. In which hearts are first introduced to the gospel
- **A process involving time, teaching, influence, often with little visible results**

#### **B. THE PROCESS OF REAPING...**

1. In agriculture, reaping is the harvesting of what has been sown
2. In winning souls to Christ, reaping involves a similar harvest
  - a. Involving souls who have already heard the Word
  - b. Involving souls who decide to obey the Word
- **A process involving conversion, with great joy and excitement over the results**

[Both sowing and reaping are necessary to win souls. Yet the “saying” reveals that the two are not always done by the same person(s)...]

## **II. WE MAY REAP WHERE OTHERS HAVE SOWN**

### **A. THIS WAS THE CASE IN SAMARIA...**

1. Jesus sent His disciples to reap where others had labored - cf. **Jn 4:38**
  2. Who had done the sowing?
    - a. Jesus, in conversing with the woman at the well - **Jn 4:5-26**
    - b. The woman, in telling those in town about Jesus - **Jn 4:28-30**
- **The disciples were to benefit from the sowing done by others**

### **B. THIS IS OFTEN THE CASE TODAY...**

1. There are times when people seem “ripe” (ready to be reaped)
    - a. Ready to obey the gospel
    - b. Requiring little effort on our part
  2. This is likely due to “sowing” that occurred some time earlier
    - a. Perhaps the example or teaching by a friend, family member in the past
    - b. To which they did not respond then, but are ready now
- **We often benefit from the sowing done by others**

### **C. THIS CAN BE MISINTERPRETED...**

1. We might think that we have won souls by ourselves
  2. We might think that those who convert many are great soul winners in of themselves
- **Reaping does not always reflect where the hardest work has been done**

[We should be careful not to boast if we are privileged to reap where others have sown. Yet we can rejoice, for reaping even when others have sown is an exciting time for the laborers! Then again...]

## **III. WE MAY SOW WHERE OTHERS WILL REAP**

### **A. THIS WAS THE CASE IN SAMARIA...**

1. Jesus did the sowing, but the disciples would do the reaping
  2. The woman did some sowing, then Jesus and His disciples did the reaping - **Jn 4:39-42**
- **In this case, the sowing and reaping, though separate, occurred close together**

### **B. THIS IS OFTEN THE CASE TODAY...**

1. There are times when a lot of sowing is being done
  - a. Lives are influenced by the godly examples of other Christians
  - b. Souls are taught the Word of God
2. Yet the reaping is not enjoyed by those doing the sowing
  - a. Few seem to respond to the efforts being made
  - b. Much time and energy is expended, with little immediate results
3. The reaping often comes later
  - a. It might be years before the Word bears fruit
  - b. It might be long after we are gone

- c. It might be done by others
- **In such cases, the sowing and reaping occur far apart**

### C. THIS CAN BE MISINTERPRETED...

1. Those sowing with little visible reaping may think they have failed
    - a. Causing them to become discouraged
    - b. Tempting them to discontinue their efforts
  2. Others may think those who sow with little visible reaping are failures
    - a. Presuming they must not be sowing the seed
    - b. Presuming they must not be diligent in their efforts
- **Failure to reap does not always reflect the hard work being done**

[When the efforts to sow appear to produce little fruit, we should not draw conclusions hastily. It can only lead to discouragement and possible misjudgment others. Understanding the principle, “**One Sows And Another Reaps**”, then may I suggest that...]

## IV. WE SHOULD BE DILIGENT TO SOW AND REAP

### A. DILIGENT IN SOWING...

1. There will be times when we will be mostly sowing the seed
    - a. Teaching souls the first principles of the gospel of Christ - cf. **Mk 16:15-16**
    - b. Influencing souls by example - cf. **1 Pe 3:1-2**
  2. There may be times when we see little fruit from our efforts
    - a. Jeremiah prophesied nearly fifty years with little success
    - b. Jesus and His apostles had their periods when few would listen
  3. Yet we can take comfort in knowing that God’s Word is never sown in vain
    - a. It will accomplish its purpose - cf. **Isa 55:10-11**
    - b. It has the power to save those who believe it - **Ro 1:16; Ja 1:21**
    - c. God only holds us responsible for sowing the seed - cf. **Ezek 3:17-19**
- **Even if we never reap, we can rejoice in the work of sowing, knowing that our labors for the Lord are not in vain - cf. 1 Co 15:58**

### B. DILIGENT IN REAPING...

1. There may be times when we may reap where others have sown
    - a. Souls who come to us, wanting to study, ready to obey
    - b. Souls where others had sown, and we are privileged to reap
  2. There may be times when there is much reaping with little effort
    - a. Souls seem quick to respond
    - b. Numbers of members increase
  3. Yet we should be cautious not to boast
    - a. The power is in the seed, not the sower or the reaper - **He 4:12**
    - b. The providence of God is at work, He is the one who gives the increase - **1 Co 3:5-7**
- **As we reap, be mindful of the contribution of others (including God), and rejoice together in the work of the Lord - cf. 1 Co 3:8; Jn 4:36**

## CONCLUSION

1. Brothers and sisters in Christ, are we not laborers in the vineyard of the Lord...?
  - a. Then let us not hesitate to reap where others have sown
  - b. Then let us not hesitate to sow where others might reap
  
2. May the principle “**One Sows And Another Reaps**”...
  - a. **Encourage us** when it seems we are sowing with little fruit to be seen
  - b. **Humble us** when it seems we are reaping where we have not sown

Finally, if we are not reaping at the moment, then let us at least be sowing...!

# All Should Honor The Son

## John 5:16-30

### INTRODUCTION

1. The ministry of Jesus was not without controversy...
  - a. One reason was because He healed on the Sabbath - **Jn 5:16**
  - b. Another reason was because He made Himself equal with God - **Jn 5:17-18**-- **Prompting the Jews to seek to kill Him**
  
2. Yet He they sought to kill, they should have honored - **Jn 5:22-23**
  - a. Even as one should honor the Father
  - b. For failing to honor the Son, they did not honor the Father who sent Him-- **Indeed, all should honor the Son!**

[Do we honor the Son today? Truly honor the Son? We certainly should, and in our text we note several reasons why Jesus should be held high in our estimation of Him...]

### I. WHY WE SHOULD HONOR THE SON

#### **A. THE SON WILL RAISE THE DEAD...**

1. Among the “greater works” Jesus would do included raising the dead! - **Jn 5:20-21**
2. We have record of Jesus raising three people from the dead
  - a. The daughter of Jairus - **Mk 5:21-43**
  - b. The son of the widow of Nain - **Lk 7:11-17**
  - c. The brother of Mary and Martha, Lazarus - **Jn 11:1-44**
3. One day, Jesus will raise **all** from the dead! - **Jn 5:28-29**
  - a. Those who have done good, to the resurrection of life
  - b. Those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation-- **Just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive! - cf. 1 Co 15:22**

#### **B. THE SON WILL JUDGE THE WORLD...**

1. The Father has committed judgment to His Son - **Jn 5:22**
  - a. Jesus has authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man - **Jn 5:27**
  - b. Jesus will exercise righteous judgment, because He seeks the Father’s will - **Jn 5:30**
2. One day, Jesus will judge **all** mankind! - cf. **Ac 10:42; 17:31**
  - a. His words will judge us in the Last Day - **Jn 12:48**
  - b. We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ - **Ro 14:10; 2 Co 5:10**-- **Knowing we will one day stand before the Judge, should we not honor Him now?**

#### **C. THE SON OFFERS EVERLASTING LIFE...**

1. To those who hear His Words, and believes in the Father who sent Him - **Jn 5:24**
  - a. They shall not come into judgment (i.e., condemnation)
  - b. They shall pass from death (spiritual) to life (eternal)

2. The time for this offer is **now** (“the hour is coming, and now is”) - **Jn 5:25**
    - a. When those who are dead (spiritually) will hear the voice of the Son of God (via the gospel)
    - b. Those who hear (obey) will live (be saved)
  3. The Son has power to give life - **Jn 5:26**
    - a. Because the Father has life in Himself
    - b. And the Father has granted the Son to have life in Himself
- **That Jesus offers the gift of everlasting life is certainly reason to honor Him!**

[Many other reasons to honor the Son could be given, but these certainly suffice. How should we honor Him? From our text, we can glean at least three ways...]

## **II. HOW WE SHOULD HONOR THE SON**

### **A. BY HEARING HIS VOICE NOW...**

1. One day, we will hear His voice - cf. **Jn 5:28-29**
    - a. Whether alive or dead
    - b. Whether we want to or not
    - c. Either to a resurrection of life, or to a resurrection of condemnation
  2. How much better that day will be, if we hear His voice now - cf. **Jn 5:24-25**
    - a. We can have everlasting life!
    - b. We will not come into judgment (condemnation)!
    - c. We can pass from death to life!
- **Will we honor the Son by listening to His words of life?**

### **B. BY OBEYING HIS VOICE NOW...**

1. It is not enough to simply “hear” His Words
    - a. We must be “doers” of His Words - **Mt 7:24-27**
    - b. Otherwise, why bother to call Him “Lord”? - **Lk 6:46**
    - c. Only by abiding in His word are we truly His disciples - **Jn 8:31**
  2. Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all obey Him - cf. **He 5:9**
    - a. Obeying His call to believe in Him - **Jn 8:24**
    - b. Obeying His call to repent of sins - **Lk 13:3**
    - c. Obeying His call to confess Him before others - **Mt 10:32-33**
    - d. Obeying His call to be baptized - **Mt 28:19; Mk 16:16**
    - e. Obeying His call to remain faithful - **Re 2:10**
- **Will we honor the Son by heeding His voice now, today?**

### **C. BY SEEKING THE FATHER’S WILL NOW...**

1. Jesus sought His Father’s will in all that He did - **Jn 5:30**
  - a. His “food” was to do the Father’s will - **Jn 4:34**
  - b. He came down from heaven to do the Father’s will - **Jn 6:38**
  - c. He glorified the Father by doing the work He was given to do - **Jn 17:4**
2. Jesus wants us to do His Father’s will
  - a. Otherwise we will not enter the kingdom of heaven - **Mt 7:21-23**
  - b. Otherwise we will not be part of His family - **Mt 12:46-50**



-- We can best honor the Son by emulating His example in doing the Father's will!

## CONCLUSION

1. All **should** honor the Son today...
  - a. He is certainly worthy of honor - cf. **Re 5:12**
  - b. Just as the Father (He who sits on the throne) is worthy - cf. **Re 5:13**
  
2. All **will** honor the Son one day...
  - a. By responding to His voice at the resurrection - **Jn 5:28-29**
  - b. Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess - **Ro 14:10-11; Ph 2:9-11**

For those willing to honor Him today by heeding His voice, they will be honored together with Him in That Day! - cf. **2 Th 1:10-12**

# The Insufficiency Of The Scriptures

## John 5:37-40

### INTRODUCTION

1. The all-sufficiency of the Scriptures is an important doctrine...
  - a. For the Scriptures are completely adequate - **2 Ti 3:16-17**
  - b. God has provided all that we need for life and godliness - **2 Pe 1:3**
  - c. We do not need further revelation, we have the faith delivered “once for all” to the saints - **Ju 3**  
-- **Thus we have that which is able to build us up and give us our inheritance - Ac 20:32**
  
2. Yet there can come a time... when the Scriptures are insufficient...
  - a. When despite its power, the Word of God is unable to save
  - b. When despite diligent study, it does not benefit those who search through it  
-- **There can be a time when the Scriptures are insufficient!**
  
3. We find such an occasion in the gospel of John...
  - a. When Jesus was confronted by unbelieving Jews - cf. **Jn 5:16-18**
  - b. Who had rejected various sources bearing witness to Jesus - cf. **Jn 5:33-36**

[In what serves as our text (**Jn 5:37-40**), we learn when and how the Scriptures can be insufficient, as it proved to be in the case of the Jews...]

### I. HOW THE SCRIPTURES PROVED INSUFFICIENT FOR THE JEWS

#### **A. THEY DILIGENTLY SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES...**

1. As indicated in our text - **Jn 5:39**
  - a. The KJV has Jesus commanding them to search the Scriptures
  - b. The ASV, NKJV, NASB has Jesus acknowledging their study of the Scriptures
  - c. “The form here can be either present active indicative second person plural or the present active imperative second person plural. Only the context can decide. Either makes sense here, but the reason given ‘because ye think’ (clearly indicative), supports the indicative rather than the imperative.” - **Robertson’s Word Pictures**
  
2. The Jews were diligent students of the Scriptures
  - a. Moses was read in the synagogues every Sabbath - cf. **Ac 15:21**
  - b. “Hillel used to say, ‘More law, more life...He who has gotten himself words of law has gotten himself the life of the world to come’ (Talmud). In their zeal for the Scriptures the Jews had counted every letter of them, expecting to find life in the laws and precepts...”  
- **McGarvey’s Fourfold Gospel**  
-- **One could hardly be a more diligent student of the Scriptures than the Jews!**

#### **B. YET THE SCRIPTURES DID NOT BENEFIT THEM...**

1. They were unwilling to believe in Him of whom the Scriptures testified - **Jn 5:39-40**
2. Failing to believe in Jesus led to the Father’s Word not abiding in them - cf. **Jn 5:38**

- **Unwilling to believe in Him of whom the Scriptures testified, the Scriptures proved insufficient to be the Word of life for them!**

[How sad that many Jews who had the benefit of receiving “the oracles of God” (**Ro 3:1-2**) and studied them so diligently fell short of receiving their true benefit. Yet the same occurs often today...]

## **II. HOW THE SCRIPTURES CAN BE INSUFFICIENT FOR US TODAY**

### **A. WE MAY BE DILIGENT STUDENTS OF THE SCRIPTURES...**

1. Indeed we should be diligent students of the Word!
    - a. The gospel is God’s power to save - **Ro 1:16**
    - b. The Word of God is living and powerful - **He 4:12**
    - c. The Word is able to save our souls - **Ja 1:21**
    - d. The Word is able to make one born again - **1 Pe 1:22**
    - e. The Word is able to help us grow - **1 Pe 2:2**
    - f. The Word is able to give us that inheritance among those sanctified - **Ac 20:32**
  2. Many people are diligent students of the Word!
    - a. Every denomination has its scholars, people well-versed in the Word
    - b. People read the Bible daily, study it in church frequently
    - c. Some can even quote entire sections from memory
- **Many are like the Berean Jews in their study of the Scriptures - Ac 17:11**

### **B. YET THE SCRIPTURES WILL NOT BENEFIT US...**

1. **If we do not have faith - He 4:1-2**
    - a. We may come short of our promised rest
    - b. Like the Israelites who fell in the wilderness
  2. **If we are not doers of the Word**
    - a. If we are only hearers, we deceive ourselves - **Ja 1:21-25**
    - b. If we are only hearers, we will not stand in times of trial - **Mt 7:24-27**
- **Unless we believe and obey the Word of God , it remains insufficient to save us!**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. The Word of God is truly all-sufficient..
  - a. To do the work God designed it do - **Isa 55:10-11**
  - b. To bear fruit in the noble and good heart - **Lk 8:11,15**
2. Yet “people of the Book” (as the Koran calls Jews and Christians) should take heed..
  - a. The Word cannot bear fruit in some hearts - **Lk 8:12-14**
  - b. We must let the Word lead us to Him Who is the giver of life - cf. **Jn 5:40**

Indeed, “the all-sufficiency of the Word” must be understood in its context, for the Word alone does not save. To be saved we also need **faith** (**Jn 8:24**), we need **blood** (**Ep 1:7**), we even need **water** (**Ep 5:26**), the last being an allusion to baptism where the Word, God’s grace, Christ’s blood and our faith comes together to provide remission of sins! - cf. **Ac 2:38; 22:16**

# Two Kinds Of Food

## John 6:27

### INTRODUCTION

1. Among the miracles of Jesus that attracted great attention was the feeding of 5000 with five loaves of bread and two fish - **Jn 6:1-13**
  - a. Many came to believe in Him as the Prophet to come - **Jn 6:14**; cf. **Deu 18:15**
  - b. Some wanted to take Him by force and make Him king - **Jn 6:15**
  - c. People sought to follow Him - **Jn 6:22,24-25**
2. Jesus, who knew the hearts of men (**Jn 2:25**), perceived their selfish motives...
  - a. They were interested only in the food, not what the miracle indicated - **Jn 6:26**
  - b. Prompting Jesus to warn them about the food for which they labor - **Jn 6:27**

[The words of Jesus in our text (**Jn 6:27**) reveal there are “**Two Kinds Of Food**”, one that perishes and another that endures. As we seek to apply Jesus’ admonition to our own lives, let’s consider...]

### I. THE FOOD WHICH PERISHES

#### **A. WHAT FOOD IS THIS...?**

1. **Literally**, it is the food we eat
  - a. It quickly perishes, even with the benefit of preservatives
  - b. It fails to satisfy for long, soon we are hungry and thirsty again - cf. **Jn 4:13**
2. **Figuratively**, there are other “foods” which soon perish
  - a. The food of human wisdom
  - b. The food of folly
  - c. The food of mirth and pleasure
  - d. The food of great wealth and industrious labor-- Which Solomon found to provide no lasting fulfillment - cf. **Ecc 1:17; 2:1-2,3-11**

#### **B. DO NOT LABOR FOR SUCH FOOD...**

1. This does not mean we are to make no effort to supply our needs
  - a. A Christian is to provide for his family - **1 Ti 5:8**
  - b. If a man does not work, neither should he eat - **2 Th 3:10-12**
2. But that we not do so to the neglect of food which endures
  - a. The “food” which perishes should not be our priority in life - cf. **Mt 6:33**
  - b. A lesson that Martha needed to learn - **Lk 10:38-42**

[Sadly, many people expend much time, energy, and money for “food” which soon perishes. Jesus would have people direct their life’s efforts toward...]

### II. THE FOOD WHICH ENDURES

## A. WHAT FOOD IS THIS...?

1. In other texts, it is **the Word of God**
  - a. By which man truly lives - cf. **Mt 4:4**
  - b. Which Job treasured more than necessary food - **Job 23:12**
  - c. Which David valued more than gold and fine food - **Psa 19:10; 119:72,103,11**
  - d. Which Jeremiah found to be the rejoicing of his heart - **Jer 15:16**
  - e. Which causes rebirth, and endures forever - **1 Pe 1:22-25**
2. In our text, it is **Jesus, the Word of God**
  - a. Jesus, the Logos (Word) of God - **Jn 1:1,14,18**
  - b. He is the true bread from the Father in heaven - **Jn 6:31-35**
  - c. He is the bread of life who offers everlasting life - **Jn 6:47-51**

## B. LABOR FOR THIS FOOD...

1. Jesus must be the primary focus of our labors, in which we strive:
  - a. To believe in Him, for therein is everlasting life - **Jn 6:28-29,40**
  - b. To follow Him, for He has the words of eternal life - **Jn 6:66-69**
  - c. To know Him, for that is eternal life - **Jn 17:1-3**
  - d. To obey Him, for to those who obey He is the author of eternal life - **He 5:9**
2. Are we laboring for the food which endures to everlasting life?
  - a. Let Paul's attitude be our example - **Ph 3:7-15**
    - 1) Seeking to know the Lord more and more
    - 2) Never content with our current understanding, always pressing further
  - b. Let Peter's exhortation to diligence in growing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ set the standard - **2 Pe 1:5-8; 3:18**
    - 1) Seeking to become like the Lord more and more
    - 2) Always abounding, always growing in grace and knowledge

## CONCLUSION

1. Dear friends and brethren, for what "food" do you labor...?
  - a. Is your focus in life on that which is temporary?
  - b. Do you strive for that which cannot truly satisfy?-- If so, consider what Isaiah wrote 700 years before Christ came - **Isa 55:1-4**
2. Jesus is the true bread of life, the living water, who truly satisfies...
  - a. He alone provides the hope of eternal life - **Jn 6:40**
  - b. He alone offers the abundant life even now - **Jn 10:11**

Though written by Isaiah, these words may serve as the invitation Jesus offers to all...

*"Why do you spend money for [what is] not bread, And your wages for [what] does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat [what is] good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you—The sure mercies of David." (Isa 55:2-3)*

# To Whom Shall We Go?

## John 6:67-69

### INTRODUCTION

1. When Jesus talked about being the Bread of Life, it troubled some people...
  - a. He used figurative language, which sounded cannibalistic - cf. **Jn 6:51-59**
  - b. Difficult to understand, some were offended (those lacking in faith) - cf. **Jn 6:60-65**
  - c. Many of His disciples left Him - cf. **Jn 6:66**
  - **Prompting Jesus to ask the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?” - Jn 6:67**
  
2. Peter’s response serves as the text of our lesson...
  - a. **“To whom shall we go?” - Jn 6:68a**
  - b. He acknowledged that Jesus alone has the words of eternal life - **Jn 6:68b**
  - c. He also confesses their faith in Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God - **Jn 6:69**
  - **His question is one that we do well to ask today**

[For the answers to our true purpose and mission in life, to find the words of eternal life, **“To Whom Shall We Go?”** There are many places we could turn to, indeed many do turn to, but they are not the right ones. For example, consider...]

### I. TO WHOM WE COULD GO

#### **A. THE OPINIONS OF THE MAJORITY...?**

1. Many people look to whatever the majority believes
  - a. E.g., what their peers think
  - b. E.g., whatever the latest polls indicate
2. But consider the words of Jesus, in describing the end of the majority - **Mt 7:13-14**
3. If you followed the majority...
  - a. In Noah’s day, you would have perished in the flood
  - b. In Joshua’s day, you would have perished in the wilderness

#### **B. THE PRONOUNCEMENTS OF HUMAN WISDOM...?**

1. Many feel that human wisdom can lead them to truth and life
  - a. Especially that pronounced by educated professors
  - b. Or that pronounced by “pop” psychologists on talk shows
2. But God’s thoughts and ways are not always our own - cf. **Isa 55:8-9**
3. In fact, God has chosen to save man in a manner specifically designed to confound those who depend solely upon human wisdom - cf. **1 Co 1:18-29**

#### **C. THE PROCLAMATIONS OF PREACHERS...?**

1. It is common for people to trust their preacher, priest, or pastor
2. They reason that surely these “men of God” could not be wrong or lead them astray
  - a. Yet Paul warned of how we can easily be misled - cf. **2 Co 11:13-15**

- b. And Jesus warned about the “blind leading the blind” - **Mt 15:12-14**

#### **D. THE DICTATES OF OUR CONSCIENCE...?**

1. “Let your conscience be your guide” is the motto of many
2. But our conscience cannot always be reliable
  - a. Paul had served God with a good conscience throughout his life - **Ac 23:1**
  - b. Even at a time when he was persecuting Christians! - cf. **Ac 26:9-11**
3. Our conscience is like a clock, which works properly only if set properly

#### **F. THE DIRECTION OF OUR FEELINGS...?**

1. This is often where many people turn
  - a. Who go by whatever “feels right”
  - b. Who place stock in things “better felt than told”
2. Yet the Bible declares the danger of trusting in “feelings”
  - a. “There is a way which seems right...but its end is the way of death.” - **Pro 14:12**
  - b. “He who trusts in his own heart is a fool...” - **Pro 28:26**
  - c. “O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.” - **Jer 10:23**

[None of these should be the ultimate source to where we turn if we are looking for the words of eternal life. As confessed by Peter, there is only One...]

## **II. TO WHOM WE SHOULD GO**

### **A. JESUS CHRIST, SON OF THE LIVING GOD...!**

1. As Peter confessed in our text - **Jn 6:68-69**
  2. He is the one who provides “food which endures to everlasting life” - **Jn 6:27,35,40**
  3. He is the way, the truth and the life - **Jn 14:6**
  4. Upon this One has God “set His seal” - **Jn 6:27**
    - a. I.e., confirmed Him to be the source of eternal life
    - b. Through the miracles, and ultimately His resurrection - **Jn 5:36; Ro 1:4**
- **Yet how does one “go to Jesus” when He no longer walks on the earth? We must turn to...**

### **B. THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST, INSPIRED OF THE SPIRIT...!**

1. Jesus prepared and equipped His apostles to carry on and complete His work
    - a. He told them of the Holy Spirit - **Jn 16:7-11**
    - b. Who would guide them into all the truth - **Jn 16:12-13**
  2. To receive the apostles (**apostolos**, lit., one sent) is to receive Jesus - **Jn 13:20**
  3. Thus the apostles were authoritative spokesmen for Christ - e.g., **1 Th 4:1-2,8; 1 Jn 4:6; Ju 17**
  4. They received all things pertaining to life and godliness - **2 Pe 1:3**
  5. They did not shun to proclaim the whole counsel of God - **Ac 20:20-21,27**
- **But how do we “go to the apostles” when they no longer live on the earth? We must turn to...**

**C. THE NEW TESTAMENT, REPOSITORY OF THE WORD OF GOD...!**

1. The apostles wrote that we might benefit from their understanding- e.g., **Ep 3:3-5**
  2. We must view their words as the commandments of the Lord - e.g., **1 Co 14:37**
  3. Therefore we are to hold fast to what they taught - cf. **2 Th 2:15; 3:15; Ju 3**
  4. As exemplified by the very first church in Jerusalem - **Ac 2:42**
- **The words of the apostles preserved in their writings, can lead us to Him who alone has the words of eternal life!**

**CONCLUSION**

1. **To whom shall we go...?**
  - a. The answer must be **“Jesus!”**
  - b. He is “...the Christ, the Son of the living God”
  - c. He alone has “...the words of eternal life”
  
2. **Where will you find Jesus...?**
  - a. Not in the words of modern theologians and filmmakers, who have sought to remake Jesus according to their own image
  - b. But in the words of His apostles, eyewitnesses of His majesty and inspired by the Spirit to reveal all that we need to experience life and godliness

Don't let the cacophony of modern voices lead you away from Jesus and His words of eternal life. Make sure that it is His apostles' writings, the Word of God, that leads you to Him who is the way, the truth and the life!



# Even His Brothers Did Not Believe

## John 7:1-9

### INTRODUCTION

1. In a gospel designed to create faith in Jesus, John tells of those who lacked faith...
  - a. Those in His own nation - **Jn 1:11**
  - b. Those among His disciples - **Jn 6:66**
2. For a time, even His own brothers (named in **Mt 13:55**) did not believe...
  - a. As recorded in **Jn 7:5**
  - b. As implied in **Mk 3:21**
  - c. As foretold in **Psa 69:8**
  - **Though they eventually came to believe in Jesus - Ac 1:14**
3. Why did Jesus' brothers not believe in Him from the very beginning...?
  - a. Had they not seen the miracles?
  - b. Did they not know Him as well as anyone?

[Reasons why they did not believe at first, and the reason they came to believe at last, can provide some valuable lessons for us today...]

### I. WHY THEY DID NOT BELIEVE

#### **A. POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THEIR UNBELIEF...**

1. Perhaps they were blinded by **familiarity**
    - a. As is often said, "Familiarity breeds contempt"
    - b. This hindered many who knew Jesus from childhood - **Mt 13:54-58**
    - c. A problem common among prophets - **Mt 13:57; Jn 4:44**
  2. Perhaps they were blinded by **envy**
    - a. Large crowds had been following Jesus everywhere
    - b. Making it difficult for His family to speak to Him at times - **Mt 12:46-47**
    - c. Jealousy can be a powerful hindrance to seeing things clearly
  3. Perhaps they were blinded by **preconceptions**
    - a. Many Jews had wrong conceptions concerning the kingdom - cf. **Jn 6:15**
    - b. His brothers had their ideas as to what He should do - **Jn 7:2-4**
    - c. It is easy to reject someone if they do not live up to your expectations
- **For one reason or another, Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him**

#### **B. A WARNING FOR US TODAY...**

1. Do we let **familiarity** blind us to the truth?
    - a. Do we reject what a close friend or relative may tell us?
    - b. Especially since they have their own faults of which we are well aware?
- **Truth can be communicated by imperfect messengers - cf. Ph 1:15-18**

2. Do we let **envy** get in the way of truth?
  - a. Are we jealous that we might be wrong and others may be right?
  - b. Do we think that by admitting others are right, it somehow makes them better?

-- **Truth (and salvation!) is too precious to let envy or jealousy keep us from it**
3. Do we let **preconceived notions** obstruct a clear evaluation of the truth?
  - a. Refusing to reexamine our cherished beliefs?
  - b. Rejecting a view or teaching simply because we have never heard it before?

-- **Truth requires a willingness to hear, and has nothing to fear from investigation**  
- Ac 17:11

[Don't discount the potential impact of **familiarity**, **envy**, or **preconceptions**. Such blinded the brothers of Jesus so that even His miracles did not convince them! What finally prompted them to believe is worthy of note...]

## II. HOW THEY CAME TO BELIEVE

### A. THE REASON FOR THEIR FAITH...

1. As noted previously, Jesus' brothers eventually became disciples
  - a. They were with the apostles after the Ascension - **Ac 1:12-14**
  - b. James, the Lord's brother, became a key figure in the church at Jerusalem - **Ac 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Ga 2:9**
  - c. James and Judas wrote their respective epistles - **Ja 1:1; Ju 1**
  - d. According to secular history, James was martyred for his faith
2. What changed them? **The resurrection of Jesus from the dead!**
  - a. Jesus appeared to James - **1 Co 15:7**
  - b. The others may have seen Him on other occasions - cf. **1 Co 15:6**
3. The significance of Jesus' resurrection
  - a. Miracles can be faked
  - b. Rising from the dead cannot!

-- **The resurrection shattered any blinders of familiarity, envy, preconceptions**

### B. A BLESSING FOR US TODAY...

1. It is understandable that one might find the gospel story incredible
  - a. A man born of a virgin?
  - b. A man who was the Son of God?
  - c. A man who supposedly...
    - 1) Walked on water?
    - 2) Calmed the seas?
    - 3) Fed thousands with five loaves and two fish?
    - 4) Healed the sick and lame, gave sight to the blind, raised the dead?
    - 5) Was Himself raised from the dead?
2. Yet there is a good reason to believe the incredible story!
  - a. That is, the conversion of those like Jesus' brothers
    - 1) Who at first did not believe (for whatever reason)
    - 2) Who were persuaded by overwhelming empirical evidence - cf. **Ac 1:3; 10:39-41**
    - 3) Who never recanted their testimony, despite hardship and persecution

- b. What else can explain the transformation of Jesus' brothers?
    - 1) It was the same thing that transformed the disciples of Jesus!
    - 2) "If the disciples were totally disappointed and on the verge of desperate flight because of the very real reason of the crucifixion, it took another very real reason in order to transform them from a band of disheartened and dejected Jews into the most self-confident missionary society in world history." - **Pinchas Lapide**, former Chairman of the Applied Linguistics Department at Israel's Bar-Ilan University (TIME, May 7, 1979)
    - 3) This Orthodox Jewish scholar concluded that a bodily resurrection could possibly have been that reason!
- **The conversion of His brothers and others who first doubted should strengthen our faith in Jesus!**

## CONCLUSION

1. The unbelief of Jesus' brothers serves as a **warning**...
  - a. How easily one can be blinded by such things as familiarity, envy, and preconceptions
  - b. How carefully we must give others a fair hearing
2. The unbelief of Jesus' brothers also serves as a **blessing**...
  - a. Their eventual conversion implies overwhelming evidence of Jesus' resurrection
  - b. Since we believe in Jesus through the words of such men, the foundation of our faith is stronger

With the help of their own example, we can heed the exhortation given by one of Jesus' brothers:

***"But you, beloved, BUILDING YOURSELVES UP ON YOUR MOST HOLY FAITH, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (Jude 20-21)***

# The Proof Is In The Pudding

## John 7:17

### INTRODUCTION

1. The evidence for Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, is manifold...
  - a. The testimony of John the Baptist - **Jn 5:33**; e.g., **1:29,34**
  - b. The works (miracles) that Jesus did - **Jn 5:36**; e.g., **2:11; 20:30-31**
  - c. The testimony of God Himself - **Jn 5:37**; e.g., **Mt 3:16-17; 17:5**
  - d. The testimony of the OT scriptures - **Jn 5:39**; e.g., **Isa 9:6-7**
  - e. His resurrection from the dead, attested to by eyewitnesses - **Ro 1:4**; e.g., **Jn 20:24-29**
2. Jesus offered another proof that He is from God...
  - a. It came at a time when many questioned who He was - **Jn 7:12-15**
  - b. If you are willing to do God's will, you will know His doctrine is from God - **Jn 7:16-17**
3. Jesus' claim is akin to well-known proverb...
  - a. **"The proof of the pudding is in the eating"**
  - b. As stated more often, **"The proof is in the pudding"**

[This is a remarkable claim by Jesus, certainly worthy of closer examination...]

### I. FACETS OF JESUS' CLAIM

#### **A. ONE MUST BE WILLING TO DO THE FATHER'S WILL...**

1. There must first be a willing heart
    - a. A good and noble heart - cf. **Lk 8:15**
    - b. A heart willing to hear and examine carefully - cf. **Ac 17:11**
    - c. A humble heart, one that fears God - cf. **Psa 25:9,12**
  2. There must then be obedience from the heart
    - a. Such as found in the Christians at Rome - **Ro 6:17**
    - b. The kind of obedience that must be in all aspects of our service - **Ep 6:6; Co 3:23**
- **"Those who would test the divinity of the doctrine of Christ can not do so by rendering a mere mechanical obedience to his teaching. A willing, heartfelt obedience is essential to a true knowledge of his doctrine. Such a disposition makes a good and honest heart in which the seeds of his kingdom must inevitably grow." - J. W. McGarvey**

#### **B. ONE WILL KNOW HIS DOCTRINE IS OF GOD...**

1. They will know that Jesus' teaching comes from above - cf. **Jn 12:49**
  2. They will know that His teaching is everlasting life - cf. **Jn 12:50**
- **"He shall have evidence, in the very attempt to do the will of God, of the truth of the doctrine." - Barnes**

[What kind of evidence does one receive? The answer may be put in the words of Isaiah, *“The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.”* (Isa 32:17) Consider therefore the...]

## II. EVIDENCE OF JESUS’ CLAIM

### **A. PEACE THAT SURPASSES UNDERSTANDING...**

1. Jesus offered such peace to His disciples - **Jn 14:27; 16:33**
  2. As we do the Father’s will as taught by Jesus, we experience such peace:
    - a. As the result of our justification in Christ - **Ro 5:1**
    - b. As the prayer for faithful Christians - **Ro 15:13; 2 Th 3:16**
    - c. As the fruit of the Spirit in the lives of Christians - **Ga 5:22**
    - d. As the response to prayer - **Ph 4:6-7**
- **Such peace, when experienced, confirms Jesus’ doctrine as being from God**

### **B. ASSURANCE THAT CALMS THE HEART...**

1. Jesus offered assurance to His disciples - **Jn 14:27b; 16:33**
  2. As we do the Father’s will as taught by Jesus, we experience such assurance:
    - a. As when we love the brethren in deed and truth - cf. **1 Jn 3:18-19**
    - b. As expressed by Paul - cf. **2 Ti 1:12**; also **Ro 8:38-39**
- **Such assurance, when experienced, confirms Jesus’ doctrine as being from God**

[B. W. Johnson expressed it this way: **“He who in his heart says, “Thy will be done, give me light and I will walk in it,” will find that Christ is just the teacher demanded by his soul, and that the gospel meets his soul’s want. Jesus will so meet the wants of his soul that he will be satisfied and will know the doctrine, that it comes from him who made the soul.”** (People’s New Testament) Yet, we should note...]

## III. CAUTION REGARDING JESUS’ CLAIM

### **A. WHEN THERE IS NO PEACE OR ASSURANCE...**

1. It is not evidence that Jesus’ doctrine is not from God
  - a. We may have not done the Father’s will **yet**
  - b. We may have not done the Father’s will **from the heart**
2. It may not be evidence that we failed to truly do the Father’s will at one time
  - a. Our faith may yet be **weak**, needing to grow
  - b. Our faith may have become **hardened** by the deceitfulness of sin - **He 3:12-14**

### **B. WHERE THERE IS PEACE AND ASSURANCE...**

1. We should not trust in that evidence **alone**
  - a. Many believed they are saved because of their feelings
  - b. They might construe such as the ultimate proof of salvation
2. The heart can easily be **deceived**
  - a. There are ways that seem right, but may lead to death - **Pro 16:25**
  - b. It is not in man to direct his footsteps - **Jer 10:23**
3. We must always be open to **the Word of God**

- a. Let the Word of God produce the feelings (**faith, then feelings**)
- b. Don't let one's feelings reject the Word of God (**not feelings, then faith**)

## CONCLUSION

1. The proof that is in the pudding is somewhat subjective, but it is proof...
  - a. Proof that can further confirm a faith based upon more objective evidence
  - b. Proof that if lacking should be a sign our faith needs work (i.e., diligence)
2. It is a diligent faith willing to do the will of God that produces a full assurance...

***“And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,” (He 6:11)***

Are you willing to do the Father's will from the heart? The blessings of peace, assurance, and confirmation that Jesus' doctrine is truly from God, awaits those who obey His will...!

# The Promise Of The Spirit

## John 7:37-39

### INTRODUCTION

1. During the Feast Of Tabernacles, there was a daily ceremony involving water...
  - a. Each day, the priests and the people would joyfully make their way to the pool of Siloam
  - b. Using a golden pitcher, water was drawn, taken back to the temple, and poured on the altar of burnt offering
  - c. The words of **Isa 12:3** were then sung: *“Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”*
2. On such an occasion Jesus used the opportunity to extend a wonderful promise...
  - a. Inviting those who thirst to come to Him and drink - **Jn 7:37**
  - b. Those who believe in Him will have “rivers of living water” flow from their hearts - **Jn 7:38**
3. The apostle John explains that this promise concerns the Holy Spirit... - **Jn 7:39**
  - a. Whom those who believe would receive
  - b. Who had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified

[What else might we glean from the Scriptures concerning this promise of the Spirit? Let’s first take a closer look at...]

### I. THE NATURE OF THE PROMISE

#### **A. FROM THE TEXT...**

1. **A promise foretold by the Scriptures - Jn 7:38; cf. Isa 44:3; 58:11**
  - a. “The reference is not to any single passage, but to the spirit of the Scripture, notably such passages as Isa 55:1; 58:11; Psa 36:8-9.” - **B. W. Johnson**
  - b. “...referring not to any particular passage, but to such as Isa 58:11; Joel 3:18; Zec 14:8; Ezek 47:1-12; in most of which the idea is that of waters issuing from beneath the temple, to which our Lord compares Himself and those who believe in Him.”  
- **Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown**
2. **A promise that makes one a blessing to others - Jn 7:38**
  - a. “out of his heart will flow rivers of living water”
  - b. “When a man turns himself to the Lord, he shall be as a fountain filled with living water, and his streams shall flow to all the nations and tribes of men” - **Kuinoel**
  - c. “...those who are Christians shall diffuse large, and liberal, and constant blessings on their fellowmen” - **Barnes**
3. **A promise offered to believers - Jn 7:39**
  - a. Not to those who have yet to believe
  - b. Which is why I do not believe it refers to the ministry of the Spirit through the Word **alone**, for such occurs even on those who do not believe - e.g., **Jn 16:8**
  - c. Note this observation by Robert Milligan:

- 1) "He manifestly refers in this passage to something which had hitherto been enjoyed by no one, and which could be enjoyed by none until after that he himself was glorified." - **Robert Milligan**, Scheme of Redemption, p.283
- 2) "This, it would seem, could not have reference to the mediate agency of the Spirit, through the written word and the ordinary workings of God's providence; for through these media the Spirit had always operated on the minds of both Jews and Patriarchs." - **ibid.**
- 3) "Christ is speaking here of what is peculiar to his own personal reign and administration." - **ibid.**
4. **A promise extended to all believers - Jn 7:39**
  - a. Not just to select disciples with special tasks, such as apostles and prophets
  - b. Which is why I do not believe it refers to miraculous manifestations of the Spirit, such as the gifts of the Spirit, for not all Christians had such; note also:
    - 1) This promise of the Spirit had not yet been given
    - 2) Yet miraculous manifestations of the Spirit had been experienced prior to the glorification of Jesus - e.g., **Lk 1:41,67**
5. **A promise given after Jesus was "glorified" - Jn 7:39**
  - a. I.e., after His resurrection and ascension to heaven
  - b. "The first and second chapters of the Book of Acts is the best comment upon this passage. When Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father and was glorified, he sent forth the Spirit upon his apostles on the day of Pentecost, and the apostles in turn promised the gift of the Spirit to all who would believe, repent, and be baptized."  
- **J. W. McGarvey** (Fourfold Gospel)

## **B. FROM OTHER TEXTS...**

1. **We conclude that it refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit**
  - a. Promised to all who repent and are baptized - cf. **Ac 2:38-39**
  - b. Given to all who obey - cf. **Ac 5:32**
  - c. Imbibed by all who are baptized - cf. **1 Co 12:13**
  - d. Sent into our hearts because we are God's children - cf. **Ga 4:6**
2. **We conclude that it refers to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit**
  - a. Who indwells all that belong to Christ - cf. **Ro 8:9-10**
  - b. Making their bodies a temple of the Spirit - cf. **1 Co 6:19**

[That this promise refers to the gift or indwelling of the Spirit given to all Christians becomes more apparent as we now focus our attention on...]

## **II. THE BLESSINGS OF THE PROMISE**

### **A. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT...**

1. **Remember what Jesus said of those who receive the Spirit - Jn 7:38**
  - a. "out of his heart will flow rivers of living water"
  - b. I.e., they will become a blessing to others; note again:
    - 1) "When a man turns himself to the Lord, he shall be as a fountain filled with living water, and his streams shall flow to all the nations and tribes of men" - **Kuinoel**
    - 2) "...those who are Christians shall diffuse large, and liberal, and constant blessings on



their fellowmen” - **Barnes**

2. **Especially when they bear the fruit of the Spirit in their lives- Ga 5:22-23**
    - a. Such as love, joy, peace
    - b. Such as longsuffering, kindness, goodness
    - c. Such as gentleness, faithfulness, self-control
- **Bearing such fruit of the Spirit, they bless the lives of others!**

## **B. THE AID OF THE SPIRIT...**

1. **The fruit of the Spirit becomes possible with the aid of the Spirit**
    - a. Who helps us to put to death the deeds of the body - **Ro 8:12-13**; cf. **Co 3:5-8**
    - b. Who enables us to be filled with joy and peace, abounding in hope - **Ro 15:13**
  2. **For the Spirit is God’s instrumental agent to strengthen the Christian**
    - a. Strengthening with might through the Spirit in the inner man - **Ep 3:16**
    - b. With a power working in us - **Ep 3:20**
- **We are able to be a blessing to others, with the aid of the Spirit working in us!**

[Jesus therefore offers us the opportunity to be blessed by the Spirit’s indwelling, so we can be useful in blessing the lives of those around us. But to ensure that we receive this blessing of the Spirit, let’s be careful to consider...]

## **III. THE RECEPTION OF THE PROMISE**

### **A. GIVEN TO THOSE WHO OBEY...**

1. **By believing in Jesus Christ**
    - a. The need to believe emphasized twice in our text - **Jn 7:38-39**
    - b. For faith is necessary to receive “life in His name” - cf. **Jn 20:31**
  2. **By repenting of our sins**
    - a. The gift of the Spirit promised to those who repent - **Ac 2:38-39**
    - b. Those who repent will experience “times of refreshing” (what could be more refreshing than “rivers of living water”?) - cf. **Ac 3:19**
  3. **By being baptized for the remission of our sins**
    - a. Those baptized are promised the gift of the Spirit - **Ac 2:38-39**
    - b. They are made to drink into one Spirit - cf. **1 Co 12:13**
- **As Peter put it, God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him - Ac 5:32**

### **B. EXPERIENCED BY THOSE WHO GROW...**

1. **By singing psalms, hymns, spiritual songs**
  - a. We are to be filled with the Spirit - **Ep 5:18**
  - b. Which we can do by singing - **Ep 5:19**
2. **By studying the Word of God**
  - a. Which is the sword of the Spirit - **Ep 6:17**
  - b. The means by which the Spirit teaches and instructs the Christian, for it contains the revelation of God given by the Spirit to inspired men who wrote it for our benefit- cf. **1 Co 2:9-13; Ep 3:5-7**
3. **By praying, making requests regarding the Spirit**
  - a. That God would fill one with all joy and peace in believing, abounding in hope by the

power of the Holy Spirit - **Ro 15:13**

- b. That God would strengthen one with might through His Spirit in the inner man - **Ep 3:16**
- 4. **By turning away from sin**
  - a. Lest they grieve the Spirit - cf. **Ep 4:29-31**
  - b. Lest they quench the Spirit - cf. **1 Th 5:19**

## CONCLUSION

1. What a wonderful promise Jesus offers in our text...
  - a. The Holy Spirit to those who believe in Him
  - b. A refreshing drink that can become rivers of living water
    - 1) First refreshing our souls
    - 2) Then refreshing the souls around us by His impact on our lives
2. How sad if we **quench** the Spirit Who is intended to **quench** our thirst...
  - a. By failing to obey the Lord
  - b. By failing to grow in the Lord

May our attitude and heart's felt desire be similar to that of the Samaritan woman, when Jesus spoke to her at Jacob's well...

*“Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.’” (Jn 4:13-15)*

Are you willing to say to Jesus, *“Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst”* by coming to Him in faithful obedience...?

# The Light Of The World

## John 8:12

### INTRODUCTION

1. The gospel of John records at least seven remarkable claims by Jesus...
  - a. "I am the bread of life" - **Jn 6:48**
  - b. "I am the light of the world" - **Jn 8:12**
  - c. "I am the door" - **Jn 10:9**
  - d. "I am the good shepherd" - **Jn 10:11**
  - e. "I am the resurrection and the life" - **Jn 11:25**
  - f. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" - **Jn 14:6**
  - g. "I am the vine" - **Jn 15:5**
2. In making such statements, Jesus reveals much...
  - a. About the world around us, and the lives we live
  - b. About Himself, and what He has to offer to us
3. In this study, we will focus our attention on His claim to be "**The Light Of The World**" ...
  - a. As recorded in **Jn 8:12**... "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."
  - b. Made by Jesus in the treasury of the temple (part of the Court of Women) - cf. **Jn 8:20**
  - c. In which there were "two colossal golden lamp stands, on which hung a multitude of lamps, lighted after the evening sacrifice (probably every evening during the feast of tabernacles), diffusing their brilliancy, it is said, over all the city" - **Jameison, Fausset, and Brown**

[As we examine the words of Jesus, we notice what is implied about the world in which we live...]

### I. THERE IS DARKNESS IN THE WORLD

#### **A. THE SYMBOLISM OF DARKNESS...**

1. Used metaphorically to symbolize distress, mourning, perplexity, ignorance and death - **Isa 9:1-2; Job 5:14; 12:24-25; 10:21; 17:13**
2. Used figuratively of moral depravity - cf. **Jn 3:19; Ro 13:12-13; Ep 5:11**

#### **B. THE REALITY OF DARKNESS...**

1. Seen in the news (terrorism, war, oppression, sexual abuse, greed)
2. Viewed in the media (pornography, filthy language)
3. Experienced in life (adultery, physical and verbal abuse, false religions)
4. As described by the apostle Paul, many walk in darkness... - cf. **Ep 4:17-19**
  - a. In the futility of their minds
  - b. Darkened in their understanding
  - c. Alienated from the life of God
  - d. Ignorant because of the blindness of their heart

- e. Past feeling, given over to lewdness
- f. Working all uncleanness with greediness

[While there may be varying degrees of darkness in which people find themselves, if they live in the world they must contend with darkness. To those in darkness, Jesus offers hope...]

## **II. JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

### **A. HE IS THE LIGHT...**

1. A claim made elsewhere in the gospel
  - a. In the prologue - **Jn 1:4-9**
  - b. By Jesus on other occasions - **Jn 9:5; 12:35,46**
2. He is **the** light, not **a** light
  - a. Indicating that **He alone** provides the true light
  - b. Even as **He alone** provides the true and living way - cf. **Jn 14:6**
3. As the **light**, Jesus is the source of **life** - **Jn 8:12c**
  - a. The abundant life (with peace, joy, love) - **Jn 10:10; cf. Jn 14:27; 15:10,11**
  - b. The eternal life (including the resurrection) - **Jn 11:25; 17:2**
4. We must be wary of those who proclaim to offer "light"
  - a. Some may be servants of Satan - cf. **2 Co 11:13-15**
  - b. At best, one can only reflect what light Jesus has already bestowed

### **B. OF THE WORLD...**

1. Not for the Jews only, but for Gentiles (the nations) as well
  - a. As foretold by the prophets - cf. **Isa 49:6; 60:1-3**
  - b. As commanded of His apostles - cf. **Ac 26:15-18**
2. Available to all who believe, not an elect few
  - a. To everyone who believes in Jesus - **Jn 12:46**
  - b. To those who follow Jesus - **Jn 8:12b**

[How wonderful to know that in a world of darkness, we can have the light of life through Jesus Christ, the light of the world! Yet we should reiterate that He is truly the light...]

## **III. FOR THOSE WHO FOLLOW HIM**

### **A. BY BECOMING HIS DISCIPLE...**

1. Note the connection between **following** Jesus and being a **disciple**
  - a. The word "disciple" means a follower, a learner
  - b. Only those who follow Him will have the light of life
  - c. Therefore only those who become His disciples will walk in His light
2. How one becomes a disciple (or follower) of Jesus
  - a. It begins with faith - **Jn 12:46**
  - b. It includes baptism - cf. **Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:16**

### **B. BY ABIDING IN HIS WORD...**

1. Only by abiding in His Word...

- a. Are we truly His disciples (followers) - **Jn 8:31**
- b. Do we truly have Christ - cf. **2 Jn 9**
2. As we abide in His words, we not only walk in light, we become light!
  - a. Reflecting the light of Christ - cf. **Ph 2:15-16**
  - b. Proving what is acceptable, exposing that which is not - cf. **Ep 5:8-14**
  - c. The light of the world, bringing glory to our Father in heaven - cf. **Mt 5:14-16**

## CONCLUSION

1. Are you confused, stumbling in a morass of darkness, making a mess of your life...?
  - a. Come to Jesus, the light of the world
  - b. Follow Him, who will give you the light of life
2. You can become a light to others walking in darkness...
  - a. As you reflect the light of Christ in your own life
  - b. As you abide in His teachings, and follow His doctrine

In a world of darkness, let us walk in the light of Him who leads us to both the abundant life and eternal life...!

# The Truth Shall Make You Free

## John 8:31-36

### INTRODUCTION

1. One of the better known statements of Jesus is this: “*And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*” (Jn 8:32)
2. Today this popular statement is often used in a **political** context...
  - a. Referring to freedom from political oppression
  - b. Extolling the value of the free press, and freedom of expression
3. While such are notable virtues, Jesus had something else in mind...
  - a. Freedom from something more serious than political oppression
  - b. Truth that comes from only one source

[Let's examine the context in which Jesus' statement is found (i.e., **Jn 8:31-36**). From a careful reading of it we first note...]

### I. THE FREEDOM OF WHICH JESUS SPEAKS

#### **A. FREEDOM FROM SIN...**

1. The Jews misconstrued Jesus - **Jn 8:33**
  - a. They claimed to have never been in bondage (i.e., political oppression)
  - b. An odd claim in view of the present Roman occupation, and past Egyptian, Assyrian and Babylonian captivities!
2. Jesus explains the context of His statement - **Jn 8:34-36**
  - a. He is talking about **the slavery of sin**
  - b. He offers freedom from **the bondage of sin**

#### **B. THE BONDAGE OF SIN...**

1. There is the **guilt** of sin
  - a. A guilt shared by everyone - **Ro 3:23; 1 Jn 1:8**
  - b. Even if one has committed only one sin (if such were possible!) - **Ja 2:10-11**
2. There is the **power** of sin
  - a. Jesus describes how committing sin makes one a slave to sin - **Jn 8:34**
  - b. Paul illustrated the dilemma of one in bondage to the power of sin - **Ro 7:14-24**

[More oppressive than any kind **physical** slavery is the **spiritual** slavery that comes from being a sinner! While man may legislate political freedom, only Jesus provides freedom from the bondage of sin. How He does this can be seen as we now examine...]

### II. THE TRUTH OF WHICH JESUS SPEAKS

**A. HIS DOCTRINE...**

1. The truth of which Jesus speaks is His own word or doctrine - **Jn 8:31-32**
2. Which offers freedom from the bondage of sin
  - a. From **the guilt of sin** through the blood of Christ - cf. **Mt 26:28; Ep 1:7**
  - b. From **the power of sin** through the Spirit of God - cf. **Ro 8:1-2,12-13**

**B. WHICH WE MUST OBEY...**

1. To be His disciples indeed - **Jn 8:31**; cf. **Lk 6:46**
2. To be set free from sin - **Ro 6:17-18**; cf. **He 5:9**

**C. BEGINNING WITH BAPTISM INTO CHRIST...**

1. In which we are crucified with Christ - **Ro 6:3-4a,6a**
2. In which we die to sin, thus freed from sin - **Ro 6:6b,7,11a**
  - a. Its **guilt** removed by the blood of Jesus - **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
  - b. Its **power** weakened by the gift of the Holy Spirit - **Ac 2:38; Ep 3:16**
3. In which we rise to newness of life, free now to serve God - **Ro 6:4c,11b-14,17-18**
  - a. With the aid of the continual cleansing of Jesus' blood - **1 Jn 1:9**
  - b. With the aid of the Spirit in putting to death the deeds of the body - **Ro 8:12-13**

**D. CONTINUING WITH ABIDING IN HIS WORD...**

1. As stated by Jesus - **Jn 8:31**
2. As reiterated by John - **2 Jn 9**

**CONCLUSION**

1. Perhaps we can now better appreciate the significance of the Great Commission...
  - a. To make disciples by baptizing them - **Mt 28:19**
  - b. To make disciples by teaching them to observe all that Christ commanded them - **Mt 28:20**
2. For in carrying out the Great Commission into all the world...
  - a. We offer the truth that really makes one free!
  - b. Freedom from sin, the burden which truly oppresses mankind!

Are you under the heavy burden of sin, both it's guilt and it's power? Then respond to the Savior's tender invitation:

***“Come to Me, all [you] who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Mt 11:28-30)***

Accept His call to discipleship (“take My yoke...learn from Me”), remembering His promise in our text:

***“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.” (Jn 8:36)***

# Is God Your Father?

## John 8:42

### INTRODUCTION

1. We often hear people speak of the “Fatherhood of God”...
  - a. Suggesting that all people are the children of God
  - b. There is some truth to that, for we are all the offspring of God - cf. **Ac 17:28-29**
2. Yet in one sense, not everyone has God as their Father...
  - a. Jesus identified some who did not have God as their Father - **Jn 8:42**
  - b. He even said their father was the devil! - **Jn 8:44**
3. Who is your Father? God or the devil...?
  - a. If God is your Father, you will love Jesus - cf. **Jn 8:42**
  - b. Love of the Son is proof that we have God as our Father

[Do we love the Son? How does love for Jesus express itself? **We prove that God is our Father when we love the Son in at least seven ways.** For example...]

### I. BY TRUSTING IN JESUS

#### **A. CAN LOVE EXIST WHERE THERE IS NO TRUST...?**

1. Between husband and wife?
2. Between friends?

#### **B. SO TRUST IN JESUS IS INHERENT TO LOVING HIM...**

1. He asks us to trust Him - cf. **Jn 14:1**
2. How can we say that we love Him, if we don't trust Him?

#### **C. DO WE REALLY TRUST JESUS...?**

1. To be the way, the truth, the life (enough to put our souls in His hands)? - **Jn 14:6**
2. To be the provider of our daily needs (enough to put the kingdom first)? - **Mt 6:33**

[If we trust Jesus in this way, we must surely love Him - and thus God is our Father! But we also show our love for Jesus...]

### II. BY OBEYING HIS COMMANDMENTS

#### **A. KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS IS INDICATIVE OF LOVE...**

1. As Jesus made clear, time and again - **Jn 14:15,21,23,24; 15:10**
2. Can anything be more clear?
  - a. Yet some might accuse us of “legalism” because we stress keeping His commands
  - b. If keeping His commandments is legalism, then I plead guilty, because:



- 1) I love Him and want to abide in His love
- 2) Don't you?

**B. YET MANY FAIL TO DO WHAT JESUS TEACHES...**

1. He said to repent (**Mk 1:14-15**) - but many don't, while professing to love Him
2. He said to be baptized and observe all that He commanded (**Mk 16:16; Mt 28:19-20**)  
- yet many say baptism is not a necessary command

[Jesus said it best in **Lk 6:46**...why bother to call Him Lord if we don't do what He says? If God is our Father, we will obey Jesus Him gladly because we love Him. We also show love for Jesus...]

**III. BY DELIGHTING IN HIS COMPANY**

**A. IF YOU LOVE SOMEONE, YOU ENJOY BEING WITH THEM...**

1. E.g., friends, loved ones
2. Can you imagine someone loving Jesus, but not wanting to be with Him?

**B. YET IT SEEMS DO NOT ENJOY BEING WITH CHRIST...!**

1. Demonstrated by their disregard for His Word revealed by the Spirit - **Jn 16:12-14**
  - a. They don't make the effort to read it
  - b. They don't take advantage of opportunities to study it
2. Demonstrated by their lack of prayer which Jesus is willing to answer - cf. **Jn 14:13-14**
  - a. They don't pray as they should privately
  - b. They don't appreciate the blessing of congregational prayer
3. Demonstrated by their sporadic attendance - cf. **Mt 18:20**
  - a. Where Jesus has promised to be present
  - b. Where many seem to pass by opportunities to assemble

**C. WHY SUCH DISREGARD FOR THE COMPANY OF CHRIST...?**

1. For those new in faith, it is likely ignorance
2. For others, Satan and sin has hardened them into complacency - cf. **He 3:12-14**

[If we love Jesus, we will love the opportunities to be in His company. We will also show our love...]

**IV. BY SPEAKING ABOUT HIM**

**A. WE OFTEN DEMONSTRATE LOVE THIS WAY...**

1. "Let me tell you about my grandchildren!"
2. "You want to see the latest pictures?"

**B. SO THE EARLY CHURCH DEMONSTRATED THEIR LOVE FOR JESUS...**

1. E.g., the apostles - **Ac 5:41,42**
2. E.g., those scattered abroad by persecution - **Ac 8:1,4**

**C. DO WE NOT LOVE THE LORD...?**

1. How can we be the children of God, if we are ashamed to speak of His Son?

2. Imagine treating your family that way

[We should always be ready to speak about Jesus (cf. **1 Pe 3:15**). We also show our love...]

## **V. BY WILLINGLY SUFFERING FOR HIM**

### **A. MANY MAKE GREAT SACRIFICES FOR OTHERS...**

1. Parents give up much to be able to have and support children
2. People are willing to jeopardize their lives for loved ones
3. Even a dog will risk his life to save his master

### **B. DO WE LOVE OUR LORD ANY LESS...?**

1. Especially when we receive salvation through His suffering? - **He 5:7-9**
2. Paul called Timothy to join in suffering with him for Christ - cf. **2 Ti 1:7-12**
3. Peter likewise enjoins all to suffer willingly if need be - cf. **1 Pe 2:19-21; 4:1**

[Another way to express our love for Jesus, and thereby prove that God is our Father...]

## **VI. BY LONGING TO BE LIKE HIM**

### **A. CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE LOVE THROUGH IMITATION...**

1. By adapting mannerisms of the parents they love
2. Some good, some not (such as bad habits)

### **B. CAN ONE SAY THEY LOVE JESUS, BUT NOT WANT TO BE LIKE HIM...?**

1. Especially when imitating Jesus is the goal of Christian doctrine?
2. **Note Co 3:9-11; Ga 2:20**

[Finally, we show love for Jesus...]

## **VII. BY DESIRING TO PLEASE HIM**

### **A. CONSIDER PEOPLE IN LOVE...**

1. What man or woman won't go out of their way to please the one they love?
2. They'll change clothes, mannerisms, hobbies, etc.

### **B. CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE SIMILAR...**

1. For we are a pure virgin betrothed to Christ - cf. **2 Co 11:2**
2. Because of His love for us, we should live for Him - **2 Co 5:14-15**
3. Do you have a compelling desire to please Christ?
4. You do if you truly love Him!

## **CONCLUSION**

1. If one does not love the Lord Jesus, they are accursed - cf. **1 Co 16:22**
  - a. Why? Because if you do not love Jesus then God is not your Father, Satan is!

- b. If God is your Father, then you will love the Son and demonstrate in these various ways!
2. How does one initially become a child of God? - cf. **Ga 3:26-27**
- a. It involves faith, and putting Christ on in baptism
  - b. This demonstrates our love for Christ as well
  - c. For we are willing to become one with Him, just as two in marriage become one out of love

Is God your Father? Do you love Jesus enough to obey Him and become a child of God?

# By This All Will Know

## John 13:34-35

### INTRODUCTION

1. How is the world to know that we are truly disciples of Christ, members of His body?
  - a. Is it by **the name** we wear?
  - b. Is it by having **the right doctrine, organization, worship**, etc.?
2. It is certainly important to have all these things; but if we think...
  - a. That by these things alone we are truly the disciples of Jesus
  - b. That by these things alone the world will know we are Christ's disciples  
...then we are sadly mistaken!
3. Shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus identified **a key mark** of discipleship...
  - a. He gave what He called **“a new commandment” - Jn 13:34**
  - b. It was a command to **“love one another” - Jn 13:34**
  - c. He said **“by this all will know”** who were His disciples - **Jn 13:35**
4. Love for one another is how people will know that we are truly the disciples of Jesus...
  - a. Do we know what kind of love that is?
  - b. How do we develop that kind of love?
  - c. How do we demonstrate this love?

[In this study I wish to encourage the kind of love Jesus commands of us, so that **“By This All Will Know”** that we are truly His disciples! Let's begin with...]

### I. THIS LOVE DEFINED

#### **A. IT IS A NEW KIND OF LOVE...**

1. There had always been the love of family, friends, etc.
2. The OT taught to **“love your neighbor as yourself” - Lev 19:18**
3. But Jesus said, **“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another” - Jn 13:34**
  - a. This is not simply a command to love one another
  - b. But a command to love one another in a special way**-- Jesus is calling us to new and higher standard of love!**

#### **B. IT IS A SACRIFICIAL LOVE...**

1. What kind of love does Jesus command?
  - a. **“as I have love you, that you also love another”**
  - b. It is a love patterned after Jesus' love for us  
**-- This is what makes it a new and higher standard of love!**
2. The love Jesus had for us can be summarized in one word: **sacrificial**

- a. As Jesus explained in **Jn 15:13**
- b. As John wrote in **1 Jn 3:16-18**
- c. As Paul commanded in **Ep 5:1-2**
3. It was this kind of love manifested by the first disciples of Jesus
  - a. The church in Jerusalem - **Ac 2:44-45**
  - b. The churches in Macedonia - **2 Co 8:1-5**

### **C. IT IS A VISIBLE LOVE...**

1. By such love Jesus declared ***“all will know that you are My disciples”*** - **Jn 13:35**
    - a. The implication is that such love will be visible and observable
    - b. And visible by **all**, not just by brethren!
  2. To be a visible love, requires a love...
    - a. That goes beyond the four walls of the church building
    - b. That extends beyond the few hours we are assembled together
    - c. That can be observed by those of the world and in the world
- In some way, the world needs to have the opportunity to observe the disciples in action, in which their love that is patterned after Jesus' love can be seen**

[Being a “warm and friendly church” while assembled is commendable, but it alone does not fulfill the command to have a new, sacrificial, and visible love patterned after the love of Jesus! If we wish to manifest this kind of love in our lives, where do we begin? Consider...]

## **II. THIS LOVE DEVELOPED**

### **A. WE ARE TAUGHT BY GOD...**

1. The Thessalonians excelled in this love - **1 Th 4:9-10**
  2. For they had been “taught by God to love one another”
  3. Certainly God’s own love for us teaches us how to love - cf. **1 Jn 4:9-11**
- Think of the Father's own sacrificial love for us, in sending His Son to be the propitiation for our sins!**

### **B. WE LEARN FROM JESUS...**

1. Jesus’ own example of sacrifice teaches the true meaning of love - **1 Jn 3:16**
2. The more we contemplate upon the example of Jesus’ life and death, the more likely we will love like He did!

### **C. WE ARE TO BE STIRRED UP BY BRETHREN...**

1. We are to stir one another to love and good works - **He 10:24**
  2. An important means of doing this is by frequent assembling - **He 10:25**
- Perhaps one reason why some don’t love as they should, is because they don’t assemble like they should!**

[Through **careful study** of the Father’s love for us, the Savior’s love for us, and through **frequent assembling** where we stir up another to love and good works, we can develop the kind of love **“By Which All Will Know”** we are Jesus' disciples. Finally, a thought or two about...]

### III. THIS LOVE DEMONSTRATED

#### **A. IN OUR ASSEMBLY...**

1. When we are assembled and have guests, we have an opportunity to demonstrate our love for another
  2. What do our guests see? Do they see Christians who...
    - a. Are glad to see one another?
    - b. Are willing to take the time to visit with each other?
    - c. Even know each other's name?
- **Our assemblies may be the only time some guests have the opportunity to see Christians interact; do they see an evident love and concern for one another?**

#### **B. IN OUR COMMUNITY...**

1. We often have the opportunity to be together in ways that others can see...
  - a. Perhaps we work with other Christians
  - b. Or we have neighbors that are Christians
  - c. Or we gather to visit, or do things together
2. What do those in the world see? Do they see an interaction that...
  - a. Reveals a strong love and appreciation for one another?
  - b. Shows a sincere interest in each other's well-being?
3. Where there are differences, is the way we handle them different?
  - a. Christians will often sin against one another, offend one another
  - b. But will they see long-suffering and a quickness to forgive, even as Christ forgave us?  
- cf. **Ep 4:32; Co 3:13**

### CONCLUSION

1. Jesus has revealed a powerful tool to persuade the world that we are His disciples...
  - a. Certainly we show our discipleship by faithfulness to His doctrine - cf. **Jn 8:32**
  - b. But in a world that cares little for doctrinal distinctiveness, a Christ-like love for one another is how Jesus would have us convince the world! - cf. **Jn 13:34-35**
2. How is your love for your brother in Christ?
  - a. Is it **Christ-like**, i.e., a sacrificial love?
  - b. Is it **observable**, i.e., do people see your brotherly love in our assemblies and community?
3. If you admit your love for your brethren needs work (we all can improve)...
  - a. **Look to God and Jesus** as the ultimate teachers of what it means to love one another
  - b. **Utilize opportunities to be with brethren**
    - 1) Which provides occasion to grow and display your love
    - 2) Which can serve to stir you to love and good works - cf. **He 10:24-25**

*“...By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (Jn 13:35)*

*“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (1 Jn 4:11)*

# Fruit-Bearing Discipleship

## John 15:8

### INTRODUCTION

1. What does the Lord desire of His disciples...?
  - a. Surely He desires their heart (faith) - **He 11:6; Jn 8:24**
  - b. But He also desires their hands (works) - **Lk 6:46**
2. Works are an important part of our discipleship...
  - a. We are created in Christ for this very purpose - **Ep 2:10**
  - b. By them we glorify God - **Mt 5:16; Jn 15:8**

[Good works are an indication of “bearing fruit” as disciples of Christ. As we focus our attention on the theme of “**Fruit-Bearing Discipleship**”, let me reiterate that...]

### I. BEARING FRUIT IS NECESSARY TO BEING A DISCIPLE

#### **A. AS TAUGHT BY JESUS...**

1. Glorifying God by bearing fruit is a mark of discipleship - **Jn 15:8**
2. Disciples have been “appointed” to bear fruit - **Jn 15:16**

#### **B. OTHERWISE WE ARE CUT OFF...**

1. From Christ, the true vine, and His Father as the vine dresser - **Jn 15:1**
2. As branches that no longer bear fruit - **Jn 15:2**
3. Whose end is to be burned - **Jn 15:6; cf. He 6:7-8**

[The end of unfruitful disciples is dreadful to contemplate. Like the Hebrew writer (**He 6:9**), I wish to be more confident of better things regarding our discipleship. We can be, by remembering that...]

### II. BEARING FRUIT IS CONTINGENT ON ABIDING IN CHRIST

#### **A. AS TAUGHT BY JESUS...**

1. We must abide in Him, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself - **Jn 15:4**
2. Abiding in Him, we bear much fruit; without Him we can do nothing - **Jn 15:5**
3. As confessed by Paul in **Ph 4:13; 2 Co 3:5**

#### **B. HOW WE CAN ABIDE IN CHRIST...**

1. First, by putting Him on in baptism - **Ga 3:27**
2. Then, by abiding in His love through keeping His commandments - **Jn 15:9-10; cf. 14:15, 21-23**

[To be a disciple, we must bear fruit. To bear fruit, we must abide in Christ. To abide in Christ, we must keep His commandments. But what kind of fruits will disciples bear...?]

### III. BEARING FRUIT IS MANIFESTED IN VARIOUS WAYS

#### **A. WINNING SOULS TO CHRIST...**

1. As expressed by Paul in his desire to go to Rome - **Ro 1:13**
2. Disciples creating more disciples is a natural indication of bearing fruit - cf. **Mt 28:19-20**

#### **B. SHARING WITH THOSE IN NEED...**

1. As explained by Paul in describing the contribution to poor saints - **Ro 15:25-28**
2. Which was evidence of God's grace at work in the givers - cf. **2 Co 8:1-2; 9:12-14**

#### **C. DEVELOPING CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER...**

1. Indicating that one is walking in the Spirit - **Ga 5:16,22-23**
2. Evidence that is diligent in growing the true knowledge of Jesus - **2 Pe 1:5-8**

#### **D. PRAISING GOD AND GIVING THANKS...**

1. The fruit of our lips in praise and prayer are spiritual sacrifices - **He 13:15**
2. Which we are to offer continually - **He 13:15**

[As we bear fruit in these different ways, we not only glorify God and prove to be fruitful disciples, we also experience the "abundant" life of which Jesus speaks (**Jn 10:10**)...]

### IV. BEARING FRUIT LEADS TO THE FULFILLED LIFE

#### **A. WINNING SOULS PRODUCES JOY...**

1. As Paul found to be case with the Thessalonians - **1 Th 2:19-20**
  2. As John realized with his "children" - **3 Jn 4**
- **One reason many Christians do not live a life of joy is that they never bear fruit in leading others to Christ!**

#### **B. SHARING WITH OTHERS PRODUCES HAPPINESS...**

1. Those who give are "blessed" - **Ac 20:35**
  2. The word "blessed" can be translated "happy"
- **If Christians are so materialistic and selfish that they do not share, they will never know the blessedness of giving!**

#### **C. DEVELOPING CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER PRODUCES ASSURANCE...**

1. Growing in the true knowledge of Christ ensures an "abundant entrance" into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord - **2 Pe 1:8-11**
  2. Developing a Christ-like love gives assurance of one's discipleship and salvation - **Jn 13:34-35; 1 Jn 3:14,18-19**
- **Many Christians have no assurance; and no wonder, if their character remains unchanged as evidenced by little love for the brethren!**

#### **D. PRAISING GOD AND GIVING THANKS PRODUCES PEACE...**

1. Prayer is the antidote for anxiety - **Ph 4:6**



2. For in response to prayer God will guard our hearts through His peace - **Ph 4:7**  
-- **Failing to bear much fruit in regards to prayer, Christians will be filled with anxious lives, not abundant living!**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Why is “**Fruit-Bearing Discipleship**” so important...?
  - a. It is necessary to be a **faithful** disciple of Jesus Christ
  - b. It is necessary to be a **fulfilled** disciple of Jesus Christ
2. If you desire to be both a faithful and fulfilled disciple of Jesus...
  - a. Abide in Him by keeping His commands
  - b. Produce fruit that glorifies His Father

*“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” (Jn 15:8)*

If you are not yet a disciple of Jesus, then let His own words lead you to become one - **Mt 28:18-20;**  
**Mk 16:15-16**

# The Greatest Prayer Ever Prayed

## John 17:1-26

### INTRODUCTION

1. “Some brethren pray by the yard; but true prayer is measured by weight, and not by length.”  
- **Charles Spurgeon**
2. This statement is true, for the greatest prayer ever prayed is recorded in **Jn 17**...
  - a. It takes about six minutes to reverently read it aloud
  - b. There may not be much length, but there is certainly a great depth and weight!
3. Though there are approximately 650 prayers recorded in the Bible...
  - a. Not one of them can match our Lord’s “High Priestly Prayer” in **Jn 17**
  - b. Nor can any prayer recorded outside the Bible

[What is it about this prayer that makes it so great? At least four reasons can be given. From **Jn 17:1** we learn it is great because of...]

### I. THE PERSON WHO OFFERED THE PRAYER

#### **A. JESUS, REVEALED IN THIS GOSPEL AS...**

1. He who was with God in the beginning - **Jn 1:1**
3. He who was God - **Jn 1:1**
4. He who was in the beginning with God - **Jn 1:2**
5. He who was the Creator of all things - **Jn 1:3**
6. He was the light of men - **Jn 1:4**
7. He who became flesh and dwelt among men - **Jn 1:14**

#### **B. JESUS, PROCLAIMED IN THIS GOSPEL AS...**

1. The Word - **Jn 1:1,14**
2. The Lamb of God - **Jn 1:29**
3. The Son of God - **Jn 1:34**
4. The King of Israel - **Jn 1:49**
5. The promised Messiah - **Jn 4:25-26**
6. The Bread of Life - **Jn 6:35**
7. The Light Of the World - **Jn 8:12**
8. The Great “I Am” - **Jn 8:56-58**
9. The Good Shepherd - **Jn 10:11**
10. The Resurrection and The Life - **Jn 11:25**

[The prayer in **Jn 17** is great because the greatest Person who ever lived is the One who offered it! It is also great because of...]

## **II. THE OCCASION THAT DEMANDED THE PRAYER**

### **A. OCCASIONS PROVIDE WEIGHT TO WORDS...**

1. **Neil Armstrong** said, “That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.”
  - a. If he had made the statement while playing hopscotch with the neighborhood children, nobody would have paid him attention
  - b. He made it as he stepped down from his spacecraft, the first man to walk on the moon
2. The situation helped give weight to his words!

### **B. THE OCCASION SURROUNDING THIS PRAYER...**

1. Notice His first words: “Father, the hour has come” - **Jn 17:1**
2. What ‘hour’ is that?
  - a. His appointment with the cross - cf. **Jn 16:31-32**
  - b. A time of separation, betrayal, suffering, and crucifixion
  - c. A time in which God’s eternal purpose is about to be carried out
  - d. A time in which Jesus is about to bear the sins of the world on the cross!

[The occasion, in which Jesus knows His crucifixion is imminent, gives great weight to the words of His prayer. Whatever preoccupied the mind of Jesus at this time must be very important! The prayer was also great because of...]

## **III. THE CONTENTS OF THE PRAYER**

### **A. THIS PRAYER DEALS WITH GREAT THEMES...**

1. It takes us back and forward in **time**
  - a. Back to eternity past - **Jn 17:5**
  - b. Forward into the future glory in heaven - **Jn 17:24**
2. It deals with **glory**
  - a. The glory of the Father and the Son - **Jn 17:1**
  - b. The disciples glorifying God on earth - **Jn 17:10**
  - c. The Son giving glory to His disciples - **Jn 17:22**
  - d. The disciples beholding the glory of the Son - **Jn 17:24**
3. It discusses **love**
  - a. The Father’s love for believers - **Jn 17:23**
  - b. The Father’s love for Jesus - **Jn 17:23-24**

### **B. THIS PRAYER CONTAINS GREAT PETITIONS...**

1. “Glorify Me” - **Jn 17:1-5**
2. “Keep them” - **Jn 17:6-12**
3. “Sanctify them” - **Jn 17:13-19**
4. “That they all might be one” - **Jn 17:20-23**
5. “That they may behold My glory” - **Jn 17:24-26**

### **C. THIS PRAYER HAS THREE GREAT DIVISIONS...**

1. Jesus prays for Himself - **Jn 17:1-5**
2. Jesus prays for His disciples - **Jn 17:6-19**

3. Jesus prays for all believers - **Jn 17:20-26**

[Even a brief examination of its contents reveal the greatness of this prayer, and why it is worthy of careful study. Finally, a fourth reason why this is the greatest prayer: because of...]

#### **IV. THE VICTORY REVEALED IN THE PRAYER**

##### **A. THE CONCERN OF JESUS IS EVIDENT...**

1. Pertaining to **“the world”** (used 19 times!) and the effect it can have on believers
2. A justifiable concern, for we live in a world which is:
  - a. **Deceived** (blinded by Satan) - cf. **2 Co 4:3-4**
  - b. **Dangerous** (promises fulfillment, but will pass away) - cf. **1 Jn 2:15-17**
  - c. **Defiled** (defiling those who accept it) - cf. **Ja 1:27**
  - d. **Divided** (this is self-evident, especially in regards to religion)

##### **B. YET JESUS HAS OVERCOME THE WORLD...**

1. As He told His disciples prior to this prayer - cf. **Jn 16:33**
2. In this prayer, the victory in Jesus is revealed! The world may be:
  - a. **Deceived**, but Jesus has shown us **reality**, in revealing the only true God - **Jn 17:3**
  - b. **Dangerous**, but Jesus provides **security** as we are kept in God’s name - **Jn 17:11-12**
  - c. **Defiled**, but Jesus provides **sanctification** through God’s word - **Jn 17:17**
  - d. **Divided**, but Jesus offers **unity** through His glory - **Jn 17:22**

#### **CONCLUSION**

1. These four reasons help us appreciate why Jesus’ prayer in **Jn 17** has been called...
  - a. “The Greatest Prayer Ever Prayed”
  - b. “The High Priestly Prayer”
  - c. “The Lord’s Prayer” (not just that taught by Jesus in **Mt 6** and **Lk 11**)
2. It is indeed a great prayer...
  - a. But it is a prayer in behalf of those who are Jesus’ disciples
  - b. If you are not a disciple, Jesus’ prayer is that you first become one! - cf. **Mt 28:18-20**

Then as disciples of Jesus Christ, we should do all that we can to see that **“The Greatest Prayer Ever Prayed”** be fulfilled in our lives...!

**Note:** The main idea and many points for this outline came from a book by **Warren Wiersbe** which I believe is now out of print.

# Father...Glorify Your Son

## John 17:1-5

### INTRODUCTION

1. In a previous lesson we stated that the prayer of Jesus in **John 17** is “**The Greatest Prayer Ever Prayed**”, noting four reasons...
  - a. The Person who prayed the prayer
  - b. The occasion that demanded the prayer
  - c. The contents of the prayer
  - d. The victory in Jesus that it reveals
2. We now begin to take a closer look at this prayer, beginning with the petition Jesus makes for Himself in **verses 1-5** and asking...
  - a. What is Jesus asking for?
  - b. Why should God grant His request?
  - c. Was Jesus’ prayer answered?

[In regards to the first question...]

### I. WHAT IS JESUS ASKING FOR?

#### **A. THE PETITION EXPRESSED...**

1. “Father...glorify Your Son” - **Jn 17:1**
2. “Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” - **Jn 17:5**

#### **B. THE PETITION EXAMINED...**

1. **glorify** - “to exalt to a glorious rank or condition” - **Thayer**
2. Jesus asks to be restored to His state of glory He had before the world existed - **Jn 17:5**
3. His request implies two great truths concerning Jesus:
  - a. **His pre-existence**, as foretold in prophecy- cf. **Mic 5:2**
  - b. **His Deity**, for God shares His glory with no one - cf. **Isa 42:8**
4. Overhearing this prayer, we appreciate why John began his gospel with these words:
  - a. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God...He was in the beginning with God.” - **Jn 1:1a,2**
  - b. “...and the Word was God.” - **Jn 1:1b**
5. Thus Jesus asks the Father to reinstate Him to the glorious position He had before coming to earth

[This leads us to our second question...]

### II. WHY SHOULD GOD GRANT HIS REQUEST?

**A. “THAT YOUR SON ALSO MAY GLORIFY YOU...”**

1. Jesus desires to glorify His Father - **Jn 17:1**
  - a. Thus His prayer is not purely personal
  - b. He wants to reciprocate by utilizing His glory to honor the Father
2. Jesus provides an important example in regards to our own prayers
  - a. Do we ask for blessings that we might better serve God and do His will?
  - b. Many prayers go unanswered because they are for selfish reasons - cf. **Ja 4:3**
  - c. Our requests should always be with the Father’s will in mind - cf. **1 Jn 5:14**

**B. “AS YOU HAVE GIVEN HIM AUTHORITY OVER ALL FLESH...”**

1. The Father had already given Jesus ‘authority’ - **Jn 17:2**
  - a. Authority to give eternal life - **Jn 17:2** (more in our next study)
  - b. Authority to forgive sins - cf. **Mt 9:6**
  - c. Authority to execute judgment - cf. **Jn 5:26-27**
  - d. Indeed, all authority in heaven and on earth - cf. **Mt 28:18**
2. In view of such authority, it is only proper to receive glory to accompany it

**C. “I HAVE GLORIFIED YOU ON EARTH...”**

1. Jesus had glorified His Father on earth - **Jn 17:4**
  - a. By making His Father’s will and work His chief delight - cf. **Jn 4:34**
  - b. He came from heaven for this very purpose - cf. **Jn 6:38**
  - c. By His life and His words Jesus always glorified His Father
2. Again, Jesus provides an example regarding our own prayers
  - a. Do we base our requests solely on promises of what we will do?
  - b. Or do we seek to do His will first, and then ask God to fulfill what He has promised?

**D. “I HAVE FINISHED THE WORK...”**

1. He had finished the work given to Him by His Father - **Jn 17:4**
  - a. True, His greatest work (dying for our sins) had not yet been done - cf. **Jn 19:30**
  - b. But its accomplishment was so certain, Jesus could speak of it as done
2. Jesus illustrates the proper place prayer should occupy in our lives
  - a. Not something used only in the case of emergency
  - b. But complementing a life of devotion and service dedicated to glorify God!

[We now come to our third and final question...]

**III. WAS JESUS’ PRAYER ANSWERED?**

**A. YES, BY MAKING HIS DEATH SIGNIFICANT...!**

1. The significance of Jesus’ death gives Him great honor
2. As expressed in the book of Revelation - cf. **Re 5:9-14**

**B. YES, BY RAISING HIM FROM THE DEAD...!**

1. God declared Jesus to be the Son of God with power - **Ro 1:4**
2. And then gave Him glory - **1 Pe 1:21**

**C. YES, BY EXALTING HIM TO THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD...!**

1. God seated Him at His right hand, far above all things - **Ep 1:20-22; 1 Pe 3:22**
2. Jesus now reigns with authority over the nations - **Re 2:26-27; 3:21**

**D. YES, THOUGH MORE GLORY IS TO COME...**

1. When Jesus returns, He will be glorified in His saints - **2 Th 1:10**
2. He will sit on His throne of glory, as He judges the world - **Mt 25:31-32**

**CONCLUSION**

1. The words of Paul confirm that God has glorified His Son - cf. **Ph 2:9-11**
  - a. Having highly exalted Him, giving Him the name which is above every name
  - b. At which every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord
2. But we do well to also remember...
  - a. Jesus not only prayed “Father...Glorify Your Son” - **Jn 17:1,5**
  - b. Jesus also prayed that we might behold His glory! - **Jn 17:24**
  - c. Jesus desires that we share in His glory! - cf. **Re 2:26-27; 3:21**
3. From these two passages in the book of Revelation...
  - a. We know that God **has answered** Jesus’ prayer to be glorified
  - b. We know that God **will answer** Jesus’ prayer that **we** may behold His glory!

Do you want to participate in that glory? Confess and obey Jesus as Lord (cf. **Ac 2:36-38**), and then “hold fast” till He comes (cf. **Re 2:25**)...!

# This Is Eternal Life

## John 17:2-3

### INTRODUCTION

1. In His “High Priestly Prayer” (**John 17**), Jesus makes mention of **eternal life**...
  - a. “that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.” - **Jn 17:2**
  - b. “And this is eternal life...” - **Jn 17:3**
2. Eternal life is a major theme in the gospel of Christ...
  - a. Jesus was crucified in order to offer eternal life - **Jn 3:14-16**
  - b. Eternal life in Christ Jesus is the gift of God - **Ro 6:23**
3. But what exactly is eternal life...?
  - a. Is it simply a **future blessing**, pertaining to life after death?
  - b. Or is it a **present possession**, something to enjoy in this life?

[What does the Bible say? Let’s see if we can find the answer to the question...]

### I. ETERNAL LIFE: PRESENT OR FUTURE?

#### **A. ETERNAL LIFE AS A FUTURE BLESSING...**

1. Many scriptures refer to eternal life as a future blessing
    - a. Jesus spoke of it in this way - cf. **Mt 25:46; Mk 10:28-30**
    - b. Paul wrote of it in this way - cf. **Ti 1:2; 3:7; Ro 6:22**
  2. Thus many think of eternal life in this way
    - a. As a future blessing
    - b. An everlasting existence in the presence of God, free from death, sorrow and pain - cf. **Re 21:1-7**
    - c. Available in this life as a hope
- It is certainly scriptural to conceive of eternal life as a hope for the future

#### **B. ETERNAL LIFE AS A PRESENT POSSESSION...**

1. John often writes of eternal life as a present possession
  - a. As that which is abiding in one (or not) - cf. **1 Jn 3:14-15**
  - b. That God has given us eternal life, that we have eternal life - **1 Jn 5:11-13**
2. Might John be using a form of speech known as the **futuristic present**?
  - a. “This use of the present tense denotes an event which has not yet occurred, but which is regarded as so certain that in thought it may be contemplated as already coming to pass.” - **Dana & Mantey**, p. 185
  - b. Examples of such speech can be found in **Jn 14:3; 17:24**
  - c. If so, eternal life would still be only a future blessing, something to be hoped for
3. There is another explanation which I believe highly plausible
  - a. John chooses to use the phrase “eternal life” in a special sense



- 1) Describing a **quality of life** (and not just quantity of life) which comes by knowing God and His Son Jesus Christ
- 2) In the manner in which Jesus uses it in His “High Priestly Prayer” - **Jn 17:3**
  - a) Jesus says “This is eternal life...”
  - b) Defining it as “that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ...”
- b. In these sense, eternal life is a **present possession!**
  - 1) When we come to ‘know’ God and Jesus, we experience a **quality of life** that surpasses what the world has to offer
  - 2) As a present possession, this quality of life is a **foretaste** of the future blessing we shall experience with God
  - 3) As a foretaste, this quality of life can rightly be called eternal life
  - 4) For is not **our life with God now** really **the beginning** of eternity with God?

[Since Jesus spoke of eternal life in both ways, it is **both** a future blessing and present possession. As we come to ‘know’ God and Jesus, we begin to experience the blessings of eternal life. This naturally raises the question...]

## **II. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ‘KNOW’ GOD AND JESUS?**

### **A. THE MEANING OF THE WORD ‘KNOW’...**

1. There are two different words for ‘know’ in the Greek
  - a. **oida** - this word suggests a fulness of knowledge, coming from observation
  - b. **ginosko** - this word suggests a progression in knowledge, frequently implying an active relationship between the knower and the object known
2. In **Jn 17:3**, the word is **ginosko**
  - a. So to ‘know’ God and Jesus goes beyond knowledge of facts about them
  - b. It implies a progressive knowledge and understanding which comes by having an active relationship with Them
  - c. “To know the Father and Jesus Christ (for He is the only way to the Father) refers not to merely abstract knowledge, but to joyful acknowledgment of his sovereignty, glad acceptance of his love, and intimate fellowship with his person (through Scripture, that is, through his Word to us; and through prayer, that is, through our word to him).”  
- **Hendriksen**

### **B. WHAT IS INVOLVED IN ‘KNOWING GOD’...**

1. As suggested by Hendriksen, it involves communication through the **Word** and **prayer**
2. It is also directly related to **keeping the commandments** of the Lord
  - a. As emphatically stated by John in his epistle - **1 Jn 2:3-4**
    - 1) This is how we know that we know (**ginosko**) Him
    - 2) Otherwise we lie if we say that we know (**ginosko**) Him
  - b. As explained by Jesus to His apostles - **Jn 14:21,23**
    - 1) Keeping His commandments results in being loved by the Father and the Son
    - 2) Keeping His word results in the Father and Son dwelling in us
  - c. Thus we will ‘know’ (**ginosko**) them: ever progressing in knowledge because of an active relationship with God and Jesus!

## CONCLUSION

1. Eternal life is more than just a hope regarding a future blessing...
  - a. It is a present possession, an unparalleled quality of life available in this life
  - b. It is a blessing that comes from 'knowing' God and Jesus in a personal and progressive way
  - c. It is enjoyed only by keeping the commandments of God and Jesus!
  
2. In the course of our short sojourn in this life, 'knowing' God is most important... - **Jer 9:23-24**
  - a. More so than wisdom
  - b. More so than power
  - c. More so than riches

Jesus came to show us the only way to truly 'know' God, and to experience the eternal life that He made possible through His death on the cross. Are you walking in the commandments of the Lord that you might truly know God and His Son Jesus, and thereby experience eternal life...?

# I Pray For Them

## John 17:6-19

### INTRODUCTION

1. We noted that one of the reasons Jesus' prayer is "**The Greatest Prayer Ever Prayed**" was because of the **content** of the prayer
2. A previous lesson examined that part of the prayer in which Jesus prayed for Himself ("**Father... Glorify Your Son**") - **Jn 17:1-5**
3. In this study, we shall consider **the second part** of the prayer...
  - a. In which Jesus prays on behalf of His disciples
  - b. In which He prays for those He would soon leave behind on earth

[As we closely examine this part of the prayer (**Jn 17:6-19**), we note that Jesus makes a **threefold petition** in behalf of His disciples...]

### I. JESUS' PETITION FOR HIS DISCIPLES

#### **A. KEEP THEM IN UNITY...**

1. Note this plea in **verse 11**
  - a. "Keep through Your name..."
  - b. "...that they may one as We are."
2. Jesus' departure would tend to scatter the disciples - cf. **Jn 16:32**
3. While with them, Jesus had kept them together - **Jn 17:12**
4. With His departure imminent, it is understandable He was concerned they be kept in unity
5. The importance of such unity is explained later in **Jn 17:20-26**, and will be examined in our next study

#### **B. KEEP THEM FROM THE EVIL ONE...**

1. This petition is found in **verse 15**
2. Jesus knew that with His departure Satan would shift his efforts from Him to His disciples - cf. **Re 12:1-6,13-17**
3. Even so, Jesus does not ask for their **removal**, but their **protection**
  - a. Disciples need to be in the world that their presence might bless it - cf. **Mt 5:14-16; Ph 2:15**
  - b. The protection for which Jesus prayed is described in **1 Co 10:13; Ro 8:35-39**

#### **C. SANCTIFY THEM...**

1. This part of the petition is found in **verse 17**
2. That is, to set them apart for a holy purpose
3. Jesus even mentions the instrument of sanctification: **the Word of God!**
4. Through sanctification by the Word, the other parts of His petition would be realized

- a. The Word would keep them united in Christ
- b. The Word would keep them from the evil one (even as it did for Christ when He was tempted by Satan, cf. **Mt 4:4-11**)

[Thus Jesus prays for His disciples: **1**) to keep them in unity, **2**) to keep them from the evil one, and **3**) to sanctify them through the Word of God. In His prayer, Jesus also provides several reasons...]

## **II. WHY GOD SHOULD GRANT HIS PETITION**

### **A. THE DISCIPLES ARE THE FATHER'S GIFT TO HIS SON...**

1. Notice Jesus' words in **verse 6**:
  - a. "...the men whom You have given Me out of the world."
  - b. "They were Yours, You gave them to Me..."
2. J. W. McGarvey made the following observation:
  - a. "The Father is **possessor of all humanity** as the **Creator**."
  - b. "The Son by gift from the Father **possesses the believing portion of humanity** as its **Redeemer**."

### **B. THEY RECEIVED GOD'S WORD...**

1. They kept His Word - **Jn 17:6b**
2. They knew that all things God gave Jesus came from God - **Jn 17:7**
3. They received the words Jesus gave them, and believed He was sent by God - **Jn 17:8**

### **C. THEY ARE A JOINT POSSESSION OF THE FATHER AND SON...**

1. Jesus' prayer was for those who were both the Father's and the Son's - **Jn 17:9-10a**
2. The Father would naturally have a similar concern for the disciples
3. For they are not only the disciples of Christ, but children of God!

### **D. THEY GLORIFY CHRIST...**

1. Jesus was glorified in His disciples - **Jn 17:10b**
2. He is glorified when sinners become saints, for it is only by His blood and transforming power that such is possible
3. If Jesus' petition was not answered, then Jesus would not be glorified!

### **E. THEY NO LONGER HAVE CHRIST ON EARTH...**

1. Jesus was going back to the Father, leaving the disciples on earth - **Jn 17:11**
2. He had preserved them all while on earth, save Judas as foretold - **Jn 17:12**
3. Now leaving them, He wanted them to have His joy fulfilled in themselves - **Jn 17:13**

### **F. THEY ARE HATED BY THE WORLD...**

1. Because they are not of this world - **Jn 17:14-15**
2. Just as Jesus was not of this world - **Jn 17:16**
3. Following Christ had put them at odds with the world!

### **G. THEY ARE BEING SENT INTO THE WORLD...**

1. As Jesus was sent into the world by His Father - **Jn 17:18a**

2. So Jesus was sending His disciples into the world - **Jn 17:18b**
  - a. A world which hates them
  - b. A world under the influence of the evil one
  - c. A world which rejected the Son of God

#### **H. JESUS WAS WILLING TO SANCTIFY HIMSELF FOR THEM...**

1. For their sakes, He was willing to sanctify Himself - **Jn 17:19a**
  - a. To set Himself apart for a holy purpose (the meaning of sanctification)
  - b. Which He did by presenting Himself as the Lamb of God, to offer Himself for the sins of the world - cf. **Jn 1:29**
2. That His disciples might also be sanctified by the truth - **Jn 17:19b**

[On the basis of **eight reasons**, Jesus prayed for His disciples, that His Father might **1**) keep them in unity, **2**) keep them from the evil one, and **3**) sanctify them through the Word of God. Before we close our study, consider...]

### **III. HOW JESUS' PRAYER RELATES TO US TODAY**

#### **A. JESUS HAS THE SAME CONCERN FOR US...**

1. That we be kept in unity - cf. **Jn 17:20-21**
2. That we be kept from the evil one - cf. **2 Th 3:3**
3. That we be sanctified - cf. **1 Th 4:3**

#### **B. WHAT WAS TRUE THEN REMAINS TRUE TODAY...**

1. Disciples are the Father's gift to the Son - cf. **Jn 6:44-45**
2. Disciples have received God's Word - e.g., **1 Th 2:13**
3. Disciples are a joint possession of the Son and the Father - cf. **1 Co 3:23**
4. Disciples glorify Christ - cf. **2 Th 1:11-12**
5. Disciples no longer have Christ on earth - cf. **Ac 3:21**
6. Disciples are not of the world, even hated by the world - cf. **1 Pe 2:11-12; 4:4**
7. Disciples are sent out into the world - cf. **1 Co 5:9,10**
8. Jesus sanctified Himself for disciples today as well as those then - cf. **1 Jn 2:1-2**

### **CONCLUSION**

1. Jesus prayed for His disciples because...
  - a. They received the Word - **Jn 17:8**
  - b. They believed the Word - **Jn 17:8**
  - c. They kept the Word - **Jn 17:6b**
2. If we desire Jesus' prayer in our behalf today...
  - a. We must receive the Word - cf. **Ja 1:21**
  - b. We must believe the Word - cf. **Ro 1:16**
  - c. We must keep the Word - cf. **Jn 8:31**
3. Otherwise, we will **not**...

- a. Be kept in unity
- b. Be kept from the evil one
- c. Be sanctified by the Word of God - **Jn 17:17**

Jesus still prays for His disciples today (cf. **He 7:25**). His concerns are still the same. Are we doing our part by receiving, believing, and keeping His Word...?

# For Those Who Will Believe

## John 17:20-26

### INTRODUCTION

1. In previous lessons devoted to “**The Greatest Prayer Ever Prayed**”, we noted that...
  - a. Jesus first prayed for Himself (“**Father...Glorify Your Son**”) - **Jn 17:1-5**
  - b. Jesus next prayed for His disciples (“**I Pray For Them**”) - **Jn 17:6-19**
2. Jesus then prayed for “those who will believe through their word”... - **Jn 17:20**
  - a. I.e., those who would come to believe in Jesus through the teaching of the apostles
  - b. This would include everyone who believes in Jesus today

[In this **third and final part** of Jesus’ prayer, we learn what was heavy on the mind of Jesus concerning His followers during this difficult time just before His arrest and crucifixion. In our text (**Jn 17:20-26**), we can read of...]

### I. JESUS’ DESIRE FOR US

#### **A. THAT WE BE ONE...**

1. The **nature** of the oneness Jesus desires - **Jn 17:21,23a**
  - a. As He and the Father are one
  - b. Together with the Father and the Son
2. The **purpose** of the oneness Jesus desires - **Jn 17:21c, 23b**
  - a. That the world may believe the Father sent the Son
  - b. That the world may know the Father sent Jesus, and loved them
3. The **means** to the oneness Jesus desires - **Jn 17:22**
  - a. The glory which God gave Christ - **Jn 17:22**
  - b. **B. W. Johnson** offers the following insight as to what this ‘glory’ might be:
    - 1) “God gave Christ the glory of Sonship and this resulted in their unity.”
    - 2) “So Christ gives to his disciples the glory of becoming the sons of God (**Jn 1:12; 1 Jn 3:1**).”
    - 3) “This glory, the adoption and gift of the Spirit, ought to effect that they be one as we are one.”
  - c. **Adam Clarke** rephrases Jesus’ words in this way:
    - 1) “I have communicated to all those who believe, or shall believe in me, the glorious privilege of becoming sons of God;”
    - 2) “that, being all adopted children of the same Father, they may abide in peace, love, and unity.”

#### **B. THAT WE BEHOLD HIS GLORY...**

1. That we **be with Him** where He is - **Jn 17:24a**
  - a. That is, in heaven, as He had mentioned earlier - **Jn 14:3**
  - b. Using the futuristic present form of speech (e.g., **Jn 17:4**)

2. That we **behold His glory** given to Him by the Father - **Jn 17:24b**
  - a. That glory prayed for earlier - **Jn 17:1**
  - b. The eternal glory He had with the Father before the world was - **Jn 17:5**
  - c. When the Father loved Him before the creation of the world - **Jn 17:24c**
  - d. Glory like that depicted in the visions of Revelation - e.g., **Re 5:6-14**

### **C. THAT WE BE LOVED BY HIS FATHER...**

1. The Father **has loved** us - **Jn 17:23**
  - a. Manifested by sending His Son - **Jn 3:16**
  - b. Manifested by offering Him as a propitiation - **1 Jn 4:10**
2. The Father **will love** us - **Jn 17:26**
  - a. With the same love He has for His Son!
  - b. For all who keep His commandments - cf. **Jn 14:21,23**

[Such is Jesus' **desire** for us as expressed in His prayer: **1**) to be one; **2**) to behold His glory; and **3**) to be loved by His Father! How shall we react to such a prayer? Let me suggest...]

## **II. OUR DUTY FOR JESUS**

### **A. TO WALK IN UNITY...**

1. Preserving the unity of the Spirit - **Ep 4:3-6**
    - a. Keeping that which Jesus accomplished for us
    - b. Through doctrinal faithfulness to each of the seven 'ones'
  2. Attaining unity of mind and judgment - **1 Co 1:10-13; Ph 2:1-5**
    - a. In our dealings with one another as brethren
    - b. By developing and displaying the mind of Christ
- **That the world might know that God loves them and has sent His Son**

### **B. TO WALK IN FAITH...**

1. To remain steadfast to the end - **He 3:12-14**
    - a. There is a real danger of developing a heart of unbelief
    - b. We are partakers of Christ (and His glory) if we remain steadfast to the end
  2. To receive the crown of life - **Re 2:10; 3:21-22**
    - a. We must remain faithful till death
    - b. We must overcome if we are to sit with Him on His throne
- **That we might behold His glory in heaven and throughout eternity**

### **C. TO WALK IN LOVE...**

1. Love for God - **Mt 22:37-38; Jn 14:15,21; 1 Jn 5:3**
    - a. The greatest commandment of the Old Law
    - b. Demonstrated by keeping the commandments of the Lord
  2. Love for the children of God - **Ep 5:1-2; 1 Jn 5:2**
    - a. Imitating God who loved us
    - b. Demonstrated by keeping the commandments of God
- **That we might remain in His love**



## CONCLUSION

1. If we take Jesus' prayer seriously, we will do all we can to...
  - a. Walk in unity
  - b. Walk in faith
  - c. Walk in love-- **Are you doing your part to see that His prayer is answered?**
  
2. We note the concluding words of **"The Greatest Prayer Ever Prayed" ...**
  - a. Those disciples with Jesus knew that He was sent by God - **Jn 17:25**
  - b. He taught them that they might know the love of God and the fellowship of Christ - **Jn 17:26**
  
3. Years later, the disciple who recorded Jesus' prayer wrote an epistle...
  - a. That we might have share in the fellowship of God and Jesus - **1 Jn 1:1-3**
  - b. That our joy might be full - **1 Jn 1:4**

Both Jesus and John would have us share in the wonderful love and fellowship with God. May **"The Greatest Prayer Ever Prayed"** always encourage us to do what we must to experience it...!

# That The World May Know

## John 17:20-23

### INTRODUCTION

1. Shortly before His betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion, Jesus prayed to His Father...
  - a. For Himself - **Jn 17:1-5**
  - b. For His disciples - **Jn 17:6-19**
  - c. For all His future believers - **Jn 17:20-26**
2. His prayer is truly remarkable...
  - a. It has been called **“The Lord’s High Priestly Prayer”**
  - b. It is truly **“The Lord’s Prayer”**, a title normally given to the sample prayer found in **Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4**
3. We learn what weighed heavily on our Lord’s mind, knowing that “the hour has come:...”
  - a. He sought to be glorified by His Father
  - b. He was concerned for the well-being of His disciples
  - c. He wanted His followers to be one, even as He and the Father were one - **Jn 17:20-23**
4. It is our Lord’s concern for unity that I want us to examine in this study...
  - a. Why was unity so important to Jesus?
  - b. What has Jesus done that it might be accomplished?
  - c. In our religiously divided world today, how can we maintain unity among those who believe in Jesus?

[As we look closer at our text (**Jn 17:20-23**), we are immediately impressed with...]

### I. THE IMPORTANCE OF UNITY

#### **A. “THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE”... - Jn 17:21**

1. Without unity, it is difficult to persuade unbelievers that Jesus came from God
  - a. Those in the world care little about doctrine and theological distinctions
  - b. But in a world with racial, ethnic and cultural divisions, unity can capture their attention!
2. This is not to say that doctrine is not important!
  - a. Jesus had already emphasized the importance of abiding in His word - **Jn 8:31**
  - b. But the proclamation of truth must be accompanied by unity
3. When we are united in Christ, it gives credence to our claims
  - a. That Jesus was sent from God
  - b. That as the Son of God who rose from the dead...
    - 1) He lives in our hearts
    - 2) He has transformed our lives by the power of His resurrected life!

-- **Which is why some have referred to unity as “The Final Apologetic” (Schaeffer)**

## **B. “THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW”... - Jn 17:23**

1. Jesus again emphasizes the power of unity among His disciples to convince an unbelieving world!
2. Not only that they may know God sent Jesus...
  - a. But that God has also loved them! - **Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 4:9-10**
  - b. Indeed, even as God loves His only begotten Son (“as You have loved Me”)!
3. What a powerful message we have to share with the world!
  - a. God loves them even as He loves His Son!
  - b. But to convince the world of such love, unity among disciples is imperative!

[In light of Jesus’ prayer for unity, no true disciple can be content with religious division as it exists today (cf. **1 Co 1:10**). Paramount in our discipleship should be efforts to eliminate any kind of religious division that is contrary to the will of Christ! But how can we be one, even as the Father and the Son are one? Here are some thoughts on...]

## **II. THE ATTAINMENT OF UNITY**

### **A. JESUS HAS PROVIDED “GLORY” FOR US TO BE ONE...**

1. “Glory” which He had received from the Father - **Jn 17:22**
  - a. Which He had given to His disciples
  - b. Which enabled them to be one just as He and the Father were one!
2. What is this “glory” to which Jesus refers?
  - a. It may involve the idea of Jesus abiding in us
    - 1) I.e., the glory of Jesus abiding in us even as the Father abides in the Son
    - 2) Through such abiding, we may be made perfect in one - **Jn 17:23**
  - b. Certainly without abiding in Jesus, we can do nothing - cf. **Jn 15:4-5**

[Whatever the “glory” refers to, we should note that true unity comes from Jesus Himself; with this in mind, note the following...]

### **B. JESUS ATTAINED UNITY THROUGH HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS...**

1. As Paul expounded in **Ep 2:14-16**
  - a. The division between Jew and Gentile ended at the cross
  - b. Jesus died to make it possible for us to be one body! - **Ep 4:4**
2. When we come to Christ through obedience to His gospel, we are united with all believers in His one body!
  - a. We are baptized into one body - **1 Co 12:13**
  - b. Thus we begin the Christian life united with all believers in Christ!

[When it comes to **attaining** unity, Jesus accomplished the unity for which He prayed! Our challenge is **maintaining** this unity if we wish to honor Jesus’ prayer...]

## **III. THE MAINTENANCE OF UNITY**

### **A. REQUIRES THAT WE OBEY THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST...**

1. Unity is impossible without adherence to the same standard

- a. Unless there were standards regarding weights and measures, confusion and division would result every time we went to the store
- b. Religious division occurs because people accept different standards of authority
  - 1) Some accept the authority of a pope, presbytery, prophet, or preacher
  - 2) We cannot maintain the unity for which Jesus died unless we can agree on the same standard
2. For Christians our standard of authority must be that which...
  - a. Originated from Christ - cf. **Jn 8:31; Mt 28:18**
  - b. Was delegated to His apostles - cf. **Jn 13:20; Mt 28:20; Ac 2:42**
  - c. Was proclaimed and written by His apostles - cf. **1 Th 2:13; 1 Co 14:37**
3. Taught by His apostles, we must be careful to...
  - a. Observe **all** that He has commanded - **Mt 28:20**
  - b. Not allow traditions of men to make void the commandments of God - **Mt 15:3-6**
  - c. Not teach as doctrine the commandments of (uninspired) men - **Mt 15:9**
- **The “apostles’ doctrine” (i.e., the New Testament) must be our standard of authority, even as Jesus acknowledged when He prayed “for those who will believe in Me through their word” (i.e., the apostles’ teaching) - Jn 17:20**

#### **B. REQUIRES THAT WE HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST...**

1. As Paul instructed the Philippians - **Ph 2:2-5**
  - a. There is no place for selfish ambition or conceit
  - b. We must esteem others highly, and look out for their interests
2. As Paul wrote to the Ephesians - **Ep 4:1-3**
  - a. We must manifest lowliness, gentleness, longsuffering, forbearance in love
  - b. With such diligence, we "keep" (maintain) the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace
- **Without this “mind” of Christ, we will misuse the word of God and destroy the unity Jesus attained through His death on the cross!**

[With His doctrine before us, His mind in us, we can maintain the unity Jesus attained. With lives transformed by His teachings and His attitude, we provide visible proof to the world that Jesus did come from God and that the Father loves them also. Finally, some thoughts about a providing **a visible unity** (“**That The World May Know**”)...]

#### **IV. THE DEMONSTRATION OF UNITY**

##### **A. MUST BE MANIFESTED IN THE LOCAL CHURCH..**

1. It is in the context of the local congregation that unity will be most evident
  - a. For that is where interaction of Christians most often occurs
  - b. Note that the warnings against division were often addressed in the context of the local church - e.g., **1 Co 1:10-13; 3:3-4; 11:18**
2. Therefore unity truly begins “at home”
  - a. We may rightly deplore the religious division elsewhere
  - b. But our first concern must be preserving unity in our own congregation!
  - c. How sad when those who condemn religious division in the denominations can’t even preserve unity in their own congregation!

## **B. PRECLUDES ORGANIZATION ABOVE THE LOCAL CHURCH...**

1. In the New Testament, each congregation was self-governing and independent
    - a. Governed by a plurality of elders (bishops, pastors) whose authority was limited to the flock of God among them - cf. **Ac 14:23; 20:28; 1 Pe 5:1-2**
    - b. There was no authority above the local congregation other than that of Christ and His apostles
  2. It was only after the apostles died that things soon changed
    - a. “During the second century A.D. churches came to have a single bishop, and then that bishop came to exercise oversight over nearby rural churches as well as the city church so that his ecclesiastical territory became known as a “diocese” or “see” (“eparchy” in the East). Bishops of churches that had been founded by apostles were said to be in succession to the apostles, and hence their teaching was held to be authentic and their authority collegial. By 400 A.D. in the West, the bishop of Rome began to assume extraordinary authority above other bishops.” (**Holman Bible Dictionary**)
    - b. “Ignatius shows that in the early second century the office of bishop over the elders had developed, but Lightfoot has shown that it was not so in the first century.” (**Word Pictures, A. T. Robinson**)
  3. Such changes were not only unscriptural, but set the stage for denominational division
    - a. Churches were expected to line up under one bishop, patriarch, or council
    - b. Rather than let the Lord Himself judge each church (cf. **Re 2-3**), religious hierarchies began determining which churches were faithful
    - c. This has led to the denominational division so rampant today, and which presents a religiously divided picture to the world!
- **As long as the denominational practice of organizing churches under some hierarchy above the local church continues, religious division will remain!**

## CONCLUSION

1. No true disciple of Jesus should treat religious division with nonchalance...
  - a. It is contrary to our Lord's prayer for unity - **Jn 17:20-23**
  - b. It is condemned by Paul as a manifestation of carnality - **1 Co 3:3-4**
2. Unity among disciples of Christ must be a primary concern, for Jesus...
  - a. Died on the cross to attain unity
  - b. Believed it to be “The Final Apologetic” to convince the world that He came from God
3. Since Jesus **attained** unity through His death, our task is to **maintain** it by...
  - a. Following the doctrine of Christ as communicated through His apostles
  - b. Displaying the mind of Christ as we interact with one another in our local churches
  - c. Honoring the New Testament pattern of church organization, which is designed to slow the growth of religious division whenever it occurs

It is not always possible to avoid religious division (cf. **1 Co 11:19**), but may we do all we can to preserve the unity we enjoy in Christ!

# What Is Truth?

## John 18:37-38

### INTRODUCTION

1. When Jesus appeared before Pilate, the subject of truth was discussed...
    - a. Jesus claimed to bear witness to the truth - **Jn 18:37**
    - b. Pilate raised the perennial question: “What is truth?” - **Jn 18:38**
  2. Today, many people sound a lot like Pilate...
    - a. A Barna Research Group survey on what Americans believe asked the question, “Is there absolute Truth?”...
      - 1) Sixty-six percent of adults responded that they believe that “there is no such thing as absolute truth; different people can define truth in conflicting ways and still be correct”
      - 2) Seventy-two percent of those aged 18 to 25 expressed this belief
    - b. In a series of more than twenty interviews conducted at random at a large university, people were asked if there was such a thing as absolute truth - truth that is true across all times and cultures for all people. All but one respondent answered along these lines:
      - 1) “Truth is whatever you believe”
      - 2) “There is no absolute truth”
      - 3) “If there were such a thing as absolute truth, how could we know what it is?”
      - 4) “People who believe in absolute truth are dangerous”
- **Info from <http://www.christianity.co.nz/truth1.htm>**

[What is the Christian perspective regarding truth? Is truth whatever you believe? Can we know what is absolute truth? Let’s first summarize two basic views regarding truth...]

### I. TWO VIEWS OF TRUTH

#### **A. TRUTH CORRESPONDS TO REALITY...**

1. Commonly called the “**correspondence view**” of truth
2. A statement is true if and only if it corresponds to or agrees with factual reality
3. This view presupposes a law of logic called **the law of bivalence**
  - a. Any unambiguous, declarative statement must be either true or false
  - b. It cannot be neither true nor false; nor can it be both true and false
  - c. E.g., the statement “I am standing in front of you”...
    - 1) Is true only if, in fact, I am standing here in front of you
    - 2) Must be either true or false, it cannot be both true and false
4. The correspondence view of truth holds that propositional or declarative statements are subject to **verification** and **falsification**
  - a. A statement can be proven false if it can be shown to disagree with objective reality
  - b. E.g., the statement “The world is flat”...
    - 1) Is either true or false, it cannot be both
    - 2) Photographs from space have falsified flat-earth claims

- **This view of truth was held by the vast majority of philosophers and theologians throughout history until recently**

**B. TRUTH IS RELATIVE, NOT ABSOLUTE...**

1. Commonly called the “**relativistic view**” of truth
  - a. What is true depends on the views of persons or cultures
  - b. Not on whether statements correspond to objective reality
2. For a statement to be true simply means that a person or culture to believes it to be true; people with this view of truth say things like:
  - a. “Well, if that’s true for you...”
  - b. “We can’t judge other cultures”
3. Poet **Steve Turner** wrote a **parody** of this attitude and called it “**Creed**”. In part he said:

I believe that each man must find the truth that is right for him.

Reality will adapt accordingly.

The universe will readjust. History will alter.

I believe that there is no absolute truth excepting the truth that there is no absolute truth.

4. When truth is deemed dependent upon the person or culture holding the belief, anything can become “true”; **for example...**
    - a. One person can say “Jesus is Lord” and another can say “Allah is Lord”
    - b. Both statements will be true, if they accurately express the sentiments of the speakers
    - c. This view seems to advance tolerance and civility, but it does so at the expense of logic
    - d. The very definition of “Lord” precludes the possibility they are both “Lord”
  5. Those who say there is no absolute truth make decisions every day based things they believe are true or false; **for example...**
    - a. They turn on a light believing in the reality of electricity
    - b. They drive a car believing in the effectiveness of the engine
    - c. No one flying would want to be directed by a navigator who did not believe in the truth of his instruments
    - d. No one undergoing brain surgery would want to be operated on by a surgeon who did not believe that some things about the brain were true and some not true
  6. If there are no absolutes, there is no right and wrong
    - a. I can kill you, steal from you, lie to you, and you can’t say it is wrong
    - b. Because if I believe I should do such things, and succeed, then it works for me and it has become my personal truth (and who are you to judge me?)
    - c. “In the absence of truth, power is the only game in town.” - **Richard John Neuhaus**
- **Despite its absurdity, this view of truth has become the darling of all who want to be free to “do their own thing”**

[Christians have historically affirmed the “correspondence view” of truth. For good reasons, because it is consistent with...]

**II. THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF TRUTH**

### **A. BIBLICAL WORDS FOR TRUTH...**

1. True (**alethes**) - “unconcealed, manifest...actual, true to fact” - **Vine**
  2. True (**alethinous**) - “denotes ‘true’ in the sense of ‘real, ideal, genuine;’” - **ibid.**
  3. Truth (**aletheia**)
    - a. “objectively, signifying ‘the reality lying at the basis of an appearance; the manifested, veritable essence of a matter’ (Cremer)” - **ibid.**
    - b. “subjectively, ‘truthfulness,’ ‘truth,’ not merely verbal, but sincerity and integrity of character” - **ibid.**
- **When the Bible speaks of truth, it describes that which corresponds to reality, what is factual and absolute, not relative**

### **B. BIBLICAL STATEMENTS REGARDING TRUTH...**

1. God is a God of truth - **Deu 32:4**
  2. Jesus is the truth, and full of truth, and spoke the truth - **Jn 14:6; 1:14; 8:45**
  3. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, and guided the apostles into all the truth - **Jn 14:17; 16:13**
  4. The Word of God is truth - **Jn 17:17**
  5. The judgments of God are according to truth - **Psa 96:13; Ro 2:2**
  6. Christians should walk in the truth as revealed by Jesus, including the standard of morality He taught - cf. **Ep 4:17-32; 5:1-17**
  7. Christians should patiently teach others the truth - cf. **2 Ti 2:23-26**
  8. Many will turn their ears away from the truth - cf. **2 Ti 4:1-4**
- **Much more could be said, as the Bible reveals so much about what is truth**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. What is truth...?
  - a. Truth is what is real
  - b. God is real, and reveals what is real
  - c. God is truth, and what He says is the truth
2. Call yourself what you may, but you cannot be a Christian unless...
  - a. You hold the correspondence view of truth
  - b. You believe in moral absolutes of right and wrong
  - c. You accept Jesus and His Word as the ultimate source of truth, especially in regards to morality and salvation

For those willing to accept Jesus as the ultimate source of truth, they will be greatly blessed... - cf. **Jn 8:31-36**