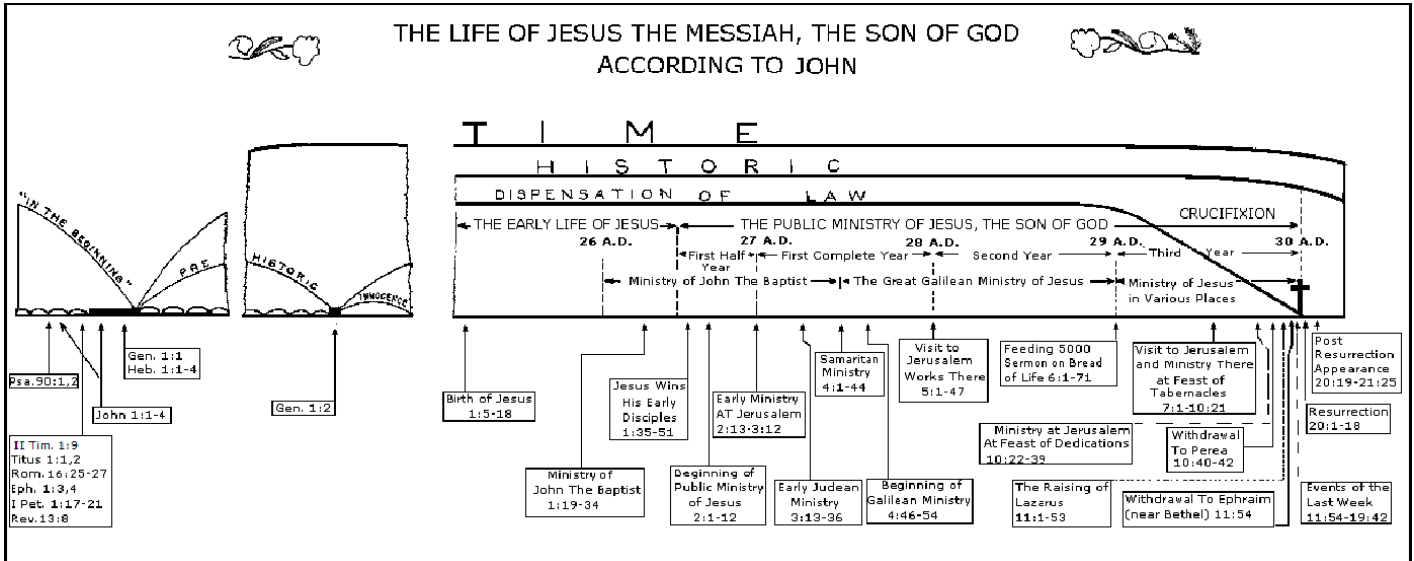


The Gospel According to John

Dr. David L. Cooper Th.M., Litt. D.
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The Gospel According to John

Biblical Research Monthly
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Dr. David L. Cooper
(Installment One)

PRELIMINARIES TO THE STUDY OF JOHN

The Synoptic Gospels the Background for the Gospel of John

With this article I begin a series of studies in the Gospel According to John, which I trust will prove to be a great blessing to every one who reads it. There are four records of the Gospel. The first three, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are called the *Synoptics*, they give a brief outline of the life and labors of our Lord during His personal ministry.

It is generally conceded by believing scholars that the Gospel of Mark was written by John Mark, who was an interpreter of the Apostle Peter, as we learn from Papias, one of the early disciples. According to tradition Mark wrote his record of the Gospel (by inspiration, of course) for the benefit of the Romans who liked to hear of a man of action and of deeds. Hence, the brevity of his record of the Gospel. He wrote, as is usually conceded, around 59 or 60 of the Christian Era—thirty years after the crucifixion and ascension of our Lord.

Matthew, it is likewise conceded, wrote his record of the Gospel for the Jews. This is quite evident from the material which is employed in the setting forth of the life and ministry of our Lord. The writer assumed, on the part of the reader, a knowledge of the Old Testament and a belief in the Writings of Moses and the Prophets. It is believed he wrote around A.D. 60, or just a little after Mark's record.

Luke wrote and addressed his Gospel (and Acts of the Apostles) to Theophilus, who was evidently a Greek. When all the data is taken into consideration, the believing scholar comes to the conclusion that probably Luke wrote his record of the Gospel before A.D. 63.

The occasion for the writing of the Four Gospels seems to be this: While the eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word who had accompanied Jesus during His ministry were still alive, the people preferred hearing the personal testimony of those who had seen and heard the Lord Jesus. One usually prefers the testimony of an eyewitness to the written message. But, with the passing of the first thirty years of the Christian Era, these eyewitnesses began to die off. Then there arose a demand that there be written records of the life and labors of the Lord. Hence, God satisfied this natural desire by giving us the three Synoptic records of the Gospel.

These three records run parallel, one with the other, with certain variations. Mark and Luke, as a rule, are chronological and present their material with the same sequence. There is, however, a section in Luke—9:51–18:14—for which there is no counterpart in Matthew and Mark. Luke tells us in his preface, 1:1-4 that he had done research and had written down an orderly account of the life

and deeds of our Lord from the beginning. Matthew and Mark did not have such an aim as that. We can see how Luke can have the fuller account of the life of Christ.

The Purpose and Authorship of John

To believing scholars it is apparent that John wrote his record of the Gospel in order to refute Gnosticism. This is also true of I John. The Apostle Paul, in the Colossian Letter, written about A.D. 63, combated Gnosticism, which has become known in ecclesiastical circles as the Colossian heresy. It seems quite apparent that Gnostic philosophy had invaded the Christian ranks to such an extent that it had to be dealt with in a complete and summary manner. John the Apostle, therefore, was led by the Spirit of God to write his record of the Gospel, the date of which is probably around A.D. 80. This record of the Gospel seems to meet the Gnostic heresy as it had developed about A.D. 80.

The Deity of Jesus in the Gospel Records

As stated above, Matthew, Mark, and Luke gave us a brief outline or survey of the life of our Lord. At the mouth of two or three witnesses everything should be established. Thus, in the three accounts of the Gospel, we have God's three witnesses to the life and ministry of our Lord.

But John came forth with his message demonstrating the deity of the Lord Jesus as none of the others had done. There is a great tendency on the part of rationalistic scholars to deny that the Synoptic writers presented Jesus as the God-man. But they say that this is what John did. Those taking this position overlook much data which has bearing upon the question in the Gospel of Matthew. For instance, in 5:17, the Lord Jesus said: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets...." The word "came" is a very significant term. This implies that He was somewhere else before He appeared on earth. He left that place and came to the earth. Of course, the place from which he came was none other than heaven, the immediate presence of God. Again, in Matthew 10:34, 35, the Lord Jesus said: "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I came to set a man...."

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus quotes words that God had spoken through Moses and then placed His own special message along beside them, or in opposition to it. For instance, in Matthew 5:21, 22 Jesus said: "ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, ...but I say unto you...." Throughout the Sermon on the Mount Jesus places His words on a level with those of the Father. This type of utterance assumes His equality with God.

Again, Jesus said: "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.... Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, ...(Matt. 7:21, 22). Here Jesus assumes that He is Lord and equal to God, who will sit upon the throne of judgment and render decisions with reference to the human family. In Matthew 11:27 we clearly see the deity of Jesus: "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal *him*."

These and other facts that are found in the Gospel of Matthew show that the writer believed in the deity of Jesus just as strongly as John does. In view of these facts, then, it is false to assert that the

Synoptic Gospels do not present Jesus as the Divine Son of God, God manifested in the flesh, but that they simply picture Him as a great Teacher and religious Reformer. It is clear from the reading of the three Synoptic records that the writers understood that Jesus was God in human form.

John simply, seeing the situation that had arisen, and that was confronting the Christian movement in the form of Gnosticism, presented the deity of Christ in a forceful and emphatic way, sounding the same note that had been struck by the other Evangelists.

The Gospel of John Largely Sermonic

As stated before, the Synoptic Gospels are really surveys of the life of our Lord. At the same time Matthew, for instance, gives us several sermons. The Sermon on the Mount (Matt., chaps. 5, 6, 7); the parables of the kingdom (Matt., chap. 13); the sermon denouncing the scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites (Matt., 23); finally, the Olivet Discourse (Matt., chaps. 24, 25). At the same time the bulk of Matthew is devoted to narration and accounts of the labors and teachings of Jesus. In contrast with Matthew, John presents various sermons and debates which Jesus had with His opponents at Jerusalem. For instance, in John, chapter 3, we have Christ's sermon to Nicodemus. In chapter 4, His message to the woman of Samaria at the well. In chapter 5 we have the controversy which arose concerning Jesus' healing the crippled man on the Sabbath, and also Christ's discourse concerning the four witnesses bearing testimony to Him. John, chapter 6, records the Lo'd's sermon on the bread of life, which He delivered in the synagogue at Capernaum, after having fed the five thousand the day before. In John, chapter 7, we have the debate which occurred between the Lord Jesus and His opponents at the Feast of Tabernacles, in the final year of His ministry. In chapter 8 we have the statement of His being the Light of the World and the debate which followed this message. Chapter 9 gives us the account of the healing of the blind man and the controversy that arose over this miracle. In 10:1-21 we have the parable of the Good Shepherd and the sheepfold which grew out of the occasion of Christ's healing the blind man. In John 10:22-39 appears the record of the clash which took place between our Lord Jesus and His opponents at the feast of Dedication. The narration of the raising of Lazarus, as recorded in chapter 11, is interspersed with statements and declarations which Jesus made. In chapter 14 we have one of the quiet talks which Jesus had with His disciples after having observed the Passover Supper and having instituted the Lord's Supper. In chapters 15 and 16 we have another quiet talk which Jesus had with His disciples on the way from the place where He observed the Passover in Jerusalem (probably the house of John Mark) to the Garden of Gethsemane. In John, chapter 17, is recorded our Lord's prayer, which He prayed just before entering Gethsemane. After He entered the Garden, He praye', as all four of the Evangelists tell us. From this little survey we can see that John is indeed sermonic, and that we should recognize these literary units and study each as a whole.

Certain Words Characteristic of John's Gospel

John records seven miracles which Christ performed. These he designates as signs. By the use of this term he is laying the emphasis upon the purpose of Christ's performing these miracles. He recognizes that they are manifestations of divine power, but lays emphasis upon the fact that they served as proof, as evidence of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus. But he tells us that "these

are written, that ye believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name” (John 20: 30, 31).

John lays great emphasis upon the word “believe.” If one studies this Gospel carefully, he will see that emphasis is laid upon belief, and the growing faith on the part of the disciples of Jesus, whereas he also emphasizes the thought that unbelief and distrust likewise were developing on the part of His opponents.

John also is very fond of the use of the word “life.” By this he means life that is imparted to the believer who accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, Lord, and Master. He also uses other abstract terms, but is very simple in his style and presentation of the material which he has for us.

The Passover Feasts Mentioned in John

John mentions three Passover Feasts and another feast, which he designates “the feast of the Jews,” mentioned in John 5:1. Believing scholars generally are of the opinion that this feast thus mentioned is another Passover. If this supposition is correct, the ministry of Jesus lasted three and a fraction of years, usually spoken of as three and a half years.

If a person will study carefully, he will see that there is quite a bit of activity, deeds, and movements that occurred before the first feast which is mentioned in John 2:13. For instance, Jesus left Nazareth, went to the Jordan, was baptized then spent forty days in the wilderness, being tempted of the devil. Then He came back to the place where John was baptizing after that ordeal. How long He stayed there, we cannot say. Then He returned to Galilee and attended a marriage feast at Cana of Galilee. After this He moved His headquarters from Nazareth to Capernaum. All these movements took some time; hence we say, roughly speaking, that something like half a year passed before the first Passover in our Lord’s ministry.

At this first Passover there was a great movement toward Jesus, as we are told that “many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did” (2:23). At this time He had His famous talk with Nicodemus, in which He declared that men must all, everywhere, be born again.

The second Passover in our Lord’s personal ministry is mentioned in John 6:4. Jesus did not attend the Passover at Jerusalem as He did on other occasions, but was in Galilee, as the facts in the parallel passages in the Synoptic Gospels and as those mentioned by John indicate. The events connected with this Passover are given in John, chapter 6.

In 5:1 we read of “the feast of the Jews.” As stated above, conservative scholars are of the conviction that this is a third Passover mentioned in our Lord’s ministry. If this conclusion is correct, two and a half years of our Lord’s life have passed by, by the time we reach John, chapter 6.

The fourth and last Passover is recorded in John 12:1. Here Jesus attended the Passover in Jerusalem. For it was at this time that He was crucified and buried—but He arose again and ascended to glory, as all the Evangelists tell us.

The Glories of Jesus the Messiah

As we study the life of our Lord, presented by John, we shall see Him in His glory, sublimity, and beauty, as in no other portion of the Word. We shall feel His pulse and heartbeat. And we shall experience a thrill derived from a knowledge of His love for us, and a desire for the redemption of the human family.

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
 (Installment Two)

THE PROLOGUE OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The most important verse of the Scriptures is Deuteronomy 6:4 which, when properly translated, reads as follows: "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity." This passage is a recognition of the fact that there is but one true and living God, who exists in the form of three persons—one Divine Essence, but three Divine Persons. If a person does not understand this basic scriptural doctrine, he will find many passages which are utterly unintelligible to him. But when he has the proper scriptural conception of this passage, he can understand thousands of others that are dependent directly upon it. No one can understand the prologue of the Gospel of John unless he is acquainted with the doctrine of the triune nature of God as set forth in Deuteronomy 6:4.

The Eternal Existence of the Word

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1,2). These verses take us back to eternity in the past, which antedated time, and which is referred to in Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The Word (Gr., *Logos*) existed throughout all eternity in the past. Such is the force of the imperfect tense of the verb which is used in this verse. This verse is an affirmation that the Word is co-eternal and co-equal with God. John asserts, moreover, that the Word was with God, that is, in intimate association with God. Then he is bold and declares that "divine was the Word."

Certain ones who have some special, peculiar, heretical doctrine to support have translated the last statement in John 1:1 as follows: "... and a God was the Word." No competent Greek grammarian would ever render this clause thus. The word meaning "God" is in the emphatic place in the sentence and emphasizes the fact that the Word was and is divine.

In connection with John 1:1 a person should study carefully Philippians 2:5-11. The same basic teaching of John 1:1 is reiterated, with amplifications and modifications, in this Philippian passage.

Possibly the fullest statement of the twofold nature of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is found in Hebrews, chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 1 quotes voluminously from Old Testament passages that show the divine side of the nature of our Lord. Chapter 2, however, emphasizes the fact that He, though God, was indeed a man. He was not God *and* man, but He was *the God-man*.

The Word the Creator of All Things

"3 All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made" (John 1:3). The testimony of John that Christ was the one who created all things that have been made is substantiated by Paul's statement in the Colossian Letter. In speaking of Christ, the Apostle declared that He is "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; 16 for in

him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; 17 and he is before all things, and in him all things consist” (Col. 1:15-17).

On the other hand, there are explicit statements affirming that God is the one who created all things. For instance, in Hebrews 1:2 the Apostle speaks of Christ “through whom also he [God] made the worlds.” This passage shows that God did the creating, but He did it through Christ the Son. Again, in Romans 11:36, Paul declared : “For of him [God the Father], and through him, and unto him, are all things.” Once again, the Apostle in I Corinthians 8:6 said: “6 yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him.” Here all things are traced back to God the Father as the Creator. Once again, we read in Hebrews 2:10 that “it became him [God], for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

Since there is perfect harmony between the persons of the Godhead, and since the creation of the universe is attributed in certain passages to God the Father, and in others, to God the Son, we come to the conclusion that both had a part in the creation of the universe. What one person does through another he is said to do himself. Hence, there is perfect agreement between these seemingly contradictory passages.

In the Word was Life and Light

“4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not” (John 1:4,5). The words, life and light, are both philosophical and scientific terms. There has been much learned discussion pro and con with reference to the real significance of the use of these terms in this passage. After everything is said and done of which man can think, he is still far from the solution to the real significance of the terms. What is life? What really is light? What is the essential nature of both? We shall have to bow our heads before the GREAT I AM and say, “We do not know!”

However, there are a few things that we do know about life, and there are also a few things that we do know about light. But what we know about them is so very infinitesimally small in comparison with the realities, it behooves us to tread very lightly on such holy ground.

Though these are profound, philosophical, abstract terms, yet we can in a limited manner ascertain what John meant. Physically speaking, we can detect life and also recognize the absence of life after it has become extinct in a body. We can also differentiate between light and darkness, even though our knowledge of light is limited.

John is using these terms in a spiritual sense, that is, in speaking of realities of the spiritual world, he uses terms of the material, physical universe. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Those who have turned to Christ and accepted Him as Saviour and have been born again, know experimentally what is meant by *life*. Those who are walking in fellowship with the Lord Jesus also know experimentally what is meant by the word *light*. The Lord Jesus, as we see in John

8:12, declared that He was and is the Light of the world. It was true when He made that statement; it is true today; and it will ever be true.

Once more, Jesus declared, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh to the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). The Lord Jesus Christ is the Way to God. He is the Life, the one alone who dispenses life eternal, life that endures forever and ever. At the same time, He is the Truth, the very embodiment of truth in the highest, truest sense of the term.

The Herald of the Messiah

“6 There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but *came* that he might bear witness of the light” (John 1: 6-8). According to Isaiah 40:1-5 the Lord sends a messenger before the face of the Messiah when he makes his second appearance upon the earth. The facts of the context of this passage show that the prophet was talking about the second coming. While this interpretation is demanded by the facts of the context, we know that this passage was quoted by Matthew, in chapter 3, and applied to John the Baptist. This fact being true, we see that this passage in Isaiah is an illustration of the law of double reference. In the beginning of the vision Isaiah saw the first coming of Christ and John the Baptist as the herald of that advent. This picture blends in with the description of the second coming of Christ, which will be announced by Elijah the prophet, who will be sent back to earth to perform a special ministry in Israel. We see the same situation in Malachi 3:1: “Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts.” A description of the two comings of the one Messiah, preceded each time by a herald, is likewise blended in this passage into a single picture by the law of double reference. An examination of John 1:6-8 shows that John had these predictions of Isaiah and Malachi in view. Especially the language of Malachi determines the phraseology used by the writer on this occasion.

Christ the True Light Not Recognized by the World Which He Created

“9 There was the true light, *even the light* which lighteth every man, coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, *even* to them that believe on His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1: 9-13). Here John declares that Christ was the light of the world, who lights everyone that comes into the world. Even though He does this for every individual, when he made His advent into the world, the men of the world as a rule did not recognize him. There were a few—a very few—who had spiritual understanding and recognized that He who was in their midst was the Creator of the universe.

He came Into the world, entering it by miraculous conception and virgin birth, being born of a Hebrew virgin. Thus He identified himself with the Hebrew race. He came, therefore, to the Hebrews, and they who were His own people did not perceive who he was. But to as many as did

receive him, He gave the right, the privilege, or the opportunity of becoming children of God—even to those who believe on His name.

These were born again, as we shall learn from the third chapter of John. Their birth is not the result of blood, that is, of the physical nature; neither were they born of the will of the flesh. The flesh lusts against spiritual things. Nor were they born of the will of man, but of God. God took the initiative and does everything in His power, using all moral, spiritual persuasion, to get men to accept the truth. Hence, this fact is in perfect accord with the statement in John 1:13.

The Word Became Flesh and Tabernacled Among Us

“14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth. 15 John beareth witness of Him, and crieth, saying, This was he of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me: for he was before me” (John 1:14,15). The statement, “the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us,” is just another way of saying that the Word, Christ the Eternal Logos, entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. He became a man. He did not lay aside His essential divine nature; but, in coming into the world, He became a man and tabernacled among us for thirty-odd years. He was the God-man, full of grace and truth. The glory of God shone forth through His very being. But men were blind and could not see. Some, however, such as Nathanael, even at first sight, being an Israelite in whom there was no guile, instantly recognized Jesus as the Son of God and the King of Israel. Of course, the Apostles and others who gave their hearts to the Lord Jesus, had their spiritual vision opened. They recognized that He was the Son of God, in a sense, a unique sense, that no other mortal can claim.

Grace and Truth Came Through Christ

“16 For of His fullness we all received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*” (John 1:16-18). We are told that the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. According to the Book of Exodus God gave His law through Moses at Sinai, when He spoke from its heights the Ten Commandments. After His proclamation of the law from Sinai, He entered into a covenant with Israel by blood. This is seen in Exodus chapter 24.

After the covenant was made and ratified, God revealed Himself in mercy and in grace by giving the Tabernacle service and the ritualism involving certain sacrifices that were to make atonement for the sins of the people, that is, those that were committed unwittingly and through the weakness of the flesh. Although the law was in force from Moses to Christ, everyone who was saved, was saved by the sovereign mercy of God. He availed himself of it by faith. Grace “was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal, 10 but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (II Tim. 1:9,10). Thus the highest expression of God’s grace, mercy and truth are seen in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is of this truth that John is speaking in the verse under consideration.

“No man hath seen God at any time,” asserted the Apostle. But the Son, who is “the only begotten,” and who is in the bosom of the Father, has revealed and declared God unto us. He who has seen Christ has seen God.

The closer one walks with God and Christ by faith, the more will Christ reveal himself to him. Let us, therefore, walk with him daily by faith.

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Dr. David L. Cooper
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THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Matthew and Luke give the birth narratives of the Lord Jesus Christ in chapters 1 and 2 of their records. Mark begins his narrative with the great Galilean ministry of our Lord. John in his prologue (1:1-18), goes back into eternity and shows that Christ was God, and that He was in association with God, throughout the endless ages of the past. Then he tells us that the Word (Christ) became flesh and dwelt among us. This is just another way of speaking of the natural birth of the Lord Jesus. We can say, therefore that John begins the human narrative of the life of Christ just where Matthew and Luke do, only in a short, abbreviated manner.

Following this, he gives us the ministry of John the Baptist. This is found in John 1:19-42. John the Baptist broke the silence of four hundred years of the Inter-Biblical Period by announcing that the time had been fulfilled, and that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. He was in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming his message of the advent of the long-expected Messiah. The people flocked to his services. The nation was thrilled from center to circumference. They could hardly realize that God was fulfilling prophecy in their day and time. Whereas the great majority of the people were not looking for the Messiah at that time, and were startled by John's announcement that the kingdom of heaven had come near, there was a small group of people who studied prophecy, who believed what the prophets said, and who were looking forward to the coming of the Messiah in their own day and time. Among these were good old Simeon and Anna the prophetess (Luke 2:22-39). Those who believed the voices of the prophets, who studied them, and who wanted to do the will of God, realized the seriousness of the times in which they were living and were confident that that was the time for Messiah to make His first advent.

There are students of the prophetic word today who see what the messengers of God said, who are able to interpret these prophecies, and who assure us that the time is fast approaching for the return of Messiah. Anyone who believes God and His Word, and who takes Him at exactly what He says, can realize the seriousness of the times in which we are living. Nevertheless, the bulk of humanity pays no attention to what God has said in the prophetic portion of the Word. They consider those students who call attention to these things as being rather wild and fanciful in their thinking. But such people will eventually see that the students of prophecy are right, and that it pays to study *all* the Bible—including the prophecies.

A Delegation From the Authorities at Jerusalem Calls Upon John

In John 1:19 we are told that the Jews at Jerusalem sent a delegation of priests and Levites to John to ask him as to his identity and his authority for launching such a preaching ministry as he had inaugurated. Not knowing the Scriptures, they were amazed at this sudden appearance and at his message.

They therefore asked him, in the first place, if he were the Messiah. The Greek word *Christ* means “Messiah,” or “Anointed.” The term *Messiah* means the expected King of Israel, who was foretold by the prophets. John immediately confessed and denied not, saying, “I am not the Messiah.” He certainly did know who he was and who he was not! His denial was positive proof that he was not.

The second question which they asked was: “Are you Elijah?” Before we consider his answer, let us remember that in the last two verses of the Old Testament, God promised: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come” (Mal. 4:5). Elijah will be sent to perform a special ministry of restoring the normal family relationships in Israel lest the Lord “come and smite the earth with a curse.” According to Malachi’s prophecy God will send Elijah the prophet, who lived in the days of Ahab the King of Israel, and who played such a prominent part in political affairs at that time.

John confessed and said that he was not Elijah. He certainly ought to have known!

When the angel Gabriel announced to Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, that he was to become the glad father of a son whom he should name John, the angel said that he should go before the face of the Lord “in the spirit and power of Elijah.” Note the language: He should not be Elijah, but should be a man similar to Elijah, going before the face of the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah.

At the transfiguration scene Moses and Elijah appeared with Christ on the holy mount. After the vision passed, the disciples asked Jesus, “Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come?” (Matt. 17:10). John the Baptist had been dead something like twelve months at that time. Jesus said, “Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things: 12 but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they would.... Then understood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist” (Matt. 17:11-13). According to this prediction of our Lord, Elijah will yet come and will perform the work that was foretold by Malachi the prophet. According to this prophecy, Elijah is to come *before*—immediately before—the great and terrible day of Jehovah, that is before the great Tribulation. But the Lord Jesus said that Elijah had already come, and that the people had done to him whatsoever they would. Then the disciples understood that he did not mean Elijah the prophet, but one like Elijah, who was John the Baptist. John was *an* Elijah, not Elijah himself.

We may, therefore, upon the authority of Malachi and the Lord Jesus Christ, expect Elijah to return to earth and to perform the ministry in Israel of restoring the family relations, just before the great and terrible day of Jehovah, the Tribulation, bursts forth upon the world.

After John denied that he was Elijah, the delegation put the third question to him: “Art thou the prophet?” The one concerning whom they asked this question is the prophet mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:15-19. According to Peter’s statement in Acts 3:22-26 the prophet to whom they referred, and whose advent Moses foretold, is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, these Jews from Jerusalem did not identify the prophecy as a messianic prediction. Of course, they were mistaken.

When they asked John, “Art thou the prophet?” they were asking him, in substance, if he were the Messiah. Of course John denied that he was.

Then they asked him, “Who art thou?” Since he was none of those for whom the nation was looking, they asked him who he was. His reply was that he was the “voice” mentioned by the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 40:1-5). An examination of this passage in its context shows that Isaiah was speaking primarily about the Messiah at His second advent, and His being preceded by a herald, namely, Elijah. At the same time, according to the New Testament, Isaiah in this very vision saw John the Baptist preceding the Messiah at His first coming, as well as seeing the Messiah when He returns, being heralded by Elijah the prophet.

John concluded his testimony to this delegation from Jerusalem by saying: “I baptize in water: in the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not, *27 even* he that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose” (John 1:26, 27). These things were done at Bethany, which was beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing at first.

John Identifying Jesus as the Lamb of God

On the day following the visit of this delegation from Jerusalem, Jesus was coming toward John. Let us remember that the Lord had already been tempted by the Devil for forty days. After that He came back to the place where John was baptizing. When John saw Jesus coming, he spoke saying: “Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). This language is an echo of Old Testament predictions. All of the sacrifices that were offered at the Tabernacle and Temple were types looking forward to and foreshadowing the coming of the real One who would make atonement for man. Whether or not John had one particular offering in mind when he used this language, we cannot say. If he had been thinking of the ritualism of the Day of Atonement, the scapegoat, to which the high priest transmitted symbolically all the sins of Israel, is meant. John’s language would seem to imply that. Just as the scapegoat bore the sins of Israel symbolically away to Azazel in the wilderness, thus the Lord Jesus Christ would have the sin of the world laid upon Him, and He would bear it away. Regardless of which prophecy John the Baptist had in mind when he used this language, we may be certain that there loomed before his sight such a passage as Isaiah, chapter 53, which foretells the vicarious suffering and atonement of the Messiah for the sins of the world.

John said, “Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!” He used the word *sin* in the singular. It is quite likely, and probable, that the sin of the world to which he refers is *unbelief*. That seems to be the one besetting sin of all men. It is thus held up in the Gospel of John. It is quite fitting to interpret “sin” in this place, at the beginning of the Gospel, as referring to the outstanding sin of unbelief.

John the Baptist, though a relative of Jesus, did not know Him personally. He states that fact twice. In verse 31 he said: “And I knew him not.” Again, in verse 33 he repeated the same thing. We are to take this language at exactly what it says, since there is nothing to indicate a departure from the normal, literal meaning.

John declared, “this is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is become before me: for he was before me” (1:30). Christ was before John. He was from all eternity, co-equal and co-eternal with God and with the Holy Spirit. This being true, Jesus said in a discussion with the Jews: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am” (John 8:58). John then stated that he did not know Jesus, but that God, who had sent him to baptize, said to him that upon whomsoever he, John, should see the Spirit “descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he.” Then John said to those present that he did not know Jesus before this, but that he had witnessed the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him at the time of His baptism. He therefore knew positively and had borne witness to the fact that Jesus was the Son of God—the Messiah of Israel for whom they were looking. This testimony of John the Baptist is clear and ringing and unmistakable.

Jesus Wins His First Disciple

On the day following John’s identification of Jesus, as we have just seen, he (John) was standing with two of his disciples and, as they were looking, they saw Jesus walking along. Then John witnessed again, saying: “Behold, the Lamb of God!” (vs. 36). When John gave this testimony, the two disciples who heard him speak left John and followed Jesus.

As they were following Jesus, He looked around and asked them, “What seek ye?” Their reply was, “Rabbi... where abidest thou?” John explains to his readers the significance of the Jewish term, rabbi, which when interpreted in Greek means “teacher.” Thus these disciples recognized Jesus as Teacher and asked him where He was staying. His home was at Nazareth, but He had left home and had come to Bethany, where John was baptizing in the Jordan. It is quite likely that there were people who had constructed some kinds of booths or tents in which they were staying, as they attended John’s protracted meeting, or revival services. Jesus may have been residing in such a place as that, or He may have gone to the home of someone, with whom He was lodging while He was attending this revival.

To their question as to where He was staying, the Lord Jesus replied: “Come, and ye shall see.” They accepted His invitation and went with Him. They therefore saw where He was staying and remained with Him that day. At the time it was ten o’clock (Roman time), or four o’clock in the afternoon. The rest of the day, the two hours till six o’clock, during which time they stayed with Jesus, is spoken of as a day. The Jews spoke of a day, or a part of a year as if it were the whole period of time.

One of the two disciples who heard John speaking, and who followed Jesus, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. Immediately he went to find Peter and said to him, “We have found Messiah.” John interprets the meaning of the word, Messiah, and translates it into the Greek, which is “Christ.” Andrew immediately led his brother Peter to the Lord Jesus. An excellent lesson in soul winning! Live so as to be able to influence your relatives, friends, and neighbors, and to lead them to Christ.

When Jesus saw Peter, He looked upon him and told him that his Hebrew name was Simon, the son of John. But Jesus said that He was changing his name to *Cephas*. John interprets this Aramaic word and translates it into Greek by the term which is rendered in English “Peter.” The word Cephas, meaning stone, was predictive, or prophetic, of the change in character that would come

over Simon. He was vacillating and impulsive before Pentecost, before he was filled with the Spirit of God; but from that time on he was indeed and in truth a *stone*. A great transformation took place in him. Praise God for that fact!

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
 (Installment Four)

PHILIP LEADS NATHANAEL TO THE LORD

In our study of the Gospel According to John we have come to a consideration of chapter 1, verses 43 to 51. In verse 43 we read the statement: “on the morrow he was minded to go forth into Galilee, and he findeth Philip: and Jesus saith unto him, Follow me.” A glance at verses 19-42 shows that the day mentioned was the fourth of a series of days on which certain things occurred. On the preceding day (vss. 35-42) Christ won probably His first four disciples. They had heard John testify concerning Jesus. They therefore left John and followed Christ.

The Call of Philip

On the day mentioned in verses 43-51, Jesus had decided to leave Peraea where John was baptizing and to go to Galilee, which is the northern part of Palestine.

Jesus sought out and found Philip. We are not told why our Lord hunted for him and found him. Of course, He, in leaving heaven and coming to earth, came here to seek and to save that which was lost, but there was some special reason why He wanted Philip. He was later appointed as one of the Apostles.

When Jesus found him, He gave the command, “Follow me.” Philip was of Bethsaida, the place where Andrew and Peter lived. This little town was just south of Capernaum, on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. It is the will of God that all who come to the Lord Jesus Christ and learn of Him, follow Him daily. Jesus said: “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matt. 16:24). A man has to say “no” to himself upon many occasions, that is, he must lay his own preferences and choices aside in order to follow the Lord. There is very frequently a clash between the desires and the wants of the Christian and the will of God. Whenever such a conflict exists, the one who really and truly wants to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus in the fullest sense of the term must say “no” to himself and follow the Lord.

A Conversation Between Philip and Nathanael

When Philip accepted the challenge of Jesus to follow Him, he took the matter seriously. He had the proper idea concerning discipleship. He therefore was a soul winner from the start. Like Andrew, who went and got Peter as soon as he himself learned that Jesus was the Messiah, Philip sought out his friend Nathanael and led him to the Lord.

The message which Philip delivered immediately was this: “We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (John 1:45). From this statement we may infer that Nathanael was looking for the Messiah and seeking Him, for Philip said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses ... wrote.” Evidently Nathanael was thirsting after God and after the Messiah, just as David said that he did (Ps. 42). Both Moses and the

Prophets wrote of the Messiah. When Jesus appeared to the disciples on the evening of the Easter on which He rose from the dead, He expounded to the Apostles all things that had been prophesied concerning Him in Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. John, in Revelation 19:10, told us that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,” that is, that all of the prophets wrote of Jesus. He is the central figure on the stage of human life and activity.

Nathanael’s reaction to the announcement concerning the Messiah was this: “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46). In the minds of the people of Palestine of that day no one of any worth as a rule lived in the city of Nazareth. Thus those who lived there were all marked men. The name, Nazarene, was a synonym for low character, and for those who were despised. Nathanael did not see how any person who had any character whatsoever would live in Nazareth. In order to sum up what the prophets said concerning our Lord’s being despised, we are told in Matthew 2:23 that “he should be called a Nazarene”—the despised, rejected one.

Philip replied to Nathanael’s query by saying: “Come and see.” Evidently Philip knew the character of Nathanael. He had made the impression upon Philip’s mind that he was a sincere, earnest, godly, truth-seeking person. Unfortunately, not all people qualify on these points. All too many people will not be convinced against their will. Hence, all the proof that might be brought, though positive and unequivocal, can never convince a person who is prejudiced, set, and determined in his ways. The sequel to the story shows that Philip had the correct idea of Nathanael.

The Conversation Between Jesus and Nathanael

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, He remarked: “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” (John 1:47.) To be free from guile, hypocrisy, pretense, and cant is a combination that is very rare indeed! Many of the very best people in the world—born-again people—who are thoroughly honest in a general way are nevertheless tainted with guile. They will offer some excuse, which is simply an excuse and not a reason, as the cause of their doing many things. Many excellent godly people, while they will not make a statement along a certain line that is shady, yet will act in such a way as to make the wrong impression. Even Abraham, the friend of God and the father of the faithful, was not free from guile. In order to deceive Pharaoh concerning the relationship that existed between him and his wife, Abraham instructed Sarah to say that she was his sister. Sarah was indeed a half-sister of Abraham, but she was more than that. She had become his wife. To tell Pharaoh and his servants that Sarah was his sister was a truth, but it was simply a half-truth. It was told in order to deceive. Hence, a correct statement may be made, but it can be put in such a connection that it will make an entirely erroneous impression. Anyone who would do that is not without guile—even though Abraham, the faithful servant of God, did practice it. God saw fit to put it on the pages of Eternal Truth that Abraham did not act apart from guile.

But Nathanael, according to our Lord’s statement, was an Israelite in whom there was no guile. This is a marvelous statement and is absolutely correct. No deception, no camouflage, no “crawfishing,” could be discovered in his life or in any of his acts. Let us pray that the Lord may grant that we, too, may be free from all sham, hypocrisy, and guile.

When Jesus spoke as He did, Nathanael replied: “Whence knowest thou me?” Nathanael gathered from what Jesus had said that He had a clear insight into his very being. He therefore asked from

what source Jesus had gathered His information, and how it was that He knew him. In reply Jesus said: “Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.” According to our Lord’s statement, He had seen Nathanael when he was under a fig tree, and He had taken note of Him, although Nathanael was not aware of that fact. There are some people whose very faces are an open book, and the message that is in their innermost soul is written, figuratively speaking, upon their countenances. Nathanael was such a person.

When Nathanael looked into the face of Jesus, let us believe, he then replied: “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel” (vs. 49). Rabbi, as we have learned, is the word for teacher, or is used in that connotation. Nathanael knew that Jesus was a teacher, who had been sent from God—a fact which Nicodemus likewise recognized. Nathanael confessed that Jesus was the Son of God and the King of Israel. Jesus was the Son of God in the truest and highest sense of the term, being one of the persons of the Holy Trinity, who entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth in fulfillment of the predictions of the prophets. For instance, see Isaiah 7:14. Jesus was likewise the King of the Jews. He was born to fill that office. Unfortunately some Bible students see in the life of Jesus proof that He offered Himself as King of Israel to the Jews. But it is exceedingly difficult to take any passage on the subject and find the one that will prove positively that Jesus offered Himself as the King of the Jews. The facts in the case are that He offered Himself as the Saviour of Jew and Gentile alike and never did offer Himself to Jewry as their King. According to the program as outlined in the Old Testament, the Messiah comes and establishes a spiritual kingdom upon the earth, at His first advent. The gospel is preached throughout the Christian Era to Jews and Gentiles alike. At the end of this dispensation the Tribulation will burst forth upon the world. At the end of it, Jesus will come in power and great glory. At that time He will be accepted by the Jews as their King—after they will have pleaded for Him to return. He will come, mount the throne of David, lift the curse, and establish His kingdom upon the earth among men.

The Lord Jesus finally made a marvelous promise to Nathanael. Here are His words: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” Jacob, as we see in Genesis, chapter 28, had a vision of God, of heaven, and of earth. In this vision he saw a ladder connecting the earth with the heavens and angels ascending and descending upon it. Just as Jacob, in the revelation given him in this dream saw the heavens connected with the earth by the continuous stream of angels going back and forth, so the Lord said that Nathanael would have a similar experience. I have no doubt that he did, on various occasions, have his spiritual eyes opened and saw angels from heaven descending to the Son of man, coming to minister to His needs, and then returning to glory. Thus in the actual experience of Nathanael this promise doubtless was fulfilled at times.

Some have thought that it will be fulfilled in the Millennium, when heaven and earth will be connected in a vital manner, similar to that which Jacob saw in his vision. It is quite likely that this may be included in the promise that Jesus made to Nathanael.

When the Millennial Era dawns, there will be many things which we shall see, and which will startle us and thrill our very being. In the meantime, let us be faithful and true to Him in all things, doing His will and His bidding at all times.

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
 (Installment Five)

THE MARRIAGE FEAST AT CANA OF GALILEE

In the preceding article of this series we studied the account of the conversion of Nathanael to the Lord Jesus Christ. The next incident, what we are to study, is the marriage at Cana of Galilee as recorded in John 2:1-11.

The narration begins thus: “And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee....” It is most difficult for us to know what period of time this is. It certainly could not be connected with the four days mentioned in the first chapter. It is immaterial as to what day is here referred to; hence we shall pass it by.

If anyone will study the Gospel Records, he will see that Jesus mixed and mingled in the social life of the country in His day and time. For instance, in this account we see Him attending a social function, a marriage in Cana of Galilee. When He was invited to the home of a Pharisee, as we see in Luke 7:36-50, He accepted the invitation. Again, in Luke 14:1-6, we see that Jesus accepted and invitation to dine with another Pharisee on a given occasion. Once more we see the Lord Jesus attending a great feast which Matthew, the tax-gatherer, made for Him (Matt. 9:10-13). On another occasion He was entertained in the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (Luke 10:38-42). When our Lord went to Jerusalem for the last time, He was entertained in the house of Simon the Leper (Matt. 26:6-13). Notwithstanding the fact that He came primarily to train men to carry on the work of the preaching ministry which He launched, and to give His life a ransom for the sins of the world, our Lord had time for social occasions. He did not withdraw from society, as John the Baptist did, and as many recluses since have done through the centuries. But He mixed with the people—for their good, and their good alone, and not simply for His own personal pleasure and delight.

Nicodemus came by night to interview Jesus. He had a religious motive in view, but it was a social call, nevertheless. Jesus had time to sit at the well of Samaria and talk with a poor, unfortunate, sin-cursed woman. Thus the religion of our Lord was one that does not pull away from contemporary life, but rather makes contacts and seeks to save those who are lost.

Marriage Is a Holy Ordinance of God

The fact that Jesus put His stamp of approval upon the marriage relationship is evident from His attending this marriage at Cana. God originally created all the animals with male and female. The same thing is true with the birds of the heavens and with the marine life teeming in the seven seas. But there was no companion for man. God therefore performed a surgical operation by removing a rib from the side of the man and built a woman out of that which He removed from him. When God had performed that miracle, He brought the woman to Adam who said “She is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.” Adam was drawn to her immediately. It was a case of love at first sight.

As our Lord was on His way through Peraea, going up to Jerusalem for the last time, He was accosted by the Pharisees who put this question to Him: “Is it lawful *for a man* to put away his wife for every cause?” (Matt. 19:3). Jesus replied by calling the attention of His interrogators to the Scripture, declaring: “have ye not read, that he who made *them* from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? 6 So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt. 19:4-6). According to the original design of God in establishing the marriage relationship and the home, it was His plan and purpose that the marriage bond should be inviolate. The Lord did not purpose and does not intend today that men and women shall marry and then divorce. He made them from the beginning male and female. They are one.

But on account of the hardness of the heart of the Israelites, God did permit under certain conditions a marriage to be annulled. But who wants God’s second best? We should all desire His first plan and purpose for our lives.

The marriage relationship is typical of that which exists between Christ and the Church. This is most beautifully brought out in Ephesians 5:22,23. Moreover, additional light is thrown upon this subject in the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Revelation, concerning the marriage supper of the Lamb. (See Rev. 19:1-10.)

Crises Always Arise

Regardless of what preparations may be made for an occasion, usually there are some unexpected events that turn up. During the festivities of the marriage at Cana, the supply of wine became exhausted. It seems that those in charge of the ceremonies became perturbed at not being able to meet the situation. Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus, brought the matter to Him. In a kind, gentle manner He reminded His mother that His hour to perform miracles and to demonstrate His divine nature had not yet come. In His language to her He used the common Greek idiom: “Woman what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come” (John 2:4). The original text, literally translated is, “What *is* to thee and to me?” In our loose popular English idiom, He said to her: “Why are you bringing this matter to me?”

Notwithstanding the words of the Saviour Mary instructed the servants to do whatever Jesus said for them to do. She had a very good knowledge of Jesus as her own child and was confident that He could and would relieve the situation that had arisen.

Our Lord, being God in human form, was able to meet any emergency or crises that confronted Him. Since He is now in His glorified body, we should not hesitate to bring any and all things that perplex and trouble us to Him for solution, regardless of how large or how small. He is able to meet any and all situations.

Jesus Knew His Working Power

Jesus instructed the servants to fill with water the pots that were standing there, after the Jews' manner of purifying. The servants obeyed Him and filled these jars with water. When they had done this, He commanded them: "Draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast." This they did. When the ruler of the feast tasted the water that had become wine, he pronounced it the best. This master of ceremonies then called the bridegroom and said to him: "Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when *men* have drunk freely, *then* that which is worse; though hast kept the good wine until now."

The turning of the water into wine was an actual miracle. Someone has called a miracle "the usual done in an unusual manner." This terse saying is quite accurate. In the case of wine, as in that of all plants, the Lord all the time gathers the elements out of the earth, air, and water and compounds them in the proper proportions by the use of the grapevine, which produces and yields fruit. The vine is God's laboratory, figuratively speaking, in which He compounds the various elements entering into the fruit of the vine in the proper proportions. Such is the usual, regular manner of making grape juice over a period of months.

On the occasion of the wedding at Cana of Galilee, the Lord, by the miraculous omnipotent power gathered up the elements and compounded them instantly into the proper proportions. He thus produced the wine. Hence He did the usual thing in an unusual manner and produced the wine, thus meeting the emergency.

Turning the water into wine was the first recorded sign which Jesus performed in His personal ministry. Though there were many miracles wrought by Him, during His earthly sojourn, John mentions only seven of them and calls them signs, proofs, that is, things which prove that He was and is what He claimed to be—the Son of God, the Son of man, the Redeemer of the world, and earth's coming King.

Jesus Always Produces the Best

When God created the universe—the heavens and the earth—the earth was perfect, not a chaos (Isa. 45:18). After the primitive earth was wrecked by some great catastrophic calamity, God took six days in repairing the damage. At intervals in the Genesis account we are told that God "saw that it was good." "The Rock, his works are perfect" (Deut. 32:4). The Lord Jesus could do nothing but that which was perfect, without any blemishes whatsoever.

Let us trust Him to do what which is best for us. If it is necessary for Him to call into play His miraculous power for us, He will do it. He is constantly working all things together for our good. He works all things according to the counsel of His will. Let us, like Abraham, refrain from staggering in unbelief. May we remember that He always does that which is for our good and for the glory of God. Jesus never fails.

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Dr. David L. Cooper
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THE JEWISH PASSOVER

In our examination of the Gospel according to John we have come to the consideration of chapter 2:11-25.

When Jesus left home, went and identified Himself with the back-to-God movement conducted by John, He returned several months later to Galilee. Probably six months intervened between His leaving home and His return to His home town, Nazareth. Last month we saw that He attended a marriage at Cana of Galilee, which is only about four miles northeast of Nazareth. He in all probability went back to His home, but soon left and changed His headquarters to Capernaum on the northwest shore of the sea of Galilee. This fact is set forth in John 2:12. He stayed here only a short while, according to this verse, and then went to Jerusalem to attend the feast of Passover.

First Jewish Passover in the Ministry of Our Lord

According to John 2:13, “the passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” Since John was writing to Gentile unbelievers in general who, in all probability, knew nothing of the Jewish festivals, John explained to them that the Passover, which Jesus attended at Jerusalem, was a feast of the Jews. This was the first Passover in our Lord’s ministry. While there is some discussion concerning this matter, there is general unanimity of opinion among conservative scholars that the ministry of our Lord continued for three and a fraction years. This calculation is based upon the fact that the feast mentioned in John 5:1, which is designated “a feast of the Jews,” was a Passover. If this interpretation is correct, that feast was one year after the feast which we are studying. The third Passover in our Lord’s ministry is mentioned in John 6:4. The fourth one is given in John 12:1. The Passover which we are studying was then three years before the one at which He was crucified.

In order for us to understand the Passover, we must study carefully chapters 12 and 13 of the Book of Exodus. When Israel left the land of Egypt under the leadership of Moses, the death angel passed over the house of Egypt destroying the first-born of every family where the blood of the Passover lamb was not sprinkled upon the door-post and the lintel. Since blood was sprinkled upon the houses of Hebrews, and Hebrews alone, therefore their firstborn were protected, but the firstborn of all the families of Egypt were slain by the death angel that night.

Israel was commanded to attend at least three annual feasts at Jerusalem, where God placed His name, Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Ingatherings.

The pascal lamb was typical of Christ, our Passover. This is made plain by the apostle Paul in the first Corinthian letter.

“6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also hath been sacrificed, *even*, Christ: 8 Wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (I Cor. 5:6-8).

The Cleansing of the Temple

In John 2:14-17 we have the record of our Lord’s cleansing the temple when He went to Jerusalem at this first Passover of His ministry. What is meant by cleansing of the temple? The following verses will reveal that fact.

“14 And he found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: 15 and he made a scourge of cords, and cast all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen; and he poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew their tables; 16 and to them that sold the doves he said, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house a house of merchandise. 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, Zeal for thy house shall eat me up” (John 2:14-17).

Why were oxen, sheep, doves, and other animals and fowls sold in the temple? Had that sacred structure become a public mart? Why were there money changers carrying on business in a commercial manner? Comparatively speaking, very few Jews lived in Jerusalem. The people who lived at a distance or in foreign lands, and who attended the feasts, would sell their goods and upon arrival in Jerusalem would purchase the animals which they intended to sacrifice to the Lord. Moreover they had the currency of the countries in which they lived. They, therefore, had to change their money into Palestinian coinage in order to transact business. Thus from the standpoint of convenience there developed a trade in animal and in money-changing in connection with the temple services.

Unfortunately many of those who engaged in this type of work became commercial and drove hard bargains and were, as Jesus said, a bunch of thieves. He, therefore, made a whip of cords and drove out the cattle, sheep and goats and turned over the table of the money-changers. When His disciples saw Him doing this, they remembered what was written in the Psalm “Zeal for thine house shall eat me up.”

When Jesus went to Jerusalem at the last Passover, as found in Matthew 21:12, 13 and parallel passages, He again drove out the money-changers and the men selling animals and overturned their tables of money. Critics find fault with this and say that there was but one occasion of this kind. They accuse John, therefore, of putting this cleansing of the temple at the beginning of the ministry of Christ instead of placing it at the last. Could there not be two cleansings? That is what John and the other evangelists tell us. We must therefore accept what they say. They knew the facts, whereas the modern rationalistic critics do not. It is easy to criticize when one does not know the facts.

A Sign Demanded of Jesus by the Jews

The Greeks, according to Paul, sought for wisdom, but the Jews always sought signs: “Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom” (I Cor. 1:22). When the Jews demanded that Jesus perform for them some miracle as a sign to prove that He was divinely commissioned, He replied, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” John tells us that Jesus meant by this language to refer to the destruction of His body and His being raised from the dead. When He was raised from the dead, the disciples understood what He meant, but His enemies did not. To blind unbelief, truth and facts are never apparent. When Jesus was on trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, false witnesses were brought who testified, “This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.” These false witnesses twisted what Jesus said. It is quite evident from John’s comment that Jesus made it clear that He was talking about His body, but these enemies of Christ, who perverted what He said, made it apply to the literal temple, which thing was farthest from Jesus’ mind.

On another occasion when our Lord was in Galilee, He cast an evil spirit out of a demonized man. Thus He performed a miracle before them which was sufficient to convince any honest conscientious person of the fact that He was what He claimed to be, the Jewish Messiah. Nevertheless they came and insisted that He should show them a sign. In reply He said: “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet: for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12:39,40). It is clear that Jesus was speaking of his resurrection. On different occasions He spoke of His raising after three days, but more frequently He said that He would rise on the third day. When all the accounts are examined in the light of each context, it is seen that Jesus was crucified on Friday, lay in the tomb Saturday, and arose on the first day of the week. Carefully study Luke 23:50-24:3.

“50 And behold, a man named Joseph, who was a councillor, a good and righteous man 51 (he had not consented to their counsel and deed), *a man* of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews, who was looking for the kingdom of God: 52 this man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb that was hewn in stone, where never man had yet lain. 54 And it was the day of the Preparation, and the sabbath drew on. 55 And the women, who had come with him out of Galilee, followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how his body was laid. 56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments.

And on the sabbath day they rested according to the commandment. 1 But on the first day of the week at early dawn, they came unto the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. 3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus” (Luke 23:50-24:3).

The resurrection of Christ as set forth in John 20:1-10 is the fulfilment of the promise that Jesus would rise on the third day.

“Now on the first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb. 2 She runneth therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him. 3 Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. 4 And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; 5 and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in. 6 Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, 7 and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed. 9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. 10 So the disciples went away again unto their own home” (John 20:1-10).

Great Numbers in Jerusalem Believed on Christ

“23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, during the feast, many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did. 24 But Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men, 25 and because he needed not that any one should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in men” (John 2:23-25).

Jesus engaged in a great teaching ministry when He was in Jerusalem on this occasion. He also performed certain signs to convince the people of His divine nature and mission. Many therefore believed on Him, but He would not place Himself in the power of anyone because He knew what was in man. He knew the Scriptures and the rottenness of the human heart. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it? (Jer. 17:9). He therefore would not trust Himself to any of the people of that day and time.

The heart needs to be regenerated. A person must be saved; otherwise every imaginable sin is lying dormant in his heart. The necessity of the new birth is therefore imperative.

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Dr. David L. Cooper
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CHRIST AND NICODEMUS

In our studies of the Gospel according to John, we have come to the consideration of chapter 3:1-15. A more important chapter than this one is not to be found within the limits of the Bible. In this passage our Lord went to the very heart of man's existence here and hereafter. We praise God that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and interviewed him and that Jesus gave us the marvelous message concerning the new birth as it is recorded in this passage.

We saw in our investigation of verses 23-25 of chapter 2 that there was a mighty turning to God on the part of the people in Jerusalem. When Jesus attended the Passover supper, as recorded in chapter 2:13-22, the people of Jerusalem heard things which they had never known before and felt a spiritual power emanating from the presence of Jesus that they had never experienced. They therefore were drawn to Him by the spiritual magnetism of his holy being. We can be certain that Nicodemus was likewise drawn by the same invisible mighty spiritual power.

Nicodemus

We know little about this man who was a member of the Pharisaic Party. To this group most of the religious devout people of the country of Judea belonged. They were what we might call the fundamentalists of that day. At the same time they developed a feeling of self-righteousness and put others to nought who did not agree with them doctrinally. There is always a danger that extreme thinking may develop into a carping critical dead orthodoxy, which sets all others at nought who do not accept the received thinking. There were, however, exceptions to the general rule, as we see by reading the four records of the gospel. We are told that Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews. This statement means that he was a member of the supreme court, the Jewish Sanhedrin. Those who were members of the Sanhedrin had perfect bodies, humanly speaking, without any mutilation whatsoever. Moreover they had developed an intellectual and spiritual life that was reasonably beyond the bounds of just criticism.

We are told that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night to have an interview with him. The question arises as to why he came by night. Some think that he was afraid of being discovered and of his interest in Jesus becoming known. This interpretation of the reasons motivating him is altogether possible, but there is a more probable explanation of his coming by night. Being a member of the supreme court and having many official duties, and doubtless responsibilities at home, he sought a time when he could be free from interruptions and could have a long uninterrupted interview with the Lord Jesus. This understanding of the situation is more in accord with what we know of him later on, for he with Joseph of Arimathaea went forth boldly and buried the Lord Jesus.

Nicodemus addressed Jesus as “Rabbi,” the regular official title of teachers of the Law. Though Jesus had never attended any rabbinical schools, Nicodemus recognized Him as a natural-born teacher who was superior to all others.

Nicodemus, moreover, was of the profound conviction that Jesus was “a teacher come from God.” What is the significance of this expression? If we examine the call and commission of Moses as recorded in Exodus, chapter 4, we shall see the meaning of this term. Moses was a man sent by God. The Lord providentially protected Moses, gave him advantages and opportunities in an educational way, and trained and tutored him for the great work which He had for him. At the proper time the Lord appeared to Moses and called him, as we see in the scene of the burning bush. In the sense that he was prepared, equipped, and called by God to do a specific work, he came “from God.” The Lord Jesus Christ was likewise “come from God,” according to Nicodemus’ statement. Though Nicodemus called Christ “Rabbi,” identifying Him with the teachers of the Law of his day and time, yet Nicodemus put Christ in a class by Himself, by saying that He was a teacher come from God.

Nicodemus was sincere in addressing Jesus as he did. Of course, he did not know that Christ was the Son of God incarnate. Being limited in his knowledge with reference to Jesus, Nicodemus spoke in the highest terms of which he was capable in addressing Christ. Jesus was a teacher sent from God, but he was more than a teacher. He was God incarnate. One should study carefully the prophecy found in Genesis 3:15, which is enlarged upon and amplified by Isaiah’s prophecy in chapter 7:14. As we see in the gospel records, these predictions found their fulfillment in the birth of the Lord Jesus.

Christ

One should study carefully the records regarding the birth of Jesus as set forth in Matthew, chapter 1, and in Luke, chapters 1 and 2. Moreover he should also study most minutely and microscopically Hebrews, chapters 1 and 2. This latter passage presents in the most wonderful way the two sides of the nature of the Lord Jesus.

When Nicodemus complimented Jesus as he did, the latter brushed aside these well-meant words and went to the heart of the question of the hour, namely, the new birth. To Nicodemus the Lord said, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Why did Jesus talk as he did to Nicodemus and employ the phraseology that he used? The kingdom of Israel was co-extensive with the kingdom of God as it existed in Old Testament days—in the dispensation of the Law. See 1 Chronicles 28:4, 5. Nicodemus was in the kingdom of God, as it then existed, by virtue of the fact that his mother and father were of Abrahamic origin. Thus their natural birth put them into the kingdom of God as it existed then. John the Baptist and Christ announced the coming of a new spiritual kingdom. Hence Jesus meant that his natural birth did not avail him anything. What was necessary in order to enter this spiritual kingdom was another birth, a new birth, a birth from above.

Nicodemus could not understand what Jesus meant. Hence he asked Him how a man who was old could enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born again. In reply to this naïve question Jesus said to him, “Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom

of God” (John 3:5). What is meant by the expression, born of water and the Spirit? Some tell us that the water here referred to can mean nothing but water baptism. They therefore believe, honestly believe, that one cannot possibly be saved unless he is immersed in water. Is that the teaching of Jesus on this occasion? If Jesus was talking about baptism, immersion in water, in this statement, then there is no possibility of anyone’s being saved unless he is baptized. If we put this construction upon this verse, we have Jesus contradicting Himself in the fourth chapter. To the woman at the well of Samaria Jesus offered to give “living” water, that would become in her a fountain of water springing up unto eternal life. Obviously in the light of the facts of the context, He was talking about salvation. Jesus assured her that He would give her this “living” water, this salvation, upon the sole condition of her asking for it. She requested it; and, of course, He carried out His promise and saved her because of her faith. He did not require her to be baptized. Clearly, Jesus did not tell Nicodemus that everybody must be baptized in order to be saved and then turn around and break the rule by promising the woman of Samaria salvation apart from her being baptized. In the light of these facts, we cannot believe that to be born of water refers to water baptism. Anyone can be true and faithful to the Greek text and translate this verse as follows, “Except one be born of water, *even* the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

While John 3:5 does not refer to water baptism, let us not ignore what Jesus said in the great commission. “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you: and Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” This passage is found in Matthew 28:19,20.

Nicodemus was indeed puzzled at the statements of the Lord and asked, “How can these things be?” Our Lord’s reply was, Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?” (John 3:10-12). The earthly things to which Jesus here refers are the things that pertain to people’s spiritual life here upon this earth in contrast with the spiritual verities and realities in the heavens. If Nicodemus could not comprehend what Jesus meant by the new birth as He explained it to him, he was entirely incapable of understanding any further revelation that Jesus might make concerning spiritual eternal matters.

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
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THE SON OF MAN, THE COMPETENT WITNESS REGARDING HEAVENLY REALITIES

From the conversation which Jesus had with Nicodemus, it is quite evident that He included in His statement regarding the new birth, not only Nicodemus, but also his colleagues who likewise were blind to the spiritual realities of life. The reason for this unusual blindness was the lack of faith on their part to receive at face value the statements of God and those of the Lord Jesus. As we learn from many passages, all men must be born again.

Faith, and Essential to the Understanding of Spiritual Matters

“If I told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?” (John 3:12). From this statement it is clear that faith is the key which unlocks the door to the understanding of spiritual realities. It takes faith, faith on the part of those hearing, to understand what Jesus meant, when he was talking about earthly spiritual things. If men can not understand these things, that are in the world in which they live and move, they can not understand the spiritual things that pertain to the heavenly realm. Celestial realities are far removed from earthly surroundings. It therefore takes even greater faith to accept and to comprehend what Jesus says in regard to the spiritual verities of the eternal world.

On numerous occasions different ones came to the Lord Jesus for blessings, especially for material healing. In different ways they showed their faith in Him and His ability to meet their need. When they thus came and were healed, He usually said, “Thy faith hath made thee whole.” Frequently, with the healing of the body, the Lord spoke of forgiving the sins of the healed ones; but His forgiving their trespasses was conditioned upon their faith in Him as healer and as Saviour.

In Paul’s roll call of faith, Hebrews, chapter 11, the apostle shows what faith is and what it does. Moreover he sets forth the imperative need that every one who comes to God must have implicit faith in his existence and His willingness and readiness to reward those who seek after Him. “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God: and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing *unto him*; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that seek after him” (Heb. 11:5,6).

The Son of Man’s Ascension to Heaven

“And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, *even* the Son, of man, who is in heaven” (John 3:13). This verse has been the occasion of much and long controversy. The reason for this fact is that it is one of the profoundest utterances of our Lord. Unfortunately men are not willing to take the passage exactly at what it says, but endeavor to read

into it something that it does not assert. When it is taken at its face value, it becomes a glorious revelation.

Some have thought that the ascension to which Jesus referred can mean only His ascension to heaven after His death, burial, and resurrection. This theory cannot be true, because Jesus was speaking near the beginning of His ministry and was reproving Nicodemus and others of His associates for their not believing even the earthly things which He was discussing, and concerning which He spoke on various occasions. Obviously Jesus could not have been speaking of His ascension after His resurrection in His condemning them at that time for not believing and receiving His teaching. Others, however think that He did not refer to His ascending to heaven, but was speaking of the spiritual condition of communion and fellowship with God—one's walking with God by faith. This explanation does not satisfy the demands of the context; for the ascension here referred to is just as clear, positive and definite, as His descending from heaven.

In this language Jesus was talking about the one who was qualified to speak about heavenly things. Concerning such a one He said, "no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the son of man who is in heaven." There was therefore no one—no man—qualified to speak about the eternal realities except the one who had gone up to heaven and had come back to earth, and who was present with them and could speak of the things which He had seen. There is, however, one such qualified witness.

The one who has ascended into heaven, declared Jesus, is the one who, prior to that event, had descended out of heaven to earth. This one is none other than the Son of man. This passage presupposes the pre-existence of the Son of man. In other words, it assumes the correctness of what is stated in John 1:1-14. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. ... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth." The Word which was in the beginning with God and was God took upon himself the form of man, entering the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. His coming to earth in this manner was in fulfillment of Genesis 3:15 and Isaiah 7:14. In the first of these quotations this eternal one is referred to as "the seed of the woman." In the second the manner of the Word's entering the human realm is described as being by miraculous conception and virgin birth. In thus entering the world, the pre-existent Son of God—coequal and coeternal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit—descended to this earth.

After He had descended to this earth, declared the Lord, He ascended into heaven and saw the things there. After witnessing these things, He came back to earth to dwell among men and to tell them about these eternal realities.

When did our Lord ascend to heaven? Since the language is so very definite, we must understand that He referred to a specific experience which He had had. Do we have any hint as to when He had this experience? The probabilities are that He was referring to what occurred at the time of His baptism. Herewith Luke's account is as follows: "Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that, Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him and a voice came out of heaven, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3:21:22). After Jesus had been baptized, He

was praying in the Spirit. Then the heavens were opened to Him or as Mark declared, He saw “the heavens rent asunder.” (See Mark 1:9-11.) By this experience Jesus was in vision taken into the remotest parts of the heavens and He, as the Son of man, saw the heavens and what was there. He was therefore qualified to speak concerning these celestial realities.

In order for us to be able to appreciate more fully what Jesus is here declaring, let us remember that, when He entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, He imposed upon himself human limitation. This thing He did voluntarily. Having thus circumscribed Himself, He lived by faith, as we are told in Hebrews 12:1,2. Being in human form with its limitations, what He learned of the world, in which He was living and having His being, was received through the five senses, the same as any other human being. He had, of course, laid aside the glory that He had with the Father before the foundation of the world, when He became man, our kinsman-redeemer. In order to be a competent witness under these conditions, to testify regarding the things of the eternal world, He had to have an experience of actual sight of these celestial realities. At the time of His baptism, therefore, the curtains of heaven were pulled back; and in full view of the heavenly realities He, as Son of man and our kinsman-redeemer, saw these celestial eternal verities.

Christ, being the Son of God incarnate, was fully equipped to testify regarding earthly spiritual matters and also these celestial verities. The Jews as a rule were not willing to receive His testimony concerning the earthly things, neither were they willing to accept His teaching regarding heavenly matters. Hence, in refusing to listen to Him, they were rejecting the testimony of the only competent witness to these things.

The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, being God, fills the entire universe—is present throughout universal space. Nevertheless, by divine power He limited himself and, becoming the Son of man, lived among men and taught them the way back to God. All these statements are correct and accurate as to His incarnation. At the same time He was in heaven while He was here upon earth, as He declared in the verse under consideration, “... *even* the Son of man, who is in heaven.” We cannot understand these profound divine mysteries. Since we cannot comprehend them, we must take them by faith. Of course, we accept the testimony of the Lord Jesus at its face value. Thus by faith we can be carried into the celestial eternal world and anticipate some of the glories that await us who have received the Son of God as our atonement and satisfaction for all our sins.

Looking Upon the Uplifted Christ

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life” (John 3:14, 15). In these verses Jesus ceases to refer to the heavenly spiritual realities and resumes his discussion concerning earthly spiritual matters. In Numbers 21:4-9 we have an account of the rebellion of the children of Israel against God and against Moses. Because of this hostile attitude, God sent a plague which came in the form of fiery serpents that bit the people, many of whom died. The terrified Hebrews rushed to Moses and sought escape from the stroke of judgement. God then instructed Moses to make a brazen serpent and to put it upon a pole. The people who might be bitten were instructed to look at the brazen serpent. If and when they did so, declared Moses, they would be healed. As soon as the

brazen serpent was lifted up, those people who had been bitten by the serpents, and who came in faith and looked upon the brazen serpent, were healed. Thus the plague was removed.

Our Lord declared that just as Moses lifted up this serpent in the wilderness, thus must the Son of man be lifted up in order that whoever believes on Him might have eternal life. The lifting up of the Son of man refers to what? Some expositors have interpreted this expression as referring to the moral and spiritual glory to which the Lord was lifted by His holy, unselfish life of devoted service for the redemption of humanity. Others think that it refers to His ascension and exaltation at the right hand of the throne of God at the present time. Still others are of the opinion that it refers to His being lifted up upon the cross to suffer and to make atonement for the sins of the world. There are points of contact between our passage and these three interpretations. It is quite likely that all these explanations blend into one grand, glorious picture. Probably the last one is what Jesus had in mind.

The antidote to the bites of the fiery serpents was the people's looking by faith upon the brazen serpent. It was by a literal serpent that the people were bitten, plagued, and died. It was by looking upon a brazen serpent, the symbol of the creature that bit them, that they were cured. This fact seems to embrace a profound truth which is the very heart of the gospel. It was by *man's* transgression of the one and only prohibition laid upon him that his death—physical, spiritual, and in the case of those who do not accept the antidote to sin, eternal death—was brought about. The fall of man therefore was brought about by Adam on the level of humanity and in the realm of the will. The loss must be retrieved by a man who is on the level of humanity and in the realm of the will. It was the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, on the level of humanity and in the realm of the will, made satisfaction and atonement for the sins of mankind.

Christ was lifted up upon the cross and poured out His life's blood for the redemption of humanity. In this manner he was carrying out the antitypical meaning of the brazen serpent.

Christ thus was lifted up that whosoever, regardless of all circumstances, should look to Him in faith might not perish but have everlasting life. It is a look of faith that avails. "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10).

Those who thus look to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith alone, depending upon the merits of His finished work on the cross, shall not perish but have everlasting life. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (John 5:24).

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
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“FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD”

In our studies in the Gospel of John we are considering the conversation which Jesus had with Nicodemus, the record of which is found in the third chapter. Although Nicodemus was, as we have already seen, a ruler of Israel, he did not understand the primary elemental facts and principles with regard to salvation and the kingdom of God upon earth. There are many people in his condition today, though they are highly educated, cultured, and refined. The primary object in life is to prepare for eternity. The way to prepare for it is to be born again, that is, to be born of the Spirit—to become a new creature in Christ Jesus by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit: “For we also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. 4 But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, 5 not by works *done* in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life which he poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; (Tit. 3:3-7).

Jesus reprimanded Nicodemus for not having understood the elemental facts regarding this spiritual kingdom. Then he pressed home the point that, if Nicodemus and his associates could not understand the elementary things such as the new birth, how could they believe if He, Jesus, spoke of heavenly things. The Lord Jesus was the only man who was thoroughly qualified to speak about heavenly realities; because He, after He had entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, had ascended to heaven and, as the Son of man, the God-man, had seen the realities of heaven.

Then coming back to the necessity of salvation, the Lord Jesus, in verses 14 and 15, drew a parallel between the Israelites who were bitten by serpents, and who looked upon the brazen serpent and were healed physically, and those who are sin-sick, and who look to Jesus as He is lifted up upon the Cross, and are healed of their spiritual ailments. One must look and live.

God so Loved the World

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). This passage is called the people’s verse, because it applies to everyone—every person of all tribes and races regardless of conditions and circumstances. Remember that it is God—the self-existent One in whom we live and move and have our being—who has loved the world, and still loves it. His heart goes out to every creature. One of the reasons why He loved us is that we are all His offspring. Just as a father pitieth his children, so doth Jehovah pity His offspring:

- 13 Like as a father pitieth his children,
 So Jehovah pitieth them that fear him.
 14 For he knoweth our frame;
 He remembereth that we are dust. (Ps. 103:13,14)

He pitied them and loved them to the extent that He gave His only begotten Son to die for them.

We are told that God loved the *world*. Though the term as employed here refers primarily to the physical globe, it is clear from the context that Jesus was talking about the people who live upon the earth. The reason for this interpretation is that the world of which He is speaking can believe or disbelieve and may voluntarily choose life or death. These facts show that “world” is not used here in its primary sense of referring to the literal physical globe on which we live, but to the people living upon it.

Someone has said that every man’s name is written in John 3:16 in the relative pronoun “whosoever.” Anyone can rewrite John 3:16 and substitute his own name instead of the pronoun “whosoever.” When he has done so, he should meditate upon the tremendous import of this thought and praise God.

In many passages of Scripture we see reference made to God’s loving us when we were in a helpless and hopeless condition. For instance, in Romans 5:6-8, we have this language; “For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: for peradventure for the good man someone would even dare to die, 8 But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” We were weak, in that the flesh is weak. Though we were in this condition, Christ died for us. Among men there is hardly one to be found who will die for a righteous man, although on some special occasion a person may be found who will dare to die for a good man. But God has commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He saw us in our helpless condition, left heaven, came to earth, suffered, and died for us that we through His suffering might have life. In the light of Christ’s loving us and giving Himself up for us, a person can more fully comprehend what God means in Psalm 103:14-18:

- For he [the Lord] knoweth our frame;
 He remembereth that we are dust.
 15 As for man, his days are as grass;
 As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.
 16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone;
 And the place thereof shall know it no more.
 17 But the lovingkindness of Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting
 upon them that fear him,
 And his righteousness unto children’s children;
 18 To such as keep his covenant,
 And to those that remember his precepts to do them.”

Oh, the boundless, matchless love and compassion of God!

Now let us turn to the New Testament to see further what it tells us about the love of God.

Did Christ die for every individual in the entire universe? This question is answered in Hebrews 2:9, which reads as follows, “But we behold him who hath been made a littler lower than the angels, *even* Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every *man*.” According to this verse Christ tasted death for every soul and made life eternal possible for every individual who has been born, or will be born. In I Timothy 2:1-3, the Apostle urges that the Christians pray for all people, especially for rulers, that they may legislate and conduct the affairs of government so that the people of God may lead quiet and peaceful lives in all godliness and gravity. Concerning such a prayer of faith, the Apostle declares, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:3,4). On the point of Christ’s dying for all and willing that all should be saved, the Apostle Peter declares that “the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

When a person reads all these verses and many parallel and related passages, he is driven to the conclusion that Christ did make provision for the salvation of every soul that is born into this world. If anyone is not saved, it is on his own account.

God Gave

Someone has said that love always expresses itself in acts of kindness and goodness in behalf of the one who is loved. Love always sacrifices for the one loved. If there is no giving up nor sacrificing on the part of one person for another, we may be certain that that one, who lives a self-centered life, does not genuinely love the other. In that marvelous chapter, Romans 8, the Apostle speaks of God’s love and of His giving up His Son for us and together with Him giving us all things. “What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:31, 32). Since God withheld not the greatest gift possible, namely, His Son, to suffer and die for us, it stands to reason that He will give us the lesser things that are necessary for our life both here and hereafter. In this connection I think of the song,

Count your blessings, name them one by one
And it will surprise you, what the Lord hath done.

Innumerable are God’s provisions and mercies for us every day. Let us praise Him for all His gifts and bounties.

Everyone Must Believe

Since God gave and Christ came and opened up the new and living way of approach to God, it is for man simply to believe and receive. Salvation is put in the simplest terms in order to make it accessible to everyone in the world. Praise God because salvation is not offered to the wise as such, to the strong, to the rich, to the beautiful and handsome, and to the affable. Few people could

qualify under those conditions. The Lord has graciously, through love for everyone, put salvation in the simplest terms possible—only believe, only trust. On one occasion the Lord Jesus spoke of salvation in the simplest terms as seen in John 5:24: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life.” According to our Lord’s statement, when one hears the Word with an open heart and believes that God has sent Christ as a propitiation for his sins, he is given eternal life—he that “believeth him that sent me hath eternal life.” Anyone who thus believes has eternal life and is assured that he shall never come into judgment, since he has passed out of death into life. The judgment here mentioned is the judgment of the great white throne, before which the lost will appear, in the second resurrection (Rev. 20:11-15).

In connection with our examination of John 3:16, let us turn to the conversion of the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:11-34). At midnight Paul and Silas were singing and praising God, notwithstanding the fact that they were in pain—having been beaten and unjustly thrown into prison. Suddenly there was an earthquake which caused the doors of the prison to swing open. The jailor—thinking that the prisoners had probably escaped and realizing that he was responsible to the authorities for the safe-keeping of the prisoners—drew his sword, and was about to kill himself. The Apostle Paul, seeing him in the very act, cried out with a loud voice, saying, “do thyself no harm, for we are all here.” Then he called for lights and “sprang in and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” This man was in dead earnest. He realized that he was face to face with the power of God. He wanted to be saved and to get right with God. In answer to his question as to how to be saved, Paul and Silas said to him, “...Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house” (Acts 16:31). The man asked a direct question as to what he must do to be saved. The Apostle, inspired of God, told him exactly how to be saved, namely, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Possibly if some of us had been there and had been asked the same question, we would have given a different reply—one with some addition or modification. Since the inspired Apostle told him to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be saved, we should say the same thing today.

But some people today, having a legalistic slant upon the gospel, insist that a person must obey some command to be saved. For, they tell us that faith always implies obedience—faith invariably manifests itself in some outward act. Hence they say that the command to believe in Christ is in reality a command which implies some act by which the faith is perfected. Is this position correct? No. In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews we have an abridged roll call of faith—God’s honor roll. We are told that faith is “the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.” Faith then is the assurance of the thing for which we hope. It is a conviction of things not seen and not possessed. By faith the elders had witness borne to them. They believed God implicitly. Because they did so, God gave them witness that they were acceptable to Him. We are furthermore told that “by faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear.” We understand that the worlds have been created by the word of God. This belief was a profound conviction with them. Such a conviction in this instance could not assert itself in action; yet it was faith—the same kind of faith as that which Abel had when he offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. It was the same kind of faith as that by which Noah erected the ark. It was the same kind of faith as that by which Abraham forsook his native land and went to a land which God promised to show him.

Let us take a further look at faith and ascertain whether or not it always has to express itself in action in order to be faith. Speaking further of these worthies of faith, the Apostle Paul, the writer of the Book of Hebrews, declares that there were certain ones, “who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens. 35 Women received their dead by resurrection: and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection; 36 and others had trials of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated 38 (Heb. 11:33-38). Some of these had an opportunity of expressing their faith in actions, whereas others of these did not have an opportunity of doing anything. Yet the faith of all of them is recognized as faith by the Lord and was acceptable to Him. Whenever a person has faith, and God instructs him to do anything, he will do it without question. The thing—and the only thing—which obtains salvation is faith.

Necessity of the New Birth

Man’s nature is corrupt. He must be born again. He must experience the new birth, which is accomplished, as we have already learned, by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. Whenever a person in absolute trust turns his case over to the Lord Jesus and accepts Him as the atonement for his sin, the Holy Spirit regenerates his heart and brings him to the new birth. Without this spiritual experience no one can be saved. It is offered to one and all, free and without price.

The life which is imparted at the new birth remains in one. He can never lose it. The one who believes has eternal life—that spiritual life which lasts throughout time and all eternity. This position is affirmed by the Apostle John in the following quotation: “Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin (does not continue in the practice of sin), because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin (continue sinning), because he is begotten of God” (literal translation of 1 John 3:9). This new nature implanted in the soul at the new birth abides in the person thus saved through out time and all eternity.

Praise God for such a wonderful salvation as is offered to us in Christ.

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Dr. David L. Cooper
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“GOD SENT NOT THE SON INTO THE WORLD TO JUDGE THE WORLD, BUT THAT
THE WORLD SHOULD BE SAVED THROUGH HIM” (John 3:17)

In last month’s article we explained John 3:16, the people’s verse. God loved every individual in the world so very much that He sent Christ to suffer and die for each one. The block of Scripture which we have for consideration in this study is John 3:17-21, which reads as follows:

“For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him. 18 He that believeth on him is not judged; he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. 20 For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reprov’d. 21 But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God.”

God Sent the Son

The most important fundamental passage of the Scripture is Deuteronomy 6:4, which, when properly rendered, reads as follows: “Hear O Israel: Jehovah our Gods is Jehovah a unity.” This passage is an echo of the Holy Trinity, as we see by comparing it with various portions of the Scriptures. The Godhead consists of three Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

The Godhead sent God the Son into the world. God the Father sent God the Son into the world for a definite specific purpose. In the latter’s coming into the world, He laid aside the glory that He had with the Father and entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. Christ voluntarily divested Himself of His glory and took the form of a servant in order that He might come to redeem the human family. Thus it is said that God sent not the Son into the world to condemn the world. The world was already condemned because of its lost condition, the result of the fall as set forth in Genesis, chapter 3. Christ came not to judge the world. By the word *judge*, we are to understand that a reference is made to condemning the world. The Lord Jesus was moved with compassion on every occasion when He saw lost, struggling humanity battling with sin in the flesh and the powers of evil. His message was always that of grace and truth and of helpfulness.

But we are told that God sent Christ into the world to save the world. After having told us that Christ did not come into the world to condemn it, John states that Jesus came to save—the positive side of His ministry. It is the will of God that all should come unto repentance and should be saved. Not matter what a person’s position in life may be, what he is, or what his past has been, he is eligible for salvation and may take hold of it by faith, as we shall presently see.

The Believer and the Unbeliever

“He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18). The believer is saved, as we have already learned. As a sinner, however, he realizes his lost, undone condition. He is under the sentence of condemnation for time and eternity, but he believes the story of Christ’s redeeming love. He accepts Christ with all his heart and looks to Him to save him eternally. Then Christ saves him by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, “not by works *done* in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5).

The unbeliever is already condemned and is in a lost condition. At the Fall which is presented in Genesis, chapter 3, sin, a corrupting force and power, entered the human family and corrupted the hearts of all men. They are in an unsaved condition. Culture, refinement, and education do not change the heart. It takes the new birth, the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, to bring one to a place of salvation. The Holy Spirit implants new life—life eternal—in the heart of the one who believes. Every man, woman, and child therefore must have the experience of the new birth.

The Basis of the Judgment of the World

“And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil” (John 3:19). The basis of the judgment is that “the light is come into the world.” Jesus is the light of the world, as we see in the first chapter of John. On one occasion Jesus proclaimed, “I am the light of the world.”

He is the spiritual light of the world. The one who does not heed Christ’s teachings walks in darkness. While men are naturally in a lost condition, their case is aggravated and intensified by the fact that the light has come into the world. And yet men, as a rule, will not receive the light, but will reject it. As beautiful as the light of the gospel is, and as winsome as the message is, men of their own free choice choose darkness rather than the light. It is by a voluntary act of the will that they turn from the light. No matter where a person may live, and regardless of the conditions under which he may exist, Christ, the Light of the world, will bring the light of the truth to every living soul and give him an opportunity of salvation—if he desires it and longs for God. The Lord Jesus, the Light of the world, said, “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6).

It is difficult for us to see how men love and choose darkness and the life of sin and degradation rather than come to the light and accept the truth. Of course, this fact harks back to the Adamic sinful nature of man.

The Attitude and Conduct of Evil-doers and Doers of the Truth

“For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works be reproved. 21 But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works should be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God” (John 3:20, 21). According to verse 20 every one

who does evil hates the light, the light of the truth. When he has thus engaged in sin, he has no, or very little, inclination to come to the light. He feels guilty in his own soul. He does not wish his works to be reproved and to be exposed as being of the evil one. Men do not like to confess that they have done wrong and have sinned.

On the other hand, the one who constantly does the truth, that is, lives according to the truth, comes to the light. He is not ashamed of the things which he does. He wants them to be manifested to the world. He is especially interested in the people's knowing that what he does and what he says are the result of the Holy Spirit's dwelling in the heart.

A good illustration of what Jesus is talking about in these verses is the case of Cornelius, of whom we read in Acts, chapter 10. He was a man who feared God, with all his house, who gave much relief to the poor, and who prayed to God always. These things he was doing instinctively. Being a pagan, he did not have the truth of God, yet he was doing moral righteous acts—things that were right in the sight of God. He was wanting to come out into the light more and more. He therefore prayed for more light. My reason for making this statement is that the angel, whom God had sent to Cornelius announced to him: “Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God” (Acts 10:4b). He was therefore a doer of the truth and was seeking for more light.

When Cornelius received the Apostle Peter upon the latter's arrival in Caesarea, Peter said, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him” (Acts 10:34b-35). Every doer of the truth wishes to walk in the steps of Abraham, who followed the Lord by faith, and in the footsteps of Cornelius, who was living up to all the light that he had and was praying for more light. Hence he came to the light and was blessed and used of God in a mighty way.

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Dr. David L. Cooper
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THE PARALLEL MINISTRIES OF JESUS AND JOHN

A close study of the Gospel records shows that John began his ministry about six months before Jesus started His. We cannot be certain how long John's ministry lasted. Quite likely however it continued about a year. Probably their ministries ran parallel for about six months. These periods of activities ran from the first Passover (John 2:13) to the time that John was cast into prison. During the first part of John's ministry, he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and baptized at Bethany, east of the Jordan. See John 10:40: "And he went away again beyond the Jordan into the place where John was at the first baptizing; and there he abode." After the baptism of Jesus, He went into the wilderness and was tempted forty days by the devil. Then he came back to the place where John was baptizing at the beginning. Four or possibly six of His early disciples at this time came to Him. Immediately He returned to Capernaum and established His headquarters there. He stayed there only a few days; then attended the Passover at Jerusalem (John 2:13). After that feast He engaged in his early Judaeian ministry, which terminated with His departure for Galilee—as seen in John, chapter 4. This early Judaeian ministry covered the first six months of the first full year of our Lord's ministry.

John the Apostle states that, "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized." The things referred to in this quotation doubtless include Christ's discussion with Nicodemus and possibly other events connected with His visit to Jerusalem. Jesus, therefore, after these things went out and toured the country of Judaea where He tarried and baptized. It is true that Jesus personally did not baptize anybody, but His disciples performed this phase of the work for him. The Apostle Paul did some baptizing at Corinth, but he by no means did all of it. Others did it for him. But all who accepted Christ in the apostolic age were baptized. See Acts 18:8 and 1 Corinthians 1:10-17 for the situation at Corinth, which was typical of the apostolic church.

While Jesus was evangelizing Judaea, John moved the base of his operations from the Jordan up to Aenon, near the little town of Salim. Many people followed him and were baptized by him. Let us always bear in mind that John at first went and baptized in the Jordan River and later went to Aenon, and that he selected that place because there was much water there, so that he could baptize the people who repudiated their sins, publicly confessed them, and came out whole-heartedly for the Lord.

A Dispute Between the Disciples of John and a Jew

"There arose therefore a questioning on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purifying." According to the ninth chapter of Hebrews the Jews had various washings. Naturally in their thinking there was connected with these various ordinances the idea of cleansing, since that thought is the natural correlative idea that goes along with that of washing. Probably the Jew who

was having this discussion with the disciples of John thought that the baptism of John, which was inaugurated by him, was just another one of these Jewish washings. There are those today who think of baptism as a saving or cleansing ordinance. As proof of this position they turn to such a passage as Acts 2:38, which reads as follows: “And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” By certain legalists baptism is interpreted as a cleansing or saving ordinance. Whenever the gospel is thought of in legalistic terms, obviously the idea of cleansing is suggested by the nature of the ordinance. But we have already seen from many passages that salvation is a matter of God’s grace and of man’s having faith in that grace. The legalistic interpretation of baptism is therefore to be rejected. This position is confirmed by what Peter said in regard to baptism, found in 1 Peter 3:20-22, “That aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved through water: 21 which also after a true likeness doth now save you even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ; 22 who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.” According to this passage baptism is not a saving ordinance; it is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh—that which cleanses—but it is the interrogation, asking, or response of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

No Place for Jealousy in the Heart of John the Baptist

Jealousy is a poison deadly to the soul. The Apostle Paul declared that the love of money is the root of every evil, that is every kind of evil can spring from the love of money. Probably the same thing could be said concerning envy and jealousy. Most likely we could say that from jealousy and envy every imaginable sin often springs forth and does its deadly work. People have to be on guard against this demon of jealousy.

John’s being free from jealousy was doubtless one of the occasions of the Lord’s saying that of all men born of women there had never arisen a greater than John the Baptist. By God’s grace he was lifted above all envy and jealousy. The disciples of John came to him and said, “Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou hast borne witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.” When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit came upon Him in the form of a dove. This sign was given to John the Baptist that he might identify the Messiah. After Jesus was baptized the Holy Spirit came upon Him in fulfilment of the message given John the Baptist by the Lord. Later when Jesus was walking at a distance from John (after His baptism) he pointed out the Lord as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Then some of the disciples of John left him and immediately followed Jesus. Jesus’ influence and power spread rapidly. Soon the number of baptisms which resulted from the ministry of Jesus exceeded the number of converts which John was making. The disciples of John were very loyal to him and could not bear the idea or tolerate the notion that Jesus could be greater than John. They therefore came to John, calling him Rabbi and mentioning the fact that the number of Jesus’ disciples and baptisms was greater than his.

John's reply to his loyal yet erring disciples showed that he was standing on a much higher plane than even the bulk of Christians of today. He gave four reasons why Jesus should increase in influence and why he himself should decrease.

The first reason was "A man can receive nothing, except it have been given him from heaven." Everything that any person has is a gift from God to him—even his heredity is given him by the grace of God. Our living in America, this land of liberty, and opportunity, is granted to us by the Lord. It is a possibility that we could have been born in some other country. The educational advantages that we have here—unparalleled in the world—are a free gift of God to us. By God's sovereign grace, relatives, neighbors, friends, and opportunities are all given to us. In short, everything that we have is given us by the grace and mercy of the Lord. Hence, if we have something that others do not experience and enjoy, we should not think more highly of ourselves than we ought, but should be humble and thankful to God that He has conferred upon us such blessings.

In the next place, John called the attention of his disciples to the fact that they were witnesses regarding his statement concerning Christ. He had said, "I am not the Christ, but, that I am sent before him." John was free from all human ambition, and fleshly pride. He did not mind what people thought of him. Yet he did not want to sail under false colors. He, therefore, told the people plainly that he was not the Messiah. There are those in the spiritual realm who are climbers, and who desire to stand high in the estimation of people, and to be thought of as they are not. May the Lord deliver us from such unholy aspirations.

John's third reason for not being jealous is stated in John 3:29 as follows: "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is made full." It is the bridegroom, who takes the bride. Christ is the bridegroom, who will eventually take to Himself His bride, the Church. No one else will ever have that honor. At an ordinary marriage no one thinks of stepping into the place of the bridegroom and of taking the bride. John therefore said that no one—and certainly not he—would ever think of flying under the false colors of being the bridegroom. Instead, he was simply the voice of one crying in the wilderness, making the announcement of the coming of the bridegroom.

In the last place, John declared that "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). From the nature of things it was proper that Christ should forge forward, figuratively speaking, should stand in the limelight, and should have the pre-eminence. He was God in human form—the God-man—who left heaven, came to earth, suffered, and died for mankind. It was therefore pre-eminently proper that He, the Lord of glory, should increase in influence and power, while John the Baptist was to decrease and to fade out of the public gaze. In keeping with this principle Jesus was, figuratively speaking, under the spotlight while John faded out of sight. Literally speaking, he was arrested and lingered in prison several months before finally being beheaded. In keeping with John's statement, he was to decrease while Christ was to increase. Let me repeat, that of all the men b'rn of women there had never arisen a greater than John the Baptist. He has properly been called John the Loyal.

He who Is From Above and He Who Is From Below

According to verse 31 of the passage under consideration “he that cometh from above is above all...he that cometh from heaven is above all.” John the Apostle in these words is practically repeating the thought which Jesus expressed in verse 13, when it is viewed from a little different angle: “And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, *even* the Son of man, who is in heaven.” Jesus is the only man who came from heaven. He laid aside the eternal glory that He had with the Father before the foundation of the world and entered the human family by miraculous conception and virgin birth. Being God in human form, He was above all others. This fact was recognized, especially after the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord. When Jesus appeared to certain disciples in Galilee, He declared to them that “...All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18). When Christ returned on high, He ascended “far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:21-23).

In contrast with the Son of God, the God-man, who is from heaven, “he that is of the earth is of the earth, and of the earth speaketh.” Man is of the earth and speaks of the earth. This statement applies to all men. They naturally can speak only of the things which they know. Being here on the earth and studying only earthly things, they speak only of earthly things. Of course, there was one exception to this rule—the prophets who were inspired by the Spirit of God, and who frequently had visions of spiritual things and of eternal realities.

In verse 32, we have this language, “What he hath seen and heard, of that he beareth witness.” From the context it is clear that in this verse the Apostle was speaking of the man who is from above, namely the Lord Jesus Christ. Being from above and knowing the things that are in the eternal world, He spoke of them, and bore witness concerning spiritual verities and realities; yet no man received His testimony, that is, men generally did not receive the testimony of the Lord Jesus. They do not do so today. Hence this statement is true. The following declaration shows that I am correct in interpreting this former statement, “He that hath received his witness hath set his seal to *this*, that God is true” (John 3:33). The public as a rule did not receive Christ’s teaching; but—and that thought is what is meant by the preceding statement—those who did receive it had spiritual discernment and clearly saw things as they are. They therefore were brought to the conviction that God is true.

According to verse 34 “... He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.” The reason assigned for this fact is that God gave not the Spirit to Him by measure. This utterance of course refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. That this statement refers to Him is evident from the fact that God did not give the Spirit to Him by measure, in a limited way. The Spirit is given in measure to day to men who accept the Lord Jesus as Saviour. Not so was it with the Lord Jesus.

According to verse 35 the Father hath turned over all things to the Son. This assertion is in keeping with the statement of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 28:18, in which He said that all authority in heaven and in earth had been given to Him. He is the Supreme One who exercises absolute power in this present age and in the one which is to come. On this point see Ephesians 1:20-23.

The one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son, has eternal life—has it now; but he who does not believe, as the text is rendered in the American Standard Version (1901 edition), “obeyeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” While the word in the original may be rendered, obeyeth not, it is clear that the better translation is the literal one, believeth not, which thought is shown in the marginal reading. This statement is a well-balanced contrast. The one who believes has everlasting life; but the one who disbelieves does not have life, for the wrath of God abides on him. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—trusting Him alone for life and salvation—determines the destiny of everyone. The conditions of salvation has been reduced to the minimum. Every person who has any desire for truth and life can see that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world and can, by simply trusting Him, receive the blessing of eternal life.

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Dr. David L. Cooper
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THE SAMARITAN MINISTRY

The Departure From Judaea

When Jesus realized that He was stirring up prejudice and hostility among the Pharisees because His disciples were beginning to outnumber those of John the Baptist, He left Judaea to return to Galilee. He could have followed the prevailing custom of skirting around Samaria, because its inhabitants were of both Jewish and Gentile descent and were therefore, abhorred by Jews of unmixed blood. But, as the Scriptures state, "He must needs pass through" (John 4:4). He deliberately chose to go through this land, not merely to save time and to shorten His journey, but to show that the salvation which He was to make possible on Calvary is for all who believe.

The Living Water

Reaching the outskirts of Sychar in Samaria at noon and being weary, He sat down by Jacob's well to wait while His disciples went into the city to buy food. While He was resting there, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Through her, Jesus began His ministry in Samaria and gave us the example perfect of how to win an unregenerate soul. No Christian burdened for the lost, as all Christians should be, can afford to overlook the lesson that Jesus, the Master Teacher, taught near Sychar in the heat of the noonday sun.

"Give me to drink," He said. By this simple, mildly spoken request, He ingratiated Himself into her favor and unobtrusively began the conversation. Many a well-meaning Christian has defeated his purpose at the outset by abruptly approaching a person and persisting in talking with him.

Surprised, the woman replied, "how is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman?" (John 4:9). Her immediate recognition of Jesus as a Jew of unmixed blood, humanly speaking, has been rightfully pointed out as giving the blasphemous lie to the heinous and wholly unfounded theory that He was the son of Mary and a Roman soldier. She knew that the Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans, for the Israelites left in the land by Sargon the Great had intermarried, and their descendants were despised as half-breeds.

Her question was exactly what Jesus had anticipated and emphasizes the importance in soul winning of engaging in the proper conversation and turning it in the right direction. "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water" (John 4:10). Having led her naturally to inquire about who He was and how He could, without anything to draw with, give her living water from the deep well, He answered her in part, without revealing His identity at that point. He has thus shown the necessity of saying the right thing at the right time, and neither too soon nor too late.

“Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14 but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life” (John 4:13,14).

The woman immediately desired the living water, as Jesus had expected. But He knew that she had not caught the spiritual significance of His statement, but was thinking of running water, which was frequently referred to as living. Naturally she was eager to know of running water nearby, so that she would not have to draw water from the deep well. Jesus also knew that she must become aware of her fallen condition before she could receive the living water “springing up unto eternal life.” Unfortunately, a Christian in his witnessing sometimes overlooks the necessity of a conviction of sin, or he may go to the opposite extreme and thereby do great harm. Actually, the awareness of sin cannot come fully before conversion. Instead, it increases as one grows in grace. The closer that one draws to the Lord Jesus Christ, the greater his own unworthiness appears and, in consequence, the more contrite he becomes.

Jesus perceived the abscess of sin on this woman’s soul and lanced it with the deftness of a skilled surgeon. A Christian does not have the insight that Jesus had as God-man; but, in so far as the occasion permits, he should endeavor to learn, through observation and any other honorable means, the character of the person to whom he is witnessing.

Knowing that the woman was an adulteress, Jesus bade her to call her husband. His command, with the revelation that ensued, was the sharp lance that He plunged into her abscessed soul. Like many persons writhing under the conviction of sin, she tried to change the subject, to shift attention from herself to Him and to turn the conversation to a technical point of worship. “The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship” (John 4:19).

The Samaritans worshiped in the temple on Mt. Gerizim, which was the mountain of blessings, whereas Mt. Ebal opposite was the mountain of curses (Deut. 11:29; 27:12,13; Joshua 8:33-35). According to the historian Josephus, when Manasseh, brother of the high priest Jaddua, married a foreigner, the elders at Jerusalem commanded him to divorce her or else not to come near the altar. In keeping with a promise made to prevent the divorce which Manasseh was reluctantly considering, Sanballat, his father-in-law, built a rival temple on Mt. Gerizim. It was destroyed in 129 B.C., but the Samaritans still revere the mountain as the site of their temple and as the scene of Isaac’s sacrifice. They also continue to celebrate the Passover on this mountain. In the synagogue at Nablus, located between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, is preserved a manuscript called the Samaritan Pentateuch. This is the oldest portion of the Scriptures extant, dating back probably to the dividing of the kingdom after the death of Solomon. Jesus ignored the reference to Himself as a prophet, and He was not interested in the controversy about the temples. But, when the woman mentioned it, He turned it to good advantage: “Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. 22 Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:21-24).

“The hour cometh and now is,” Jesus declared. The Christian dispensation has come and will continue until His return to earth at the end of the Tribulation. Not Mt. Gerizim, not Jerusalem, not any one place is the chosen spot for worship. The whole world, anywhere, everywhere, may be used. Not until the Second Coming will there again be one central place of worship. Then in the millennial Jerusalem will be the Temple where the Lord Jesus himself will dwell, and all peoples will come there to worship Him and to be taught of Him (Isa. 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-8).

“God is a Spirit,” Jesus declared, “and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” God has no corporeal being; He is Spirit. He is not to be worshiped through physical objects, but in spirit and in truth.

Jesus the Messiah

Again the woman attempted to change the subject by showing an interest in Messiah: “The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things. 26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am *he*” (John 4:25,26).

Here, to this adulteress woman of Samaria, Jesus voluntarily made known His being the Messiah, He that is called Christ. Nowhere else in the Scriptures is recorded a similar announcement on His part. At His trial, He acknowledged His Messiahship, but He did not volunteer the information. When the high priest adjured Him—that is, put Him under oath—to say whether He was the Christ, the Son of God, He replied, “Thou hast said,” a commonly used expression of affirmation. He usually referred to Himself as the Son of man, although no one else ever applied this term to Him. Even at His trial, after affirming His Messiahship, He declared: “Nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven” (Matt. 26:64).

What is the meaning of this term that Jesus applied frequently to Himself? Actually, the meaning is a moot point, but a very plausible interpretation of it is found in Daniel 7:13,14: “I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

From this passage and others one can logically assume that Jesus preferred the term Son of man to that of Messiah, because of its wider scope. Jesus is indeed the Christ, the expected Messiah of Israel, but He is the redeemer of all who will believe. As Son of man, he presented Himself as God in human form, related to all mankind.

The Fields White Unto Harvest

Just after Jesus had finished making His unique announcement of His Messiahship, His disciples returned and were amazed to find Him speaking with the Samaritan woman, but, very wisely, not one of them spoke either to Him or to her. Their silence is a mighty object lesson to Christians. Interruptions can lose, instead of win, souls. The woman, so excited that she forgot her waterpot,

went off to the city to tell the people. “Come, see a man, who told me all things that *ever* I did: can this be the Christ?” (John 4:29). And the crowds started from the city to see Him. Meanwhile the disciples urged Jesus to eat and were surprised to hear Him say that He had meat of which they knew nothing. This meat, He explained, was to do the will of the One who had sent Him and to accomplish His work. Then He taught His disciples a great truth. They were to reap what others had sown. They were to harvest the fields already white. For what purpose? “He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” (John 4:36). There is no room for selfishness in the Lord’s work. Reaper and sower have a common purpose, in which they should rejoice together. For together they are glorifying God by leading others to the Saviour and to life eternal. Without the reaper, the sower labors in vain. Without the sower, the reaper has nothing to harvest. Together they have the increase. Even so, the Biblical Research Society is today sowing seed to be reaped by the 144,000 evangels during the world-wide revival of the Tribulation (Revelation, chapter 7).

The Two-Day Revival

The woman of Samaria received the living water, for gradually she realized that Jesus who could tell her everything that she had ever done was indeed the Messiah, as He had said. With the realization came belief. Then the living water became in her “a well of water springing up unto eternal life,” as Jesus said it would in anyone who receives it (John 4:14b). Even before full realization had come to her, she ran eagerly to tell others of Jesus. Figuratively speaking, she was bubbling over with the truth that she had learned, and the Samaritans were attracted to Him through her. They came to see for themselves, persuaded Him to abide with them for two days, and thus led others to believe on Him: “And many more believed because of his word; 42 and they said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world” (John 4:41,42).

Thus, through an adulteress, Jesus launched His ministry in Samaria, and the woman, becoming “a well of water springing up into life eternal,” caused many more to believe. After two days, Jesus went on to His original destination, Galilee. Had He stooped to the petty prejudices of His day, He would have skirted around Samaria en route, but “he must needs pass through.” By so doing, He brought salvation to Samaria, a despised country, and thus showed that He is the Son of man, as well as the Messiah. Had He not designed to speak to the sinful woman at the well, she would not have received the living water. But He did speak to her and to all mankind, for “whosoever,” He said, “drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.”

In returning to Galilee, Jesus was going back to His own country, humanly speaking, for He had grown to manhood in Nazareth. But this city had rejected Him in His earlier ministry: “And he went out from thence; and he cometh into his own country; and his disciples follow him. 2 And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, Whence hath this man these things? And, What is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and *what mean* such mighty works wrought by his hands? 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended in him. 4 And Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. 5 And he could

there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. 6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief” (Mark 6:1-6).

But when Jesus returned to Galilee, He was well received, for the Galilaeans had “seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast” (John 4:45). While He had been attending the Passover in Jerusalem, many had believed on Him, because of the “signs which he did” (John 2:23), the first of these signs being the changing of the water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2:11). It was, in fact, to Cana that Jesus returned and resumed his ministry in galilee. The hostile conditions in Judaea had rendered further work there at that time useless (John 4:1-3). But they had led to the spreading of the Word into Samaria and back into Galilee.

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Dr. David L. Cooper
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THE HEALING OF A CRIPPLE MAN

The Apostle John gives the account of seven signs, or miracles, which Jesus performed during His ministry. He called them “signs” because they have special significance. The case which we have to study today is the third of the series of these seven signs.

Throughout our Lord’s ministry, Jesus laid special emphasis upon the spiritual side of life and less upon the material. He did not engage in healing campaigns such as are common today. When He healed a person, as a rule, He told him to be quiet about the matter and to say nothing. In striking contrast to the example of Jesus, the faith healers of today flash, as a rule, before the public eye the fact that they have healing campaigns and, upon that basis, appeal to the people to patronize them. There is, therefore, a wide difference between the healings which Jesus performed and the healings that are claimed to be done in His name today.

The Historical Setting of This Case of Healing

According to John 5:1 there was the feast of the Jews. At that time Jesus was at Jerusalem. While there, He healed a cripple man. Since the expression “the feast of the Jews” occurs in this passage, most conservative scholars are of the opinion that this feast was one of the Passovers occurring during the ministry of Jesus. The first one is mentioned in John 2:13; the third one in 6:4 and the fourth in 12:1. If the feast in 5:1 was a Passover, the ministry of Jesus lasted three and a fraction years. Assuming this position to be correct, we would say that one and a fraction years of our Lord’s ministry had passed when we arrive in our study at this chapter, John 5.

A Superstition

There was in Jerusalem, near the sheep gate, a pool called Bethesda, which had five porches. To them great multitudes of sick people were brought. Among these sick folk was a certain man who had been a cripple for thirty-eight years. As Jesus passed by him, he asked him this question, “Wouldest thou be made whole?” Immediately the sick man responded, “Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.”

The popular superstitious belief was that there were medicinal properties or healing powers in the water of this pool. According to this tradition an angel at times would come down and agitate the water. The first one then who could get into the pool after it had been stirred by the angel was the one who would be healed. All of these people were as close to the water as they could get, hoping that, when the waters were troubled, they could, by themselves or by the help of others, get into the water. Of course, there was no scriptural ground for such a crass belief.

Along with such a heathen tradition of that day and time, there are others just as ridiculous that are being held today. In some quarters there are those who believe that, if they can perform some physical act, they will be put in touch with the divine power, which will bring healing and blessing to them. Unfortunately, for those who hold such views, the power is not present and there is no healing—unless it be by the power of the evil one, who would duplicate the work of God and counterfeit it.

Jesus Healing the Cripple Man

After the man said that, whenever he attempted to get into the pool, another went before him, Jesus commanded him saying, “Arise, take up thy bed, and walk.” The man believed that Jesus had the power and authority to command him to do so. Like Noah and all the faithful men of God, this man acted upon his faith, and God restored him to perfect soundness of body. He was healed instantly, picked up his pallet, and walked away.

If we only had the faith to act upon any command or exhortation found in the Scriptures which is applicable to us, we could obtain many blessings and would be spared innumerable sorrows and distressing heartaches. The Lord Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. His heart is just as sympathetic and His ears open to the cries of His people as much now as they were when He was upon the earth in the flesh.

There is nothing too hard for the Lord. This man had been in his infirm condition for thirty-eight years. It was as easy for the Lord to heal him as it would have been to heal one that had been cripple only a few days. The Lord Jesus never fails. Whenever there is a failure, it is due to our imperfections, short comings, or sins.

Jesus Healing on the Sabbath Day

In verse 9 we are told that it was the Sabbath upon which the Lord healed this cripple man. As soon as the Jewish authorities saw him walking and carrying his bed, they accosted him and asserted, “It is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed.” God had at Mount Sinai commanded Israel to observe the Sabbath and keep it holy—to do no work on it. But the legalists of Jesus’ day had their interpretation of this Sabbath command and had spun many theories and enacted numerous hair-breadth regulation regarding it. According to them this man, in carrying his pallet, was violating the Sabbath law. There was nothing that the poor man could do except to take his pallet home. He could not leave it where he was when he was healed because it would be stolen. He needed it for another time. He had to go home. He therefore was not violating the spirit of the Sabbath law in the least. Nevertheless his critics thought that he was.

The healed man, in the simplicity of his sincerity, informed these legalistic enemies that the man who healed him had commanded him to take up his bed and to walk. They could see that he was telling the truth. They therefore asked who it was that had given him such a command as that one on the Sabbath. The man did not know who had healed him. Probably he had never seen Jesus before—and now Jesus had gone elsewhere. Doubtless, because of the joy welling up in the healed man’s heart, he failed to get the name of his benefactor or to learn who He was.

Later the Lord was in the temple. Then he recognized Jesus as the man who had healed him. To him the Lord said, "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee." From this statement of the Saviour one would judge that the man's infirmity was the result of sin, a personal sin. Knowing that a man reaps what he sows, Jesus warned him not to sin again lest a more severe punishment come upon him. As to what the man's reaction to this advice was, we cannot say. But of this fact we may be certain, that it never pays to sin and to do wrong. Let us remember that a man's sins will find him out, as Moses declared.

The Leaders of the Jews Persecuting Jesus

After Jesus warned the man not to sin anymore, he went and informed the Jews that it was Jesus who had commanded him to violate the Sabbath law. Some think that the man was very ungrateful in reporting Jesus to the authorities. There is however nothing in the text to indicate the motive which prompted him. Pressure may have been brought to bear against the man, and he felt that he could not do anything except to inform the bitter opponents concerning Jesus. On the other hand, he may have thought that Jesus, who could heal diseases, could take care of Himself against any opposition.

After they learned from this man that Jesus was the one—as they thought—causing him to violate the Sabbath law, they began to persecute Jesus. In the discussion which followed, Jesus declared, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." When He spoke of God as being His Father in a special sense—in a way that none of them could claim—they sought to kill Him. The thing which enraged them most was the fact that He not only, in their estimation, had violated the Sabbath, but that He had made Himself equal to God by calling God the Father. The use of the word "Father" does show the unique relationship that existed between the Lord Jesus and God the Father. The Jews were correct in interpreting His statement on this occasion. The fact that He did make this declaration was no justification for their opposition. They should have listened with open hearts to His message and prayed God to lead them to understand who Jesus was, and what was their relationship and duty to Him.

But Satan had blinded their eyes in fulfilment of such passages as Isaiah 29: 9-12. A perusal of the Scriptures—both Old and New Testaments—shows that, when one rejects light and refuses to be given any more, God always blinds his eyes in order that the judgment of God might come upon him justly. It never pays to reject light. It pays great dividends to accept any new truth and light regardless of the source from which it comes.

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
 (Installment Fourteen)

HEALING OF A CRIPPLE MAN and THE CONTROVERSY DEVELOPING THEREFROM

As we saw in the last study of this series, the leaders of the Jews in Jerusalem became infuriated at Jesus because He healed a cripple man on the Sabbath. These opponents sought an opportunity to kill Him, but were unable to do so. They were most enraged by His calling God His Father, making Himself equal with the Almighty. But, as we have already seen, the occasion of the controversy was His working on the Sabbath—as they interpreted His actions—healing a cripple man.

The Son Does Nothing Except What He sees the Father Doing

In order to justify Himself in the eyes of His opponents, Jesus declared that He first saw God working and that He then did exactly what He had seen His Father doing. Small children frequently imitate their parents. Since Jesus declared that He did nothing of Himself except those things which He saw the Father doing, and since He had healed a man on the Sabbath, the Jews concluded that the Lord Jesus meant to say that God works on the Sabbath. His language appeared to His blinded opponents as downright blasphemy. His words that greatly offended them were: “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner” (John 5:19). By this statement, the Lord, Jesus meant to say that God continually was doing exactly what He himself does. If God the Father had laid aside His glory, had entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, and had taken on human form for the purpose of redeeming all believers, He would have acted on all occasions exactly as the Lord Jesus did. In becoming Man—the Son of Man—the second person of the Holy Trinity limited Himself. Then as the God-man, with human limitations, He could say that the Father was greater than He. Since He laid aside the limitations of the flesh when He arose from the dead, He would not say, should He speak on the same subject, that God was greater than He. He was in eternity of the past equal with God, is equal with God now, and will ever be so.

But being here in the flesh, restricted by self-imposed limitations, He said that whatever He saw the Father doing, He himself did. In Psalm 146 we are given a short list of some of the things that God does. This list by no means begins to embrace the things which God does continually. The Lord Jesus, following the example of God the Father, worked—even on the Sabbath day.

According to John 5:20, the Father loved the Son and showed Him the things that He himself was doing. Moreover, the Lord claimed that He would do still greater works than healing and restoring a cripple man to perfect soundness of body and health. Whenever He would do these greater wonders, the Jews, according to the Lord, would marvel. Among the works that the Father would show the Son and that the Son would do, was raising the dead. “For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom he will” (vs. 21). Jesus raised the son of the widow of Nain. He also raised Lazarus. As God had raised different ones in Old

Testament times, so now Jesus said that He would raise the dead—certain ones, of course—in accordance with the plan of God and His own sovereign will.

Since Jesus came to earth as the Saviour and has worked out redemption for the race, God has placed all judgment in His hand “that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.” The one who, said Jesus, honors the Son, also honors the Father who sent Him.

The Believer Has Eternal Life

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life” (John 5:24). Christ’s mentioning His raising people from the dead and restoring them to life suggested the spiritual ministry for which He especially came into the world. He therefore said that those who hear His Word and believe on Him who sent Him have eternal life and do not come into judgment. The believer at the present time has everlasting life. When one believes and accepts Christ as his personal Saviour, the Lord regenerates the heart and plants in his soul life, the quality of which is eternal. He has eternal life *now* and will have it throughout all eternity, for the Apostle in I John 3:9 declares that his seed abides in him.

Those who have eternal life will never come into judgment. The judgment of which the Lord was speaking is the Judgment of the Great White Throne. All believers come up in the first resurrection, which occurs before the Millennium, and receive their rewards for service rendered (II Cor. 5:10). All who are unsaved are raised at the end of the Millennium and are brought before the Judgment of the Great White Throne, where they hear their eternal doom pronounced. Such is the prediction which the Lord Jesus made on this occasion. The reason the saved person will not come into judgment is that he has passed out of death into life.

Christ Is the Judge of All

“For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself: 27 and he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man” (John 5:26,27). When the Son limited Himself, entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth and became the God-man, God the Father gave Him the prerogative and authority to give life to whom He wills.

Christ, moreover, was given the absolute authority to exercise judgment over all men. The reason He is given this authority is that He became a son of man and championed the cause of humanity. Man lost everything upon the level of the human plane and in the realm of the will. This loss came about when Adam transgressed the one and only command that God laid upon him. The evil consequence of the fall could be offset and counteracted only by one who, on the level of humanity and in the realm of the will, would champion the cause of defeated man. Christ alone was both able and willing to do so. Because He did, He has therefore been given authority to be judge of all (John 5:27).

The Two Judgments

We have many times heard people speak of a general judgment day when all people, both saint and sinner, will be brought before the judgment bar of God and will be separated, some being put on the right hand and some on the left. Of course, those taking this position turn to Matthew 25:31-46 as scriptural proof for their belief. But when this passage is studied in its connection, it is seen that it refers to Christ's judging the living nations when He returns to earth. There is no resurrection mentioned in this chapter. This judgment of the living nations surviving the Tribulation cannot be interpreted as a general judgment at which both saints and sinners will be parted and each will go to his respective eternal abode.

Notwithstanding this fact, those who believe in general judgment frequently turn to John 5:28,29 as authority for proof that there is but one judgment. "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, 29 and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28, 29). Those thus interpreting this passage as proof of a general judgment call our attention to the word "hour" in the sentence, "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ..." The term "hour" is interpreted as a period of sixty minutes. If it has this meaning in our passage, there is a general judgment and the controversial question is settled. But, when a person looks at the usage of the word "hour" in the New Testament, he sees that it has various connotations. For instance, in John 4:23 Jesus said, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshiper shall worship the Father in spirit and truth ..." In this context "hour" refers to the entire Christian Dispensation. In other words, "the hour" is the Christian Dispensation. In I John 2:18 the Apostle declared, "Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last hour." In this passage John speaks of *the* Antichrist who will rule the world at the very end of the present dispensation. But even in John's day many antichrists had appeared. John therefore knew that this dispensation is the last one—before the kingdom age. In the light of these facts and this usage, "hour" again refers to a long period of time which has thus been drawn out for approximately 1900 years. If it can have such connotation as these passages indicate—and there is no doubt about it—it can have the same or similar meaning in John 5:28,29.

When we see in Revelation 20:1-5 that there are two resurrections: one occurring before the thousand years reign of our Lord and the other one coming to pass after His millennial reign, we can know that there is not a general judgment, as some suppose, but that there are to be two resurrections, separated by this period of the thousand year reign of Christ.

When we see these facts, and when we remember that the Scriptures do not contradict themselves, we must understand that the two resurrections mentioned by Jesus in John 5:28,29 are the same two resurrections mentioned by John in Revelation, chapter 20. Thus, the resurrection of life occurs *before* the thousand-year reign of our Lord; the resurrection of judgment takes place *after* the thousand years.

The one great concern for everyone of us is whether or not, "I have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ so that I will come up in the first resurrection." Remember, he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life and cometh not into judgment, but is passed out of death into life.

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
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THE FOUR WITNESSES TO THE DEITY OF CHRIST

As we have seen in the last two studies, our Lord's healing on the Sabbath the man with an infirmity thirty-eight years standing was the occasion of a sharp controversy between Christ and the Jerusalem authorities. We are indeed glad that this discussion came about, because it brought out in bold relief certain truths concerning our great and wonderful Lord. The last part of the debate is found in John 5:30-47.

Jesus begins this section of His message by saying, "I can of myself do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgement is righteous; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." In this connection we recall the declaration of Jesus that both His Father and He continue to work and that, whatever He saw the Father doing He himself did. In this verse He asserted that He of Himself could or would do nothing; that as he heard, he would judge; and that his judgment was correct; because He was not seeking His own will but the will of the Father who sent Him. As the God-man, or the Son of Man, into whose hand all judgment is committed, He will do nothing except as He hears from God the Father. His judgments and decisions will be right because He is not seeking His own glory, but the good of all and the glory of God.

Moreover, the Lord Jesus emphasized that, if He bore witness of Himself alone, His testimony would not be accepted as true. There is another, declared the Lord, who bears witness concerning Him. Then Jesus assured His audience that the one who testified concerning Him was true. Since He mentioned the Baptist in the next statement it is very probable that the witness to whom He was referring was none other than John.

The Testimony of John the Baptist

Although Jesus and John were first cousins, John did not know the Lord—that is, that Jesus was the Messiah. On one occasion, when John the Baptist saw Jesus at a distance coming toward him, he pointed to Him, exclaiming, "This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is become before me: for he was before me. 31 And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water. 32 And John bore witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he hath sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. 34 And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (John 1:30-34). In this language is the clear ringing testimony of John the Baptist that Jesus was the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel.

The Testimony of the Works of Jesus to His Sonship

Although the testimony of John the Baptist to Christ is clear and convincing, the Lord Jesus said that He had a greater witness than John. "... for the works which the Father hath given me to

accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me” (John 5:36). Jesus did only those things that Messiah was to perform and taught the things that were foretold of Him. Thus His works and teachings were a testimony that He was what He claimed to be, the Messiah of Israel and the son of God.

The testimony of the Father to the Son

“And the Father that sent me, he hath borne witness of me” (John 5:37a). When Jesus was baptized, He was praying as He came up out of the water. Then the heavens were rent asunder, and the Spirit of God like a dove came upon Him. Out of the heavens God the Father spoke, saying, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” This language was directed to John. Thus, God the Father bore personal testimony to Jesus that He was the Son of God in a unique sense and the Messiah of Israel.

The Testimony of the Scriptures to Jesus

To His opponents Jesus said, “Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; 40 and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life” (5:39,40). Beginning with Genesis 3:15, a person can trace the Messianic prophecies throughout the Old Testament. What one prophet declares always supplements what the others have said. As the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, when put together properly, perfectly presents the complete picture, parts of which are pasted on each piece, thus all the Messianic prophecies put together make a glorious mosaic picture of the Messiah. God thus painted the portrait of Messiah when He would come—as He did in the first century—that those who wanted the truth might see and recognize Him. Jesus said that the Scriptures bore testimony concerning Him—and the Sacred Writings cannot be broken (John 10:35).

With an incisive stroke Jesus laid bare the corruption of the hearts of those who were attacking Him. He revealed to them that they did not have the love of God in their hearts. If He had come in His own name, they would have received Him; but, since He came in the name of the Father, they would not receive Him. Then He foretold that one will yet come in his own name and that the Jews will receive him. The one to whom He was referring doubtless is none other than the Antichrist, who will come in his own name.

Jesus showed that it was impossible for His opponents to believe because they received glory from one another and were not interested in the glory that comes from God alone. In bringing this indictment against them, Jesus urged them not to think that He would accuse them to the Father. But there is one that accuses them, even Moses, on whom they had put their hope. If they had believed Moses, they would have believed Him and received Him. Jesus concluded His remarks with the Pharisees by saying, “If ye believe not his writing, how shall ye believe my words?”

We praise God for the abundance and the unimpeachable character of the testimony that was borne to the Lord Jesus Christ. All of it proves that He was and is the Son of Man, the Saviour of the world, and Israel’s coming Messiah.

Thus far in the study, we have noticed the four witnesses to the Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in His statement on this occasion. Having briefly glanced at them, I now wish to turn back and examine three key verses, 38-40: “And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he sent, him ye believe not. 39 Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; 40 and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.”

The Lord addressed these words to the Jewish authorities at Jerusalem. These men were the outstanding leaders of the nation at that time. Those who minister in spiritual things, and who are guides to the people, naturally are thought of as being sincere, honest men, who really believe that they profess what they preach. But the leaders of the people are not always true characters. There are many who are in the ministry, engaging in this holy service just as men follow an ordinary profession. They choose the ministry as a means of livelihood and as men choose a secular profession. This statement is a hard one to make, but facts prove such to be the case in all too many instances. To such time-servers, the Lord Jesus, who looked into the depths of their souls, declared, “And ye have not his word abiding in you.” The word had not sunk down into the depths of their innermost beings. They might have been able to quote the Scriptures, to speak of them in eloquent terms, and to expound them in a manner most acceptable to their audiences. But from our Lord’s statement, it is clear that their lives were little affected by the Word. The Scriptures had not become a controlling power in their thinking and”conduct. If it had been a dominating factor in their lives as it should have been, they would not have rejected Him. The fact that they were giving Him no consideration, but were opposing Him with all the might of their beings, is proof that the Word was not abiding in their hearts. If they had believed and received the Word of God with a living faith, they would have believed on Jesus and accepted Him as their Lord, Master and Saviour.

Ministers and teachers can engage in Bible study and can have a head knowledge of what God says and think that they have eternal life, whereas they do not. Thus, He said (vs. 39) “Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me.” If this rendering of the original is the proper translation, Jesus told His opponents that they searched the Scriptures because they thought that in them they had eternal life. They thought they could tell by the Scriptures that they were saved. They were probably trying to study the Scriptures”to get every shade of idea possible. Many of them doubtless were profound students of the Word and really enjoyed studying it, learning and discovering new truths revealed therein. Notwithstanding this diligent search of the Word, the facts showed that they did not have life in themselves, because they would not come to Him. If they had had the life that they professed to have, they would have most clearly recognized in Jesus the Son of God and would have come to Him.

The marginal reading of verse 39 is "Search the scriptures..." In the original Greek the same form is used in the second person plural number of the indicative mood, which simply makes a statement, and the second person plural number in the imperative mood. It is only by the facts of the context that we can determine whether or not the statement is declarative or is a command. As a rule, we can tell from the context which kind of statement is intended. The same situation exists in John 14:1, which reads in the text of the American revised version, 1901 edition: “Believe in God, believe also in me.” The marginal reading is “Ye believe in God ...” According to the text reading in this latter passage, the word is in the imperative mood and is an exhortation for the

disciples to believe in God and also in Him, the Lord Jesus Christ. But in the marginal reading we have the translation of the same verb considering it as being in the indicative mood, making a declarative statement, “Ye believe in God.”

If we take the marginal reading of John 5:39, we must render it as an imperative: “Search the Scriptures...” Jesus might have urged His opponents to search the Scriptures to see whether or not they had eternal life, because they were confident that they did, but we know from their lives and actions that they did not have the life.

Everyone would do well to heed the admonition to search the Scriptures to find out what the will of God is concerning him. We should pray to the Lord to open our eyes that we may behold the wonderful things that are found in the Word; and, as we learn new truth, we should step out upon it and take our stand fearlessly for God and for truth.

May we be diligent students of the Word. It is with the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God, that we are to conduct our fight with the devil and the forces of evil. By searching the Scriptures with honest hearts, we can grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. Let us have as our motto, “The will of God, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.”

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Dr. David L. Cooper
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THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND MEN AND JESUS WALKING ON THE WATER

In our study today we have two extraordinary events that occurred in the life of our Lord. Miracles, as a rule, are unique and attract attention; but the continuation of miracles and manifestation of the supernatural, though they attract attention for the time being, do not sustain faith. This fact is seen by an examination of Numbers 14:11,12. From this passage we see that, though God constantly performed miracles in behalf of the Hebrew people when he brought them out of Egypt and led them through the wilderness, the manifestations of divine guidance, protection, and preservation ceased to have their initial gripping effect upon the people. They misunderstood the nature of God's presence and interpreted it as the common and ordinary; hence their faith was not sustained by the many and miraculous manifestations which characterized that special era. These facts refute the idea that, if we could only see miracles performed today, we would believe. We would not believe; we would conjure up some way of explaining the supernatural upon the basis of the natural. It is the Word of God alone that can create and sustain faith. This principle is especially true in regard to the honest, conscientious truth-seeker who is willing to sacrifice everything in order to obtain the truth of God and to be in the center of His Holy directive will.

Stage Setting

By most conservative scholars, the feast of the Jews mentioned in John 5:1 was a passover. If this interpretation is correct, the festival was the second passover that occurred in the ministry of our Lord. The third one is mentioned in John 6:4 and is, upon the hypothesis just assumed, the third passover during His ministry. The fourth is found in John 12, which was the last in His lifetime, the one at which He was crucified.

On two occasions Jesus fed the multitudes. In Matthew 14:13-33 we have the writer's account of the first of these miracles, the feeding of the five thousand men besides women and children. In 15:32-39 we have an account of His feeding four thousand men besides women and children. Although the sacred writer clearly differentiates these two miracles, doubters and skeptics today deny that there were two such miracles, but assert that Matthew made a mistake. A reading of the account of these miracles by Matthew makes the impression upon the honest truth-seeker that there were actually two feedings of the multitudes. In a conversation which Jesus had with His disciples later, He referred to the two miracles. See Matthew 16:9,10. Mark mentions the feeding of the five thousand in chapter 6:30-52. Luke also records the same miracle in chapter 9:10-17.

In John 6:1 we are told that Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. This body of water was called in the Hebrew the Sea of Galilee. In the Roman period, the town of Tiberias was built on the west side of the sea and gave its name to this body of water, the Sea of Tiberias. It was also called the Sea of Chinnereth.

In John 6:2 the Apostle tells us that the multitudes followed Jesus, "... because they beheld the signs He did on them that were sick." The Lord Jesus, during His personal ministry, healed many people, but healing the physically sick was not the primary object of His labors. His chief consideration was teaching and preaching and bringing people to a saving knowledge of Himself. Sometimes a situation arose that demanded His healing the sick who were present. On certain occasions when Jesus healed a person, He strictly charged him to tell no man. His acting thus was done as a precautionary measure. When it became known in a given community that He had healed a person or persons, rumors began to spread quickly. The people came out and brought their sick to be healed. Thus they did not come primarily because they wanted to be saved, but simply because they wanted to be healed physically. An examination of the records of our Lord's life and the activities of the apostles, as revealed in the New Testament, shows that neither Jesus nor the apostles conducted any healing campaigns, such as we hear about today. After Jesus had departed to heaven, He conferred upon the apostles the ability to heal. They, in turn, on certain occasions, by the laying on of their hands, bestowed upon others the "gifts of healings." This expression implies that those who were thus set apart and spiritually endowed with the ability to heal sicknesses were given power for healing a given case and no more. There was no permanent gift of healing ever mentioned in the Apostolic church. Paul, for instance, had the gifts of healings. When he had an occasion for using this power of healing, God conferred upon him, for that special occasion, the ability to heal the case in hand. When another occasion arose, God conferred upon him the same power for healing. The expression "the gift of healing" is not known in the New Testament. If today one has such a gift, he has something that is different from that which we see in the New Testament.

We are told in John 6:3 that Jesus went up into the mountain and there sat with His disciples. The language is somewhat similar to that which is found in Matthew 5:1. Let us not confound these two incidences, for they are entirely different. The one in Matthew, chapters 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount, occurred between six months and a year before the one which we are studying on this occasion (John 6:1-14). We are told in verse 4 that the passover was at hand. The passover, as John explains, was the feast of the Jews. It stood out in Jewish thinking to the extent that it was called the feast of the Jews. If anyone is not familiar with the facts regarding the passover, he should read carefully Exodus, chapters 12 and 13, for in this passage we read of the establishment of this principal feast of the Jews.

When Jesus was seated with His disciples, He saw the multitudes gathering. Knowing what He was going to do, He tested Philip by asking him, "Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" This question, in some ways, was a test of his faith, which doubtless was lacking very materially. Our Lord proves our faith from time to time.

Life is an unbroken series of miracles—acts of God being wrought in our behalf. God is truly feeding the teeming millions of earth today as much as Jesus fed the five thousand men and the four thousand of His day. This fact is asserted by the Apostle Paul in the following declaration: "24 The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. 26 and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 that they should seek God, if haply they might feel

after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: 28 for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring” (Acts 17:24-28).

In this passage we see that God existed from all eternity. At a certain epoch He created the material universe. After He had prepared the earth as a suitable place, He created the various types of life. Moreover, He created man—Adam—from whom have descended all men. “... and he [God] made of one, every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth ...” He determined their appointed seasons and the bounds of their habitation that they should seek after God and find Him, “for in Him we live and move and have our being.” Our life, moment by moment, is dependent upon Him. Should He withdraw His spirit from us for one moment, we no longer would exist.

In a speech at Lystra, the same Apostle sounded the same note of our living and having our being in God. When the people of that heathen city wanted to worship Paul and Barnabas, the former restrained them saying, “15 We also are men of like passions with you and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: 16 who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. 17 And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. 18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them” (Acts 14:15-18).

In the Sermon on the Mount the Lord Jesus declared that God makes the sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. He acts thus in order to give us food and all necessary nourishment so that we can continue to live and serve Him. It is God who, therefore, is feeding all people every day of their lives. Having seen that it is God who feeds the people of the world all of the time, we now wish to note, particularly, the Lord Jesus Christ’s feeding the five thousand men beside women and children, the account of which forms our subject of investigation in this study.

Jesus was in a desert place on the east shore of the Sea of Galilee. The people thronged about Him in large numbers and had continued with Him for some hours. An emergency had arisen. Knowing that they could not purchase the food necessary in such a place as that, Jesus therefore, told the disciples for them to feed the multitude. Their faith staggered under such a command as this one.

When, however, the disciples had seated the crowds on the green grass, the Lord Jesus took the loaves and the fishes, blest and broke them, all the time handing out the food, as it multiplied in His hands, to the disciples, who, in turn distributed it to the multitudes. When the crowd had been satisfied with the food which Jesus had provided—doubtless the very best—the Lord instructed His disciples to pick up the fragments in order that there might not be any waste. This command they carried out.

The loaves and fishes were multiplied in the hands of Jesus or in those of the disciples. We cannot be dogmatic, but every indication would point to the fact that the food was multiplied when it was still in His hands. Although He had only the five loaves and the two fishes, He kept handing out food until the five thousand were satisfied.

God feeds the multitudes all the time by gathering the elements from air, and water; and, in the proper proportions, He compounds them in the plants over the growing season of the grain. Men harvest their crops, mill their grain, and make bread, which sustains life. In this way God usually feeds men. On the occasion of which we are studying, the Lord Jesus had a rush order. By His omnipotent power and wisdom He gathered the elements from earth, air, and water, put them through some process analogous to the baking of bread, and then handed out the food to the multitudes.

Christ's feeding the multitude was a rush order which met the emergency of the occasion. Today God's feeding the people daily is a miracle likewise, but it is wrought in an unobtrusive way, so that people, as a rule, cease to see and recognize the fact of His providing for our needs. What God does regularly and what Christ did in feeding the multitudes are both supernatural activities of the Deity.

Men of Violence attempt To Make Jesus King

When Jesus fed the five thousand, certain men, unregenerated, unsaved, thought that they saw in Jesus the possibility of a king who by his miraculous power would throw off the Roman yoke and establish a government under which He would feed the people so that they would not have to work. Many of the lesser Roman emperors doled out food to the masses in Rome. By so doing, they corrupted the people and produced more evils than they cured, using extravagant and unethical means.

When man was banished from the Garden of Eden, the Lord told him that he would have to eat his bread by the sweat of his face. God intends that men and women should work. We have been told that idleness is the devil's workshop. When people are unemployed, they become restless and turn to evil. The inspired Apostle Paul said that, if man will not work, neither shall he eat.

The Lord Jesus was born King of the Jews. He came into the world, at His first advent, to suffer and die and to make atonement for man's sins. In fulfillment of predictions in the Old Testament, when He arose from the dead, He ascended to the right hand of the throne of God where He awaits Israel's repenting of the national sin of rejecting Him and pleading for Him to return. Whenever the nation of Israel, as a people, thus repudiate their national sin, confess it (Hosea 5:15), and plead for Him to return, He will do so. Then He will take the governments of the world into His mighty hand and establish a reign of righteousness which will extend from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. Christ's reign over the earth, therefore, is contingent upon Israel's repudiation of the national sin and pleading for His return.

Jesus Walking on the Water

On a former occasion Jesus stilled the tempest which arose and was about to destroy the boat in which He and the apostles were crossing the lake (Matt. 8:23-27).

When the men of violence came and tried to force the issue to make Christ king, He withdrew and went up into a mountain alone. The apostles had already entered the boat and were rowing to the west side of the sea. A storm arose and the apostles were battling with the waves. When they were

struggling in the storm, suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water and approaching the boat. They became fearful, but He allayed their fears by saying to them, “It is I; be not afraid.”

According to Matthew’s account of this incident, Peter asked the Lord to allow him to walk on the water. Jesus granted his request. Peter started walking, but suddenly the waves became very threatening and his faith failed him. Then he began to sink. At that moment, he cried out to the Lord to save him. The Lord did so (Read the parallel account in Matthew 14:13-33.)

When Jesus got into the boat, the apostles worshipped Him saying, “Of a truth thou art the Son of God.”

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
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THE BREAD OF LIFE

In our last study we considered Christ's feeding the five thousand men miraculously and His walking on the water as His disciples and He were returning from the east side of the sea of Galilee to Capernaum (John 6:1-21). In the present study we shall examine the sequel of the feeding of the multitude.

In 6:22-24 we see that the multitude on the day following the feeding of the five thousand were seeking Jesus and could not find Him. They knew that there was but one boat in which Jesus and the disciples had come and in which the disciples alone left for the west side, whereas Jesus remained. Since the multitude could not find Him anywhere, they concluded that He in some way had returned to Capernaum. They, therefore, got in boats and crossed the lake in search of Him.

When they found Him, they engaged Him in four short dialogues.

Four Dialogues

The first of these talks is recorded in verses 25-27. The people asked Him, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" Knowing the human heart and the motive prompting every action, Jesus replied, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled." Then He urged them not to work for the physical food, but for that which abides unto eternal life and which the Son of man alone can give.

In the next dialogue (vv. 28,29) they asked Jesus, "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" His reply was "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Obviously, this statement was a play on words. The people wanted to know what they had to do in order to work God's work. Jesus spoke of the one and only thing that is acceptable to God: namely, man must believe on Him, the Lord Jesus, who alone can save. Since they were speaking of working to please God, and since faith in Jesus is the only thing which will please the Almighty, the Lord therefore spoke of faith in the terms of the topic of their conversation. An examination of all of the Scriptures bearing on salvation shows that men must believe on the Lord Jesus and receive Him as the redeemer in order to be saved. Thus there is perfect agreement between this statement and the rest of the Scriptures.

Although He had fed them miraculously the day before, they asked Him what sign He would perform in order that they might believe Him. If we read between the lines, we see that they were wanting another free meal, but they covered their design by the use of pious language—the language of a truth-seeker. That this interpretation is correct is evident from what they then said to Him: "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, He gave them bread out of heaven to eat." According to the historical account, God gave Israel the manna every day except

on the Sabbath. Jesus had fed them the day before. Their calling His attention to what God did through Moses was a strong hint for Jesus to feed them miraculously every day.

Jesus immediately reminded them that the manna given to the Hebrews in the wilderness was not the true bread out of heaven. The real bread out of heaven, asserted Jesus, comes down out of heaven and gives life—spiritual, eternal life.

Out of this conversation grew the fourth dialogue (vv. 24-40). Still being dull of spiritual comprehension and having their hearts fixed on the physical food, they said, “Lord, evermore give us this bread.” In reply our Lord said, “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” Then Jesus called their attention to the fact that they had seen Him—had had a sufficient amount of evidence to convince any honest heart as to who He was—yet they still believed not.

At this point the Lord reminded His audience that all whom God gives Him come to Him and that He will in no wise reject anyone who comes to Him. The Father gives to the Son all honest truth-seekers, who desire only doing the will of God. The fact that they rejected evidence and refused to believe was proof that they were not among those given to our Lord by the Father.

The Lord assured His audience that all who would come to Him He would raise up at the last day: “For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (vs. 40).

Discourses on the Bread of Life

What we have just looked at, verses 25-40, constitutes a series of dialogues. What we are now to look at, verses 41-65, are three messages on the bread of life which were probably delivered in the synagogue at Capernaum. The first of these is found in verses 41-51; the second is given in verses 52-59. Finally, the last one is found in verses 60-65.

Let us examine the first one of these discourses. According to verse 41 the Jews, the opponents of Jesus, murmured because He declared that He was the bread which came down out of heaven. They asked, “Is not this Jesus whose father and mother we know; how is it that He says He is come down out of heaven?”

In reply to these questions, Jesus delivered His first message in verses 43-51. He began His discourse by exhorting them, “Murmur not among yourselves; no man can come to me except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day.” In other words Jesus says, “Don’t bother yourselves about what I said; no man can come to me except God draw him, for it is w’itten in the prophets, ‘They shall all be taught of God.’” This quotation is from Isaiah 54:13. An e’amination of the original context of this quotation shows that Isaiah was talking about the people who will be born in the Millennium, and who will not be deceived by Satan, but will have their faces turned to God and will be eager for truth. Thus, God illuminates their minds and their hearts and causes them to accept the truth and to obey it. As an illustration of one who is taught of God, let us notice Nathanael (John 1:43-51). He wanted truth above everything else. God inclined his heart; and, as soon as he laid his eyes upon Jesus, he recognized Him as the Son of God and

King of Israel. As another excellent example of what is meant by “They shall be taught of God,” let us notice Lydia, of whom we read in Acts 16:11-15. The Apostle Paul was doing the preaching. God opened her heart to give heed to the things which were spoken by Paul. She had an honest heart; she wanted truth; God knew those facts. He, therefore, opened her heart, gave her spiritual illumination. She saw the truth, accepted the Lord Jesus, and was saved. What God did for Lydia He will do for anyone who wants the truth. God gives the spiritual illumination and inclines the heart of honest truth-seeker’s. Thus, the Lord teaches them and draws them spiritually and through the preaching of the Word.

Jesus again reiterated the thought that He was the bread of life that had come down out of heaven to give life to the world. He concluded this discourse by saying: “The bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world” (51b).

This last statement stirred up opposition and resentment on the part of the Jews against Christ, who began to strive one with another, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” their having word-battles about this statement was the occasion of the second discourse recorded in verses 52-59. The Jews took Him literally and thought that He was insane. When, however, we note the circumstances under which Jesus spoke, what He said becomes evident. Let us remember that this season was the Passover, and that the Pascal lamb was slain and the blood was placed upon the door-post at the entrance to every Jewish home. Each household had to eat of the Pascal lamb. Moreover since these opponents had been fed with the bread and fishes the day before, they were thinking in terms of eating. Jesus knew that the Passover lamb was typical of Himself and was a yearly reminder that in order for men to be saved, they would have to come to Him, believe on Him, and accept Him as their Passover lamb, whose blood shields from all wrath those seeking refuge behind it, as in the case of the Passover. Having, therefore, the Passover lamb in mind and having also His feeding of the people the day before fresh in His thoughts, the Lord Jesus said that He was the true bread that came down out of heaven and that they would have to eat His flesh and drink His blood or they would have no life in them. Jesus could not be speaking literally, under these conditions. He was using a figure of speech, paronomasia. He, therefore, spoke of accepting and receiving Him in terms of the eating of the Passover lamb and of their eating of the food which He had miraculously and symbolically provided for them the day before.

To interpret this language as referring to the eating of the Lord’s supper—partaking of the loaf and the cup—is to ignore all the facts of the context and to impose upon the passage something that it does not say. “As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father,” Jesus declared, “so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me.” The man Christ Jesus our Lord lived because of the living Father. Thus, those who accept Him live in a spiritual sense because of Him and through His power and might. This message Jesus delivered in the synagogue at Capernaum, as we see in verse 59.

The occasion of our Lord's delivering His third discourse on this occasion is set forth in verse 60: “Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard *this*, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?” Many of the disciples of the Lord Jesus, who doubtless had left their vocations and were following Him from place to place, were indeed carnal, could not understand what He was talking about, became offended and began to withdraw from Him. There was no little murmuring among the disciples. Jesus asked them if what He said caused them to stumble.

Jesus said in substance: if they become offended at His saying that He was the bread of life and had come down out of heaven, what would they say or how would they act if they should see Him ascend into heaven—that is, go back to glory after His resurrection? The implication is that some would believe and receive Him, but the bulk of them would reject even such clear evidence. Jesus concluded this message by saying, “For this cause have I said unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of the Father.”

The Result of the Messages—The Unsympathetic Withdrawal from Jesus and Association With Him

In verses 66-71 we are told that many of His disciples went back home and engaged in secular pursuits, in which they had been engaged before they began following Him. Then Jesus turned to the twelve, whom He had appointed as apostles, and asked if they were intending to go away too. Simon Peter, as usual, spoke up and said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” Then Peter reaffirmed his faith, and that of the other apostles, in Jesus by saying that there was no one to whom they could go because He was the Holy One of God. Moreover, Jesus declared, “Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil?” In referring to the one who was an adversary, He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, one of the twelve, who was chosen by Jesus to accomplish the dastardly crime of betraying Him in order that He might be crucified.

The more we study this marvelous chapter, the more wonderful it becomes. The one concern that everyone should have in this message is “Have I, from the depths of my heart, a desire for truth and nothing but the truth, and am I willing to accept it?” If so, God will illuminate the mind and heart and enable one to see the truth. Everyone seeing the truth and believing comes to the Lord, who will in no wise cast him away.

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STRIFE BETWEEN JESUS AND THE JERUSALEM AUTHORITIES
Part One

Before the Feast of Tabernacles

As we have already seen, John does not give the straight narrative of the life of our Lord. On the contrary, he presents certain messages that Jesus delivered at Jerusalem and some discussions that He had there. For instance, in John 2:13 ff., we see the visit of Jesus to Jerusalem and what He accomplished there when He attended the first passover of His ministry. In chapter 5 we have a record of His healing a cripple man and of the discussion that followed therefrom. This passover was probably the second one during His ministry. In chapter 6 is the record of His feeding five thousand men besides women and children in Galilee, at the time of the third passover during His personal ministry. As all know, the passover festival takes place in the spring, around our Easter. In John, chapter 7, we have an account of Christ's attending the feast of tabernacles in the fall, about six months after the passover mentioned in John, chapter 6. Except for the mention of this feast of the tabernacles, we have a gap of a year and a half probably between chapters 5, and 7. During this period, Jesus was engaged in His great Galilean ministry. The record of John supplements the accounts that are in the synoptic gospels.

The Feast of Tabernacles

In Leviticus, chapter 23, Numbers, chapters 28 and 29, and Deuteronomy, chapter 16, we have accounts of the principal feasts of the Jewish religious year. A glance at these chapters shows that the feast of the passover began this religious calendar and the feast of tabernacles closed it. At three of these annual festivals every Jewish man of age was required to attend the ceremonies at Jerusalem. Thus there were three yearly pilgrimages made by the pious, devout Jews to the Holy City. Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, was observed on the 10th day of the seventh month. On the 15th day the feast of tabernacles was observed and ran for eight days.

At the feast of tabernacles the pious Israelites dwelt in tabernacles, or tents. This festal occasion was to commemorate their wanderings and dwelling in tents in the wilderness on their trek from Egypt to the Promised Land. During this time God provided everything that was necessary. The Lord led Israel through the wilderness to teach the lesson that man lives not by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

This feast of tabernacles was also celebrated to commemorate the bountiful harvest that the Lord had given Israel when He was faithful in His services. This feast was sometimes called the feast of ingatherings.

A Suggestion by the Brothers of Jesus to the Lord

As we learned in John, chapter 3, our Lord devoted approximately six months of the first full year of His ministry to the great Judean ministry. Jesus continued laboring in and around Jerusalem as He sought to present the truth of God to the Jewish people. Opposition arose and soon grew into bitter hostility. Finally, the situation became so very tense that Jesus had to leave Judaea and go to Galilee. There He labored for practically eighteen months. The opposition that had been aroused in Judaea was transferred to Galilee and grew until it was utterly impossible for Him to accomplish very much there. He, therefore, retired four times from the Holy Land, going into adjacent territory where He continued His ministry.

The introductory words of chapter 7 are "And after these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Judaea, because the Jews sought to kill him." The phrase "after these things" possibly goes back to chapter 5, which gives the account of the opposition that arose at the second passover during His ministry. Though Jesus would not give any more time to the Judean territory, because the authorities were seeking to kill Him, doubtless He was in close touch with the situation there.

The time for the observance of the feast of tabernacles—six months before the last passover in Christ's life—was at hand. The brothers of Jesus suggested to Him that He should leave Galilee and go up to Jerusalem. They, therefore, said: "Depart hence, go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may behold thy works which thou doest. For no man doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou doest these things, manifest thyself to the world" (7:3,4).

These brothers who made this suggestion to Jesus were, of course, His half-brothers. How many of them joined in making this suggestion, we cannot say. Probably James and Jude had no part in it. On this point, however, we cannot be dogmatic. They thought that Jesus was seeking publicity; but, for some reason or other, He would not avail Himself of the opportunity. They boldly suggested, therefore, that He go in an open and spectacular manner to Jerusalem and perform various miracles, in order to attract the attention of the nation—like a victorious monarch marching into a conquered territory.

It is quite evident that they misunderstood Him altogether. It is also highly probable that they were jealous of Him and viewed His claims and His actions with suspicion. A man is not without honor save in his own country—and also in his own household.

When Jesus did go to Jerusalem at the passover at which He was crucified, the people wanted Him to make as great a demonstration as was possible. Probably these brothers wanted Him to enter the city in such a manner and perform one spectacular miracle after another which, in an overwhelmingly convincing manner, would demonstrate to the world that He was God. Such were the thoughts of men, but God's thoughts and ways are as much higher than those of men as the heavens are higher than the earth.

"For even his brethren did not believe on him." This strange unbelief on their part is most baffling to us. Jesus had performed many miracles, yet they did not believe. His life was beyond reproach; His teaching, the highest and most exalted; yet they did not believe in Him as the Messiah and as

the Son of God. They were not willing to take a stand with Him and for Him. They, therefore, bluntly said to Him that “no man doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly.” They were judging Him by themselves.

One would think that His brothers, being closest to Him in everyday life, would recognize His deity, especially since they had seen the mighty works which He performed. But miracles do not sustain faith. They simply call attention to the one who has the miraculous power and who is performing the signs. This fact is seen in the case of the Israelites. Moses appeared before the elders of Israel in Egypt and wrought various signs by the power of God. He appeared before Pharaoh and did likewise. He delivered the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage in a most marvelous and spectacular manner. God sustained them, meeting all their needs throughout the forty years of wilderness wanderings. Nevertheless, they did not believe. Thus the Lord said to Moses, “How long will this people despise me? and how long will they not believe in me, for all the signs which I have wrought among them?” (Num. 14:11). Many people today think that they would believe and that they would act differently if the Lord Jesus and the apostles were upon earth today, working the same signs and wonders that they did nineteen hundred years ago. But the people would not believe. By repetition the miraculous and extraordinary becomes, in the thinking of the masses, the ordinary, usual, normal thing. Upon these principles we can see how it was that the brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him. Doubtless their jealousy of Him, because of His superior life, actions and thoughts, likewise blinded them more or less to His divine nature and powers.

“My Time is Not Yet Come”

Jesus told His brothers to go up to the feast, but that He was not going because His time was not yet. God has a purpose which began in eternity of the past, runs, through time, and continues throughout eternity of the ages of the ages. His kingdom is over all and controls all things (Ps.103:19-22). In this kingdom there are innumerable created beings who were given the power of free choice and action. God never infringes upon the personal rights of His creatures. He uses persuasion, power, and influence to direct their actions; but He stops short of forcing their wills. The plan of God for the ages might be illustrated by a blueprint for the construction of some article, machine, building, or project. Allowances are made for every detail. A building, for instance, will be erected according to the plans and specifications of the blueprint. God is building throughout eternity a great edifice of activity on the part of His creatures. Though they all exercise the freedom of choice, the sum total of their actions throughout eternity will contribute to the advancement of His cause—to the erection of this great edifice of activity. What is true of the universe in general is also correct with reference to the individual.

At the wedding in Cana of Galilee which Jesus and His mother attended, she called His attention to the fact that there was no more wine. The inference was that He should provide more for the occasion. Knowing His miraculous conception and virgin birth, she had absolute faith in Him and knew that He could do anything. Hence, she was wanting Him to show His creative power. Aware of her thoughts, He said, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come” (John 2:4). He knew that at some specific time He would have to manifest His miracle-working power, but He said that His hour had not yet come to do so. In the passage which we are studying, Jesus twice called attention to the fact that His time had not yet come (vv. 6,8). A little later His enemies

wanted to arrest Him, but John says, "... no man took him; because his hour was not yet come" (John 8:20). Again, John informs us that His enemies sought to take Him, "but he went forth out of their hand" (John 10:39). He escaped because the time was not ripe for them to seize Him. At the last supper, we are told, Jesus "'knowing that his hour was come that he should depart "ut of this world unto the Father ... having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1). There was, therefore, a time set by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God for Him to lay down His life for the sins of the world, and to take it up. There is, also, a definite time in the future for Him to return and take the world situation in hand (Ps. 75:2).

Our times are in the Lord's hands. Man, so we are told by the poet, is immortal until his work is done. Our days were all numbered, "when as yet there were none of them" (Ps. 139:16).

Jesus' Urging His Brothers to go to the Feast

Knowing that His enemies hated Him with a venom and would try to do some bodily violence to Him if He went to the feast, Jesus told His brothers that "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil. Go ye up unto the feast: I go not up unto this feast; because my time is not yet fulfilled." The implication of His words is that, since His brothers assumed the same attitude regarding His messiahship which His enemies took, the enemies would not hate them; but He knew that these enemies hated Him, because He condemned them and because His plans were not in harmony with theirs.

Jesus Going Up to the Feast

"But when his brethren were gone up unto the feast, then went he also up, but as it were in secret." Is there a contradiction between His first statement to His brothers that He was not going up to the feast and the statement that later He did go up to the feast, not publicly but in secret? No, there is not. These two statements have been the occasion of much wrangling and controversy. Since, after saying that He was not going up, He did go (and we are told that He did not go publicly, but privately), there must be a harmony between the two statements. We remember that His brothers wanted Him to go up in a public, spectacular manner with great fanfare. When He said no, that He was not going, He was denying that He would go up with them or in any such manner as they had suggested; then, when the time came for Him to go, He went quietly and secretly—in a manner entirely different from what they had suggested. There is, therefore, perfect harmony between the two statements.

Various Opinions of the Multitude Concerning Jesus

When the feast began, the multitudes were very much concerned about His coming to the feast. Whether or not He would come was the general topic of the masses. The multitudes knew that the Jerusalem authorities were hostile and that they in all probability would do some violence to Him if He came. Some declared that He was a good man; others said not so. Others thought that He was leading the multitude astray. Nevertheless, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the rulers. The situation was becoming more tense every moment.

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
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STRIFE BETWEEN JESUS AND THE JERUSALEM AUTHORITIES
 Part Two

During The Feast of Tabernacles

In our last study we saw that Jesus went to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles, six months before His crucifixion. The Feast of Tabernacles always came in the fall, around the latter part of September or the first of October. The brothers of Jesus wanted Him to go in a spectacular manner and demonstrate to the world His supernatural power. He did not choose to act thus but went in secret, because He knew the plan and purpose of God and because His hour had not yet come. In this setting we shall investigate John 7:14:36.

Jesus went to Jerusalem in the middle of the Feast

In John 7:14 we read, “But when it was now the midst of the Feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.” Had conditions been favorable, Jesus probably would have attended every one of the feasts that occurred during His lifetime, because it was incumbent upon every Jew to carry out the will of God as expressed in the Law. But, we are correctly told, circumstances alter cases. God frequently desires mercy and not sacrifice. Whenever there is a clash between things that are commanded, the entire situation must be taken into consideration, and one must act accordingly. God does not demand the impossible.

The Source of Jesus's Teaching

When Jesus arrived at Jerusalem during the Feast, He began to teach and continued doing so. This thought is expressed by the verb *taught* appearing in 7:14. Each of the Gospels emphasizes the fact that Jesus taught everywhere He went. We are continually told that He taught and, also, that He preached and engaged in a healing ministry, relieving the suffering of those to whom He ministered spiritually.

The masses of the people in Jerusalem knew that there was hostility on the part of the leaders of the people against Jesus. On this occasion when they saw Him constantly teaching, they were amazed; they could not understand the situation; they marveled, saying “How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? (v. 15).”

They knew enough about Him, or could surmise sufficiently, to say that He had never learned letters. The word here rendered *letters* appears in Galatians 6:11 and refers to the ABC's or the alphabet. But in Acts 28:21 the same word refers to a regular communication, such as we receive by mail. Arriving in Rome, Paul called together the leading Jews of the city. He told them his story concerning his condition and about his being a Christian. These Jews said that they had not received any letters from the brethren in Jerusalem. In John 5:47, however, this same word refers

to the Law of Moses. In the famous passage on inspiration, II Timothy 3:16,17, it refers to the Scriptures, the Old Testament; and in Acts 26:24 it refers to learning. Festus said to Paul, "Thy much learning is making thee mad [rendering you insane]."

There were two religious schools in Jerusalem in the days of Jesus. One was bounded by Hillel, the other by Shammai. Jesus attended neither of these. Thus He did not receive a formal education.

In reply to the multitudes concerning how it was that He knew letters, Jesus said, "My teaching is not mine, but is of him who sent me." He spoke of Himself as a man and said that the teaching was not of Himself, but of the One who had sent Him, namely, of God the Father. According to the predictions found in Isaiah 50:4-9, the Lord Jesus would arise early every morning and would go out to some secret place and have communion and fellowship with God. He was thus taught of God daily how He should act and what He should say and do on all occasions. Thus He, the man Christ Jesus, had the very best teaching in the universe, that of the omnipotent God.

Jesus, continuing His reply, assured His audience that they could know positively whether or not the message that He was delivering was His own private teaching or was from God. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or *whether* I speak from myself" (John 7:17). Understanding the origin of the message of Jesus is not conditioned upon a great education, culture, refinement, and experience, but upon an insatiable desire to do the will of God at all cost. God will lead to the truth every earnest, sincere heart that is seeking to do His will. The determining factor in every instance is whether or not a person has set his heart to do the will of God as given in the Scriptures. To everyone thus determined the Lord God Almighty will reveal the truth regarding the divine origin of the teaching of Jesus, and of all the rest of the Scriptures.

Moreover, Jesus revealed to His audience how they could tell whether or not a man was a true servant of God. The one who is a true servant and messenger of God will not seek his own glory, but will seek to glorify and honor God. With the lips one can say that he is acting for the glory of God, but his attitude and actions may belie his words. True sincere characters can detect insincerity, hypocrisy, and deceit in any teacher.

As we tune our radios to a certain station to hear a given program, thus we tune our souls to hear the voice of God in the message of the Word. Figuratively speaking, we turn the dial of our own receiver to the point where we will do and are determined, God being our helper, to do the will of God. Then we can hear, clearly and distinctly, the divine message in the Word.

The Jews do not keep the Law

At this point Jesus charged the Jews, his enemies, by asking them a question: "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law?" He was, of course, speaking primarily to His enemies who had already plotted His destruction. Knowing what was in their hearts, He said that they were not keeping the law. To have murder and hatred in the heart, though they may not express themselves in the overt act of murder, is to violate the law of Moses. In order to lead them to see His point, He asked them the further question, "Why seek ye to kill me?" If they had been keeping the law of Moses, they would not have sought to kill Him.

The multitudes then dodged the issue by asserting, "Thou hast a demon; who seeketh to kill thee?" It is not absolutely possible for us to understand fully why the Jews said that Jesus had a demon when He charged them with seeking to kill Him. The implication of their assertion may be that the demons revealed to Him their plot to kill Him, or that He was misled by demonic influences. A study of Biblical demonology shows that the demons can and do reveal certain things to those who yield their lives and spirits to them; but, of course, they are limited in their knowledge and in their activities.

When the enemies of Jesus asked, "Who seeketh to kill thee?" He replied, "I did one work, and ye all marveled because thereof." The work to which He referred in this statement was the healing of the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem eight months prior to this time, as we see in John 5. Because Jesus healed this man on the Sabbath day, the Jewish authorities attempted to kill Him (John 5:18).

When Jesus restored this crippled man to perfect soundness, the multitudes who learned of the healing were literally amazed and continued to wonder about such a miraculous cure.

At this point Jesus was more specific and showed His enemies, who were condemning Him for violating the Sabbath law, how they themselves and others were at the same time violating it. Being great sticklers for the law, they were very punctilious in the observance of the Sabbath, and yet they violated it in circumcising a child on the Sabbath. Jesus therefore confronted His opponents with this question, which they could not answer: "If a man receiveth circumcision on the Sabbath, that the law of Moses may not be broken; are ye wroth with me, because I made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath? (v. 23)." In their own estimation it was all right for them to break the Sabbath law in order to keep the one concerning circumcising a baby on the eighth day. In their thinking it was all right, because they were doing it; but, when Jesus made a crippled man completely well on the Sabbath, they felt He was doing wrong.

Jesus then urged them: "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgement" (v. 24). This exhortation is needed greatly. Let us be righteous and just to all. Before we pass judgment upon anyone, let us, by all means, be consistent in our thinking as well as in our actions.

The True Origin of Jesus

We have already seen the origin of the teaching of Jesus, namely, that He received it daily from His father. He tells us in this section, verses 25-30, of His own origin. Jesus was continuing His teaching. Some of the people in Jerusalem said, "Is not this He whom they seek to kill?" In fact, it was common knowledge that the authorities were seeking to kill Jesus. Notwithstanding this plot, the multitude said: "And lo He speaketh openly, and they say nothing to Him. Can it be that the rulers indeed know that this is the Christ?" The authorities would have seized Him and killed Him if they had dared to do so; but the masses of the people who knew the plot and who saw that the rulers were not putting it into execution wondered whether or not they had changed their minds concerning who Jesus was. It seems that the growing opinion was that He was the Messiah. Some, however, said, "Howbeit we know this man whence he is; but when the Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence he is" (v. 27). It was general knowledge that Jesus lived in Nazareth and was

called a Nazarene. It is quite likely that the people knew something about His personal history, since He was under the spotlight of public gaze at this time. Hence they said, “We know whence this man is and whence he came, but we do not know about the Messiah.”

Jesus cried out in the temple as He was teaching: “Ye both know me, and know whence I am; and I am not come of myself, but He that sent me is true, whom ye know not” (v. 28). Their knowledge concerning Him was limited to a few facts concerning His being a resident of Nazareth and His being called the carpenter’s son. At this point, however, Jesus reminded them again that He was sent by One whom they did not know, that is, by God himself. The Lord Jesus spoke about His coming to this earth: “Think not that I came to destroy the law and the prophets. . . .” No man speaks of his birth as “a coming,” but Jesus thus spoke of His coming. What He meant by that term was His entering the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. In this way He came from heaven to earth.

Jesus was sent by Him, the Father, whom the Jews did not know; but, declared Jesus, “I know him; because I am from him, and he sent me” (v. 29). It is true, according to Psalm 40:6 ff., that Jesus volunteered to come to earth by laying aside His glory and by entering it by miraculous conception and virgin birth. Yet it is also true that the Father sent Him. Hence He repeatedly spoke of the One who sent Him.

As on the occasion recorded in John, chapter 5, when Jesus began to speak of His being on equality with God or of being sent by God, the authorities became enraged and sought to lay hands on Him; but they could not because “His hour was not yet come.”

The Approaching Departure of Jesus

As Jesus continued His teaching, more of the multitudes believed on Him: “But of the multitude many believed on Him; and they said, When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than those which this man hath done?” (v. 31). The form of the verb rendered “believed” indicates that they came to believe on Him. The tide of popular favor was beginning to rise higher and higher. Their question, in verse 31, “When the Christ shall come, will He do more signs than those which this man has done?” implies that they were about convinced that Jesus was the Messiah.

When the Pharisees heard that the multitudes were murmuring these things concerning Jesus, the chief priest and the Pharisees sent officers, temple troops, to take Him. When they appeared, Jesus said “33 yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto Him that sent me. 34 Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am ye cannot come.” The clouds of diabolical wickedness were gathering thick and fast, as was manifest by this official attempt to arrest Him; but, of course, they could not take Him because His hour was not yet come.

The Jews were grabbing at every utterance that He made and were trying to capitalize on it whenever they could. Thus they pondered what He meant by saying, “Yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto him that sent me.” Some of them believed that He was going to leave Palestine and would move out into the dispersion of Grecian Jews and teach them—and also possibly Greeks themselves. They also considered carefully His statement “Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; where I am, ye cannot come.” He was, of course, talking about their being able to kill Him

when His hour had come, at which time He would go to the Father. They would at some time seek Him, but would not be able to find him; they would seek Him when it was too late. Many a man seeks God after it is too late; by repeated deliberate rejection of God, he has wrecked his spiritual nature. In this way one can sin away his day of grace. Let us never sin against light and truth.

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Dr. David L. Cooper
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STRIFE BETWEEN JESUS AND THE JERUSALEM AUTHORITIES

Part Three

In the first installment of this series we studied John 7:1-13, which gives us the facts concerning those events which occurred before Jesus went to Jerusalem to attend the last Feast of Tabernacles during His life. In last month's study we investigated verses 14-36, which gives an account of what occurred during the feast. In the present study we shall examine the great invitation which Jesus extended, to all who thirst for God, on the last day of the Feast. "Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. 39 But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet *given*; because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37-39). On the last great day of the feast the ceremonies reached a climax. Rejoicing abounded. At the psychological moment Jesus gave His great invitation: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." This invitation reminds one of the others found in the Scriptures. For instance, in Psalm 2:10-12 is an invitation for the rulers and the kings of the earth to acknowledge and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. Through Jeremiah God gave an invitation to backsliding Israel to come back to Him and to have fellowship with Him. In Matthew 11:28,29 the Lord Jesus gave an invitation to all who are burdened and heavy laden to come to Him and find rest. Finally, in Revelation 22:17 the Holy Spirit and the Church gives an invitation to all who are thirsty to come and drink of the water of life freely. On the occasion of which we are studying, Jesus invited all who were thirsty to come to Him and slake their thirst. He concluded His invitation by adding: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water."

Immediately the question arises as to what scripture does the Lord Jesus refer? Some commentators think that He is referring to Isaiah 44:1-5. Although this interpretation is possible, it is quite unlikely. The imagery is entirely different from that which Jesus used. For this reason alone I have my serious doubts as to His referring to the Isaiah passage.

The more probable explanation may be found in the following direction. At the Feast of Tabernacles Israel was celebrating the Lord's provision for His people during the forty years of wilderness wandering. At the Feast of Tabernacles everything that would remind one of the wilderness experiences was enacted in some way. One excellent commentator suggests that probably someone read the account of the rock from which gushed forth water: "And Moses lifted up his hand, and smote the rock with his rod twice: and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation drank and their cattle" (Num. 20:11). Psalm 78:15,16 spoke thus of the water of which Israel partook during the wilderness wandering:

“15 He clave rocks in the wilderness,
 And gave them drink abundantly as out of the depths.
 16 He brought streams also out of the rock,
 And caused waters to run down like rivers.”

Note in this quotation that there were rocks which were cleft so that waters came forth. In addition to these rocks of which the writer in verse 15 was speaking, there was the one which in verse 16 is called “the rock.” Streams of water came gushing forth from it. Probably this rock was the one to which Paul referred in I Corinthians 10:1-4: “For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and did all eat the same spiritual food; 4 and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ.”

This rock symbolized Christ; the waters flowing from Him likewise symbolized something. Jesus explained that the waters coming forth from the rock was typical of the Holy Spirit which He would send to those who believed on Him. “But the Comforter, *even* the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you” (John 14:26). Here we see that God the Father in the name of the Son would send the Holy Spirit to those who would believe on Him. This verse is in perfect alignment with the teaching of Jesus on this occasion.

Differences of Opinions Regarding Jesus

According to verses 40-42 there was a difference of opinion regarding Jesus. Some of the people who heard Him said, “This is of a truth the prophet” (v. 40). The prophet to whom the reference is here made is the prophet that is promised in Deuteronomy 18:15-19. This prophet is none other than the Messiah Himself. Thus those people who held this view were correct in their opinion regarding Jesus and His being the prophet promised by Moses. Others said, “This is the Christ.” They too were right. Jesus was the prophet promised and also the Messiah of Israel. Still others who saw Him said, “What, doth the Christ come out of Galilee?” They asked this question so as to express doubt. They did not believe that the Messiah would come out of Galilee. The reason for their position was that the prophet Micah had told where Messiah would be “orn, namely, in Bethlehem of Judaea. Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea. Later, after His flight into Egypt, He returned to Israel and settled down in Nazareth of Galilee. There arose, therefore, a division among the people concerning whether or not Jesus was the Messiah. At this time those who were hostile to Him would have taken Him if they had dared to do so (v. 44).

The Report of the Officers Regarding Christ

Officials in Jerusalem, consisting of the chief priests and the Pharisees, sent a group of servants to take Jesus. When they arrived on the scene and heard Him, they feared to lay their hands upon Him; because there was something about Him different from all other men. He spoke as no other man spoke. These servants came back to the authorities and reported that they had not taken Him because He was a man different from all others.

The Pharisees, in a reprimanding way said to them: “Are ye also led astray? Hath any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees? But this multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed” (vv. 47, 48). The leaders seemed to be suspicious of certain of their members, fearing that some of them might be secret believers in Christ. There was one of their number who doubtless was a secret believer. He was Nicodemus, about whom we read: “Nicodemus saith unto them (he that came to him before, being one of them), 51 Doth our law “udge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?” (vv. 50, 51). From what we learn regarding Nicodemus, he was an honest, conscientious, sincere man who wanted truth regardless of where it was to be found. It seems quite evident that Nicodemus was searching for more light when he came and had an interview with Jesus by night (John 3:1-15). It is possible that he came by night because of fear of his associates. This explanation is possible but it does not seem to be a probable one. It appears that Nicodemus was an earnest truth-seeker who had the courage of his convictions to stand upon what he believed was right. On this occasion of which we are studying, he certainly had boldness and courage to take the position that he did in regard to Jesus. His speech was short and to the point. He knew that his associates had already judged Jesus and had passed sentence upon Him. He then asked, “Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?”

In reply the opposition said to Nicodemus, “Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and see that out of Galilee raiseth no prophet.” They were asking Nicodemus if he were of Galilee, flinging a slur at him. They asked if any prophet arises out of Galilee. Yes. Hosea did, and Jonah likewise. Unfortunately, the people of the southern kingdom, and especially those of Jerusalem, thought that they had a monopoly upon the grace of God and that they were superior to those who lived in the northern kingdom. They looked down therefore upon and despised them. Thus we find this thought reflected in their language to Nicodemus.

The Woman Taken in Adultery

The next day the early morning worshipers gathered around Jesus who sat down and began teaching them. Naturally, because of His speaking on the last day of the Feast, the people were interested to know what He had to say. Thus they flocked around him. While He was teaching the people, the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman who had been taken in adultery and put her in the midst of the group. Then they said, “Teacher, this woman hath been taken in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such: what then sayest thou of her?” (John 8:3-5). Those who brought the woman were not interested in a pure, holy life as seems evident. They were trying to move Jesus to say something whereby they could accuse Him—by so doing they hoped to be able to bring a charge against Him of disloyalty to God, Moses, and the Jewish people. That this interpretation is correct is seen in verse 6: “And this they say trying him, that they might have *whereof* to accuse him.”

Knowing their sinister and evil desires Jesus “Stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground.” This occasion is the only one on which Jesus ever wrote, so far as the Scriptures are concerned. He may have written on other occasions, but no record has been preserved regarding what He wrote. Many conjectures have been made as to what He probably wrote. Possibly He wrote something that was in the law and that touched upon the case in hand.

Being determined to draw something forth from His mouth whereby they might accuse Him, they continued asking Him in regard to His opinion concerning this woman. Finally, Jesus “lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him cast a stone at her.” In this connection the question arises as to what Jesus meant by the statement, “he that is without sin among you”? The suggestion has been made, and with great probability, that Jesus meant the sin of committing adultery. Or He could have meant any sin. Hence we cannot determine the exact meaning. Hence we would do well to hold our peace on this point.

At the mouth of two or three witnesses, according to the law of Moses, every word should be established. Those who bore the testimony that condemned an accused person to death were to cast the first stones. The passage to which Jesus referred is Deuteronomy 17:7. When anyone consults the context, he sees that the special thing concerning which Moses was speaking was the case of any man or woman who would depart from Jehovah and would turn to other gods. If in a court trial, it was established beyond peradventure that such a man or woman of Israel had departed from God and had turned to other gods, then those whose testimony condemned the accused person were to cast the first stone in the execution of the death penalty. Following those who cast the first stone were the people present, who were likewise to stone the condemned one to death. A similar case is found in Deuteronomy 13:1-11.

According to John 8:8 Jesus again stooped and was writing with His finger on the ground. Then the accusers of the woman, one by one, began to leave. Jesus and the woman were left alone. In all probability the accusers of the woman were guilty of the same thing of which they accused her.

Then Jesus lifted up Himself and said to the woman, “Woman, where are they? Did no man condemn thee?” The woman replied that no one had done so. Jesus said that neither did He condemn her, instructing her to go and henceforth sin no more—that is, never be guilty of this sin again. It was the love and compassion which Jesus had for fallen humanity that He thus spoke to this woman and did not condemn her. He knew the circumstances and understood how frail man is and how sinful is his nature. He recognized that this woman was bound by sin and urged her to cease her sinful, wicked life.

God is holy. And He commands His people to be holy the same as He. One cannot carry out this command except by the power and the grace of God. Paul said that he could do all things through Christ who strengthened him. Apart from Christ he could do nothing, but in connection with Christ and the Holy Spirit one can live a victorious life. May the Lord enable us to live day by day for Him and for His glory.

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Dr. David L. Cooper
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A DIALOGUE BETWEEN JESUS AND HIS ENEMIES THE JEWS

As we have already seen, the events recorded in John, chapter seven and eight, occurred at the last Feast of Tabernacles during the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. In our last study we found a marvelous invitation that Jesus gave on the last day of the Feast. At the conclusion of this festival season, most of the people naturally returned to their homes, but the inhabitants of Jerusalem and possibly some who remained in the city came the next day to learn more about Jesus. While He was at the temple, as we have already seen, the Scribes and Pharisees brought a woman who had been taken in the very act of adultery and wanted Jesus to condemn her; but the Lord did not. Instead He stooped down and wrote in the dust; and, when He looked up, His enemies had retired. Jesus asked the woman where her accusers were. Since none of them had accused her, but had gone away, Jesus said that He did not condemn her, and that she should be careful not to commit the sin again.

The section of Scripture which we are to study at this time is found in John 8:12-30.

The Exalted Claims of Jesus Concerning Himself

To the woman at the well of Samaria, Jesus promised to give the water of life if she would only ask Him. To the multitudes in the Synagogue at Capernaum, He declared that He was the Bread of Life. (John, chapter 6.) To the multitudes on the last great day of the Feast, He promised to give the Water of Life freely to those who would accept. On the occasion which we are studying, He claimed to be the Light of the world. To Martha, He said that He was the resurrection and the Life. (John, chapter 11.) To Philip He declared, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life ..." (John 14:6). Never has anyone made such exalted claims as the Lord Jesus made. These promises and statements are to be taken at their literal face value. The Lord Jesus Christ can meet the needs of every soul and will satisfy the longing heart—if people will but come to Him and let Him work in their behalf.

The First Dialogue

In verses 12-20, of chapter 8 we have recorded the dialogue which took place between Jesus and the Pharisees on this occasion. In verse 12, Jesus claimed that He was the Light of the world and that the one who followed Him would never walk in darkness but would have the Light of Life. Immediately the Pharisees replied, "Thou bearest witness of thyself: thy witness is not true." According to the Jewish law, all matters that were brought into court were to be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. The testimony of one person could not establish anything; therefore, the Jews said that Jesus was bearing witness of Himself and that there was no one to corroborate His testimony; consequently it was not true and not accepted. In other words they said that they did not believe in Him and would not accept Him or His testimony.

His reply to them is found in John 8:14-18: "Jesus answered and said unto them, Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye know not whence I come, or whither I go. 15 Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. 16 Yea, and if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that that sent me. 17 Yea and in your law it is written, that the witness of two men is true. 18 I am he that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me."

To the Pharisees who rejected Jesus because He seemingly stood alone giving testimony concerning Himself, Jesus said that, even if He did bear witness concerning Himself, His testimony was true, because He knew whence He came and whither He was going. He knew that He had been in heaven with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, and that He had laid aside His glory and had emptied Himself, coming into the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. He knew God in a special manner which no mortal man ever did. Though Jesus knew those facts about His own personal history and existence, the Jews who were finding fault with Him did not understand any of them. Moreover the Lord Jesus accused them of judging after the flesh, as men here with their limited faculties do. But He declared that He did not judge any man. When He was here upon earth, He judged no man. But when He comes again, He will judge all men, because, when He was God, He became man—became the God-man—and championed the cause of man. Now since He is a son of man—the God-man—all judgment has been committed unto Him, and when He returns He will judge all.

According to verse 16 Jesus declared that, even if He should judge, His judgment would be true; because He was not alone in what He was saying. But God the Father was corroborating everything that Jesus said and did. Since, therefore, God the Father was corroborating the testimony, Jesus declared that "the witness of two men is true." As just stated, the supposition (or proposition) was true, because of two competent qualified witnesses according to Jewish law—God the Father joining Jesus His Son—bore testimony concerning Himself; therefore, according to the law of Moses, His testimony should be accepted. In verse 18 Jesus reiterates this thought.

The Pharisees replied to Jesus, "Where is thy Father?" Then Jesus answered, "Ye know neither me nor my Father; if ye knew me ye would know my Father also." These opponents of Jesus claimed to know God the Father, but Jesus categorically stated that they knew neither Him nor the Father. If they had known God in a real manner, they would have known Jesus; or, if they had known Jesus, they would have known God the Father also.

This dialogue between Jesus and the Pharisees took place in the treasury as He was teaching in the temple, but we are told that "no man took Him; because His hour was not yet come." The angel of the Lord was camping round about the Lord Jesus, and no one could lay hands upon Him until the time came for Him to give up His life for the redemption of the human family. In the plan of God there was a time for Him to be given up and to be crucified. When that time came, God withdrew His restraining hand and permitted the enemies of Jesus to seize and to crucify Him.

Second Dialogue

With John 8:21, begins a second dialogue that occurred on this occasion: "He said therefore again unto them, I go away, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sin: whither I go, ye cannot come." Since John used the word *again* in this verse, it seems very likely that the preceding conversation was broken off and then was later resumed when Jesus made this statement.

In reply, the Jews said to one another, "Will he kill himself, that he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come?" (vs. 22). This question seems to have been on the lips of various Jews who were opposing Jesus. What He said was a puzzle to them. They were in darkness. He was in the light. They could not see or comprehend what he was saying.

In response Jesus said: "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for except ye believe that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (vs. 23, 24). This statement to the Jews that they were from beneath is to be taken at its face value. Their parents had lived on this earth, and they were living on this earth. They lived and moved and had their being in God, but in the sphere of human activity alone. In contrast to them Jesus declared that He was from above. He knew that He had been with the Father from all eternity, and He knew that, when the time had come, He had laid aside His glory, entering the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. Hence He said that He was from above. A classical passage on the incarnation of the Lord Jesus is found in Phil 2:5-11. Though Jesus was in "the form of God, He counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but He emptied Himself and took the form of a servant becoming obedient unto death, yea the death of the cross." Jesus declared that they were of this world, whereas He was not of this world. He was here on a visit, to work out the plan of redemption of the human family. He knew that the time was very close at hand when he would give His life for the sins of humanity—only about three months longer.

The Jews retorted, "Who art thou?" Jesus might as well have been speaking in a foreign language to them on this occasion, for they had no conception of spiritual realities and the teaching of the Scriptures which foretold that God would come to earth and appear in the form of man. Had they known the Scriptures and had they believed them, they would have recognized Him as the One of whom all the prophets had spoken.

Jesus replied, "Even that which I have also spoken unto you from the beginning. I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you: howbeit he that sent me is true; and the things which I heard from him, these speak I unto the world." From the very beginning Jesus spoke of Himself as having been in heaven and as having left there and come to earth for the specific purpose of redeeming humanity. He could therefore truthfully say that He was the one concerning whom He had spoken from the very beginning of His ministry. Moreover Jesus declared that He had many things to speak to them as a judge concerning them, but He did not do so because they were not prepared for any such message. Nevertheless He was true, even though He did withhold facts which He would have spoken to them had they been in condition to receive the same.

A great revelation is found in the statement "... the things which I heard from him (the Father), these speak I unto the world" (vs. 26). In Isaiah, chapter 50, we have a prophecy concerning the

intimacy and the communication and the fellowship which the Lord Jesus would have on earth with the Father in heaven. According to this prediction He would rise early in the morning and go out to some secluded spot where He could have uninterrupted communication in prayer and fellowship with God. God would open His eyes concerning the situation which would confront Him daily and would give Him the very words to speak so that He would not speak amiss, but would strike fire with every word. It is to these daily revelations that the Lord Jesus referred to in His statement in John 8:26.

Although Jesus spoke plainly concerning His intimate fellowship with the Father, the Jews to whom He was talking had such little spiritual insight that they could not understand that He was speaking to them of the Father.

Moreover Jesus had cried to the Jews saying, "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things" (vs. 28). This lifting up to which Jesus referred was the crucifixion of the Son of Man. His enemies lifted Him upon a cross, nailing Him to it. According to the prediction of the Lord Jesus on this occasion, when His enemies thus lifted Him, they would know that He is—that is, He is self-existing—and that He did nothing of Himself. In this way Jesus claimed to be the I AM, the One who spoke with Moses as we see in Exodus, chapter 3. God told Moses to tell the children of Israel that "I AM THAT I AM" was speaking to them. Then the Lord shortened the term to I AM, so Moses was commissioned to say that "I AM" had sent him unto Israel. Jesus here makes the same high claim that He is the I AM, the self-existing One, the One in whom we live and move and have our being.

Jesus moreover said that He of Himself did nothing; but as the Father taught Him, He acted and spoke. By this statement Jesus meant that He was not doing anything independently of God the Father. Having entered the world by miraculous conception and Virgin Birth, he was as God-man utterly dependent upon God for everything. He therefore had communion and fellowship daily with God, who revealed to Him just how He should act and what He should say on all occasions.

According to verse 29 the Father who had sent Him had not left Him alone, but was with Him constantly. Moreover he declared that He always did those things that were pleasing to the Father. He never sought to do His own will.

Jesus spoke with such convincing force, power, and clarity that many of the Jews believed on Him from that time on; but, as we shall see, there was superficiality in their faith.

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Dr. David L. Cooper
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ANOTHER DIALOGUE BETWEEN JESUS AND HIS ENEMIES THE JEWS

In our last study we examined John 8:12-30. It concluded with the statement that many believed on Christ. But the faith of the greater portion of those who had believed on Him was soon shaken. As to whether an interval of time separates verses 30 and 31 is a question, but it is immaterial to the understanding of the passage. Verses 31-59 constitute the third series of dialogues between Jesus and His enemies.

Jesus

Jesus Christ always attempted to help everyone in his struggle against Satan and sin and unbelief. He, therefore, said to those Jews who, only with the intellect, believed that He was the Messiah, "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Whenever the Word of God is sowed in the hearts of men, it must be grasped by faith, or Satan will come immediately, snatch it away, and the person will not be benefited at all. Apparently such was the situation with the bulk of the people who believed on Him on this occasion. But it is not enough to believe temporarily. One must abide in the Word, must embrace it with the whole heart and hold tenaciously to it. Jesus told His listeners that in this way they would be truly His disciples and would know the truth which would make them free. Of course, He was speaking of their liberation from spiritual bondage.

The Jews

The character of the faith and of the understanding of Jesus that His listeners had is immediately revealed by the fact that they replied, seemingly with resentment, "We are Abraham's seed and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" Their statement that they had never been in bondage to any man, meaning that their country had never been under foreign domination, was false. They had been under Babylonian, and Medo-Persian, and Greek domination; and they were then under the iron hand of Rome. No true believer would have replied to the Lord Jesus as these Jewish leaders did.

Jesus

Then Jesus explained what bondage He had in mind, namely the bondage to sin: "34 ... Everyone that committeth sin is the bond servant of sin. 35 and the bond servant abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth for ever. 36 If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed, yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath not free course in you. 38 I speak the things which I have seen with my *Father*: and ye also do the things which ye heard from your father" (vs. 34-38). Let us bear in mind that the Jews whom Jesus addressed here were those who believed on Him. His plain statements show that their belief was only

temporary and was indeed superficial. These so-called believers were seeking then to kill Jesus, something that Abraham, whom they claimed to be their Father, would never have done. Moreover Jesus said that He was speaking to them only those things which He had seen with His Father, but that they would do the things which they had heard from their father. This statement shows that there was an impassable gulf existing between Jesus and those so-called believers.

The Jews

These believers had said to Jesus, "Our father is Abraham." Literally they were descendants of Abraham. They had the Abrahamic blood flowing in their veins, but their spirit was far from that of Abraham.

Jesus

Jesus declared that, if they were the children of Abraham, they would do the works of Abraham; but they were seeking at that time to kill Him, a man who had told them nothing but the truth which He had heard from God the Father. Then Jesus said that Abraham had never acted in that way. He declared that they were doing the works of their father, but at this point He did not reveal to them who their father was, as He did a little later.

The Jews

As the Jews did not understand what Jesus was saying, they became enraged and slurred Him by saying. "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God" (vs. 41). This remark was an allusion to His origin, and echo of their knowledge of His having been born of a virgin, but it put the worst construction upon the facts, which were evidently known.

Jesus

In verses 42-47, Jesus continued His discussions with His opponents, saying, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me." If God were their spiritual Father, as they said, they would have loved Jesus, as He was the very manifestation of God in human form. Jesus asked, "Why do ye not understand my speech?" Then He answered His own question: "*Even* because ye cannot hear my word." The reason that they could not understand Him was that they were carnal and He and His words were spiritual. The carnal man cannot receive and understand the things of the Spirit because they are spiritually discerned, as the Apostle Paul says in I Corinthians, chapter 2. Then Jesus spoke plainly and said: "Ye are of *your* father the Devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do." Though they were literally the descendants of Abraham, yet in a spiritual sense they were under the control of the devil and evil influences. They did not have the truth, did not want it, and were not interested in spiritual things; therefore Jesus said that they were of their father the devil and the lusts of their father they willed to do. They actually willed to do the will of the devil, for they were being governed and controlled by earthly carnal things. Jesus accused the devil of being a murderer from the beginning. When he was created, he was put over the works of God's hand. He was the anointed cherub, as we see in Ezekiel 28:10-19. He soon became puffed up and, thinking that he could match swords with the Lord, plotted a revolt against God and His

government. Jesus said, therefore, that the devil was a murderer from the beginning and did not stand in the truth because the truth was not in him. He was made holy, upright, and righteous; but pride befogged his reason and his desire to do the will of God.

Jesus further explained that, when the devil spoke, he was speaking of his own, for he was the father and the originator of lies. Moreover Jesus asserted that, because He was speaking the truth, these Jews would not believe Him. They did not want the truth. They were smugly settled down in their own religious life and convictions and did not wish to be disturbed. Challenging His enemies, He asked which of them could convict Him of sin. He also asked why they did not believe the truth that He spoke to them. Then He declared, "He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear *them* not, because ye are not of God." The fact that they were not open to conviction and did not want the truth showed that they were not of God, but were under the domination of Satan. The Jews replied to Jesus, "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon?" (verse 48). There was nothing that indicated that Jesus was a Samaritan. The Jews hated the Samaritans, and this expression indicated the hatred that they had toward Jesus. Moreover there was nothing to lead anyone to believe that Jesus was possessed by a demon. In fact, on different occasions He cast out demons, as well as healed people. But those who were so blind that they would not see charged Him with having an evil spirit, by which He was casting out demons.

Jesus

In reply Jesus said to His opponents, "I have not a demon; but I honor my Father, and ye dishonor me. 50 But I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. 51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my word, he shall never see death" (vs. 49-51). Possibly one reason that the Jews on this occasion said Jesus had a demon was that they did not understand who He was and, therefore, attributed to demons the power by which He wrought miracles. Jesus thereupon told them that He was honoring God and, consequently, God was working in and through Him, but they were dishonoring Him. Since Christ honored God, God in turned honored Him and worked in a special manner through Him. He showed that He was not seeking His own glory, and pointed out that "there is one that seeketh and judgeth." He concluded this special phase of the discussion by saying, "If a man keep my word, he shall never see death" (vs. 51), that is, the second death, banishment from the presence of God and from the glory of His might, which lasts for ever and ever. Obviously He had the second death in mind because believers, like other people, experience physical death.

The Jews

In reply the Jews said to Jesus, "Now we know that thou hast a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my word, he shall never taste of death. 53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died: whom makest thou thyself?" (vs. 52,53). The words of Jesus were meaningful, but His unspiritually minded opponents could not comprehend what He was saying or recognize who He was. But knowing that He possessed superhuman power, they again asserted that He had a demon, the inference being that this demon was working for Him. Since He was speaking of the physical death, they declared, "Abraham died, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my words he shall never taste death. Art thou

greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died: whom makest thou thyself?" They reasoned that, if Jesus should never die, He was superior to Moses, Abraham, and the prophets. They, therefore, wanted to know from His own lips whom He considered Himself to be.

Jesus

54 "Jesus answered, If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing: it is my Father that glorifieth me: of whom ye say that he is your God; 55 and ye have not known him: but I know him; and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be like unto you, a liar: but I know him and keep his word. 56 your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." The Lord Jesus, purposely holding on to the thought that God was with Him and supporting Him in every way, said, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing." If He were simply boasting, then, of course, His glory was in vain: but, praise be to God, the Father was the One who was glorifying Jesus and working through Him. Continuing, Jesus said that He knew God and added, "If I should say, I know him not, I shall be like unto you, a liar." He closed this phase of the discussion with the statement, "I know him, and keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." Evidently God had promised on some occasion to reveal to Abraham a vision of the future in which he would see the days of Messiah. Believing the promise, Abraham rejoiced in anticipation of its fulfilment. Finally, at the psychological moment, God gave the vision of Christ and His glory to Abraham, who rejoiced in this newer and fuller revelation. Who would not rejoice to be honored by God in seeing such a marvelous, unprecedented revelation as Abraham did on this occasion?

The Jews

The Jews, still unspiritually minded, could not comprehend what He said. Some said unto Him, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" They all knew that Abraham had lived two thousand years before the coming of Christ. At the time of this conversation, Christ was not yet fifty years old. The Jews could not understand how He could have seen the days of Abraham. That was to them a great mystery. But Christ was God in human form. He was the God-man, not God and man, but the God-man.

Jesus

In reply Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was born, I am." He claimed His eternal, underived existence. His enemies understood that He was claiming to be God—that is, God in human form. Being baffled the more and being unable to see the light, they took up stones to cast at him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Here we see devout men blinded by tradition and by the lack of spiritual understanding and insight taking up stones and attempting to kill a man who spoke only the truth to them.

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THE HEALING OF THE BLIND MAN

Most of the New Testament writers speak of Christ's performing wonders, miracles and powers. The choice of the word was determined by the thought which the writer wished to emphasize in his reference to the miraculous power of Christ. If he wished to stress the amazement that was created in the person by Christ's performing a miracle, he designated the miracle as a wonder. If he desired to accentuate the power manifested in Christ, he would use the word that is translated "power." If he wanted to point out that the particular miracle indicated the presence of God in a special and unique manner, he used the term *sign*. The Apostle John designated as *signs* all the miracles that he recorded. An instance is Christ's healing of the man born blind. John 9:1 states: "And as he [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth." The preceding verse (John 8:59) reveals that Jesus had just left the temple where the enraged Jews had sought to stone Him because He had declared, "Before Abraham was born, I am" (John 8:58b). Thus the healing of the blind man occurred immediately after the feast of Tabernacles.

The Gospel of John, chapter nine, falls naturally into three sections: the miracle of the healing of the blind man (vs. 1-12); the investigation regarding the miracle (vs. 13-34); and the moral results (vs. 35-41).

The Miracle of the Healing of the Blind Man

When the disciples noticed the blind man, they asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" (v. 2). Because of this question, commentators have thought that the disciples believed in the transmigration of the soul. But this is a mere guess. There is no evidence that the Jews ever believed in this pagan doctrine. Why then did the disciples ask whether the man or his parents had sinned, that he should be born blind? Another occasion for such a question is recorded in Gen. 25:22: "And the children struggled together within her [Rebekah]; and she said, "If it be so, wherefore did I live? [or "wherefore am I thus?"] Rebekah was seeking the cause of her strange suffering, possibly even thinking that she might be out of the will of God. The disciples, however, were probably not thinking of Rebekah and her statement; but they were of the opinion that all diseases were the result of someone's sinning. Since the man had been born blind, they naturally asked whose sin was responsible, not realizing the implications involved in the question as they worded it.

In answer to the disciples, Jesus said that neither the man nor his parents had sinned. According to Exodus 34:6,7, many people do suffer physical disabilities because of the sins of their parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents. God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children, upon the third and fourth generation. In chapter five of the Gospel of John, the crippled man who was healed at the pool of Bethesda was admonished to go and sin no more lest a worse thing befall him. This admonition implies that his being crippled was a result of sin.

The man born blind had not sinned. Neither had his parents. His affliction was brought upon him in order that through his healing "the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9:3). Doubtless many men and women today suffer disabilities which have been brought upon them simply in order that God might have an opportunity to manifest His power and glory through them. Such ones have had the privilege of suffering affliction for the glory of God. In this case Jesus clearly states that the man had been afflicted in order that God might be made manifest in him.

Then Jesus declared, "We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (v. 4). Our lifetime here upon this earth is thought of as a period that is daylight, and the time that our life's work will be over is thought of as the night. We have only one life to live and only that which we do for Christ will endure throughout all eternity. We should, therefore, take advantage of every opportunity to work for the Lord Jesus Christ while we are here in this life. We are saved by the grace of God, but we shall be rewarded according to our works. Jesus urged the disciples to walk in the Light while He, the Light of the world, was shining in the world.

Then Jesus made spittle on the ground, anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and instructed him to go to the pool of Siloam and wash. Without any hesitation in the boldness of faith, the man went and washed his eyes and came seeing. He was cured by the power of God through faith, which led him to do without any question exactly what Jesus had commanded him to do.

When the man received his sight, his neighbors and others who knew that he had been blind asked in amazement, "Is not this he that sat and begged?" (v. 8). Others, however, averred, "It is he"; and still others exclaimed, "No, but he is like him." Then the man declared, "I am *he*" (v. 9). To the question "how then were thine eyes opened?" he answered immediately: "The man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to Siloam, and wash: so I went away and washed, and I received sight" (vv. 10,11). Such straightforward statement of facts as they had transpired would be received according to the laws of evidence in any court of law where justice and righteousness predominate.

When asked where Jesus was, the man replied, "I know not" (v. 12).

The Investigation

Those who had been speaking to the man healed of blindness brought him to the Pharisees. It was the Sabbath day on which Jesus had healed him. When the Pharisees questioned the man directly concerning his receiving his eyesight, he testified "He [i.e., Jesus] put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and I see" (v. 15). Again he gave forth his testimony in clear unequivocal language that anyone could understand.

Notwithstanding the testimony of the man himself and of those who had known him the Pharisees, blinded by prejudice, began to debate among themselves. Some declared: "This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath." Others asked, "How can a man that is a sinner do such signs?" (v. 16). On a previous Sabbath, Jesus had helped the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda

(John, ch. 5). Now He had healed this blind man on the Sabbath. Some of the Pharisees, therefore, said that He could not be from God because He was a Sabbath breaker. If Jesus had been actually violating the Sabbath, He would not have been the true character that He was, the Son of God. But, in healing on the Sabbath, He was not breaking the Sabbath law. To some, however, the fact that the power of God had worked through Jesus in performing these signs and miracles was proof that He was not a sinner, but a man of God. When this division arose among them, they turned to the man himself and said, "What sayest thou of him, in that he opened thine eyes?" (John 9:17a). Their question was an admission that Jesus had restored sight to the man. They wanted to hear again the testimony of the man. He testified of Jesus, "He is a prophet" (v. 17b). Jesus had told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam and receive his sight. He had done exactly as the Lord Jesus had commanded him; therefore, when he received his sight, he was convinced that Jesus was a prophet. But Jerusalem authorities would not believe that the man had been blind and had received his sight until they had called his parents and cross-examined them. After this investigation they asked the parents, "Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?" (v. 19). The parents knew that the authorities had already agreed that anyone who should confess Jesus to be the Christ should be put out of the synagogue. Aware of this danger which was confronting them, they replied, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: 21 but how he now seeth, we know not; or who opened his eyes, we know not: ask him; he is of age; he shall speak for himself." It is quite evident that the parents thought that they could avoid getting into trouble by placing all the responsibility upon their son.

Unable to involve the parents in the case, the Pharisees called the man again and, on this occasion, commanded him saying, "Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner" (v. 24). They categorically stated that they knew Christ was a sinner, but they did not. When He had challenged them in the temple by asking, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" they had evasively answered by accusing Him of being a Samaritan possessed of a demon (John 8:46-48).

The blind man replied to the Pharisees, "Whether he is a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25). The man was clear in every statement that he made with reference to his sight being restored. Every statement that he made has a ring of sincerity. Then his examiners asked, "What did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes?" (v. 26). Since he had already answered these questions once their repeating them made him wonder whether they were really asking in order that they might know the truth and might become disciples of Jesus. Immediately they disillusioned him by saying, "Thou art his disciple; but we are disciples of Moses" (v. 28). They were disciples of Moses in their way. The Jerusalem authorities sat on Moses' seat and laid heavy burdens to be borne by men, but they would not make any effort to relieve the persons upon whom they cast the burdens. Continuing their supposed investigation, they declared, "We know that God hath spoken unto Moses: but as for this man, we know not whence he is" (v. 29). They knew that God had spoken to Moses, but they were in doubt as to God's speaking to Christ. Their eyes were blinded so that they could not see the truth. They were not wanting truth. They assumed that they had all the truth that there was to be had. Moreover they asserted that they did not know who Jesus was. In this statement they were correct. They did not realize that He was God who had entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. They did not know that He was God-man.

Then the man who had received his sight replied, "Why, herein is a marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and *yet* he opened mine eyes. 31 We know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth" (vv. 30,31). Sticking to his original account of his receiving his sight and to the position on which he had first taken his stand, he declared that it was a marvel that they did not know whence Christ was, since He had the power to restore sight to the blind. With boldness he hurled at his opponents this truth, "We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do His will, him He heareth" (v. 31). Since God had answered Christ in His petition to give this man's sight, the man was convinced that Christ was not a sinner as His opponents charged. Continuing with boldness, the man said, "Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind" (v. 32). To him the restoration of his sight was a marvel that proved that Christ was what He claimed to be. Therefore, he said, "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing" (v. 33). Thus the man's testimony rang true from beginning to end.

Being unable to break down his testimony, the investigators hurled at him an accusation that they could not prove, saying "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" (34). Then they cast him out. Their statement about his being born in sin implied that his parents were immoral and that he was probably an illegitimate child. They were resentful, because they thought he was trying to teach them. To their way of thinking, they had the truth and could not be taught anything new. Many people assume the same dogmatic position today.

The Moral Result

After the authorities had cast the man out, Jesus hunted him up and, upon finding him, asked, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" His reply was, "And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?" (vv. 35, 36). The man had very little light, but he was following all the light that he had, and was seeking for more that he might step forward in it and grow in the knowledge of God.

When Jesus replied, "Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee" the man immediately declared his faith in the Son of God, saying, "Lord, I believe," and then worshipped Him (vv. 37, 38). Jesus then revealed one of His purposes in coming into the world, saying, "For judgement came I into this world, that they that see not may see: and that they that see may become blind" (v. 39). Those who are positive that they have the truth and are unwilling to receive more light cannot be reached by the truth of the Gospel. It is like the sun which melts the wax, but hardens the clay. The truth of God will blind those who do not want it, but will open the eyes of those who are sincere by seeking after God.

When Jesus made those statements, the Pharisees in rebuttal asked Him, "Are we also blind?" (v. 40). He replied, "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see: your sin remaineth (v. 41). God is going to hold people responsible for the attitude which they assume toward Jesus Christ and the truth.

Let us be open to conviction and receive any truth that God has for us. Let us not assume that we know or that we see, but let us always be on the alert for the discovery of truths hitherto unknown to us.

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
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THE THREE PARABLES OF THE SHEPHERD, THE GATE, AND THE GOOD SHEPHERD

As one will see, if he studies carefully the facts that are presented in John 7:1-10:21, these chapters deal with that which occurred at the Feast of Tabernacles during the last year of our Lord's personal ministry here upon earth. In John 9:1 we see this statement: "And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth." The Lord Jesus was in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles. After the feast He seems to have tarried there a little while and preached the theme of His being the Light of the world (John 8). Possibly, when He finished that message and the debate which followed, He passed along some place in the city of Jerusalem and saw this blind man and healed him.

The record of the healing of this man is found in John 9:1-12. The pharisees would not accept the testimony that was borne concerning the healing of this man. They therefore, had an investigation as to what part Jesus played in the restoration of sight to this unfortunate man (John 9:13-34). The account concludes with the discussion of the moral issues involved found in John 9:35-41.

Unfortunately, the chapter division here was made at the wrong place. Chapter 10:1-21 is part of the sequel to the story recorded in chapter nine. The Pharisees were the ones causing the trouble. Having a demonstration of their tactics of forcing every situation possible, the Lord Jesus spoke these parables which are recorded in chapter 10:1-21—and also later the message found in 10:22-39. These parables are drawn from the life of a shepherd and his sheep. In Palestine during ancient days, as at present, the shepherds would lead their flocks into their fold, causing them to pass through the gate. Such a fold was an enclosure. After the shepherds brought their sheep into the fold, the door or gate was locked, and the doorkeeper or watchman was stationed there, who kept watch during the night. In the morning the shepherds, whose flocks were in the fold, would come to the gate and would be allowed to enter the fold by the porter or guard. When the shepherd desired to lead his flock forth, he called his sheep, all of which recognized their master and followed him. He would then lead them forth through the gate to graze.

On the other hand, thieves and robbers would not go to the door to be admitted into the fold by the porter, but would climb up in some other way and would try to steal the sheep.

The Parable of the Shepherd

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 When he hath put forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. 6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them" (John 10:1-6).

The Pharisees, Sadducees and other groups who usurped authority over the people of Israel were the thieves and robbers, of the parable, who used their positions for their own personal advantage and ends. They did not come by the door but climbed up another way.

When we study this parable in the light of the entire situation, we see that the porter was none other than John the Baptist, who opened the door of the Jewish fold so that the True Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, might enter in and call forth His sheep. That John was the porter who opened the door for the shepherd, the Messiah of Israel, is seen in John 1:29-34. John, the porter, was the forerunner who prepared the way for the shepherd by opening the door, figuratively speaking, of the fold of Israel. By him the Lord Jesus Christ entered.

When he was thus admitted into the Jewish fold by John, He began to call forth His sheep. To those who would not hear His message, he said that they were not His sheep because they would not hear His voice. But those who heard and believed on Him, He avowed, are His sheep. "To him the porter openeth: and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out" (John 10:3). According to this verse Jesus, the true shepherd, called forth His sheep out of the Jewish fold. Like the Palestinian shepherd, Jesus said that, when He called forth all His sheep out of the Jewish fold, He would go before them and lead them to pasturage. After He led forth all His sheep out of the Jewish fold, He, of course, had to lead them into another fold.

The Parable of the Gate

"7 Jesus therefore said unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture. 10 The thief cometh not, but that he may steal and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may have *it* abundantly" (John 10:7-10). Having led His sheep out of the Jewish fold, He has another one into which he leads them, as we shall presently see. In the second parable described in the passage just quoted, Jesus is no longer the shepherd, as in the first parable (vv. 1-6), but is the door of the new fold.

The Lord Jesus Christ declared, "I am the door of the sheep. All that came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture." On another occasion (John 14) He said, "I am the way and the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." He is the door, figuratively speaking, through which we pass in coming into the new fold—in coming to God. If one ignores the Lord Jesus, there is no hope for him. He that believeth not on Christ is condemned already because he has not believed on the only begotten son of God who alone is able to save.

We must notice very carefully the exact wording of verse three, to which we have already given attention, and the statement in verse nine. In verse three the shepherd is said to lead his sheep out of the Jewish fold, but does not lead them back into it. On the contrary, He leads His sheep into this new fold of which He is the door. Note that the sheep go in and out of the new fold and find pasture. In their going into the fold, they have protection; in their going out of it, they have provision—everything necessary for their life and welfare. In other words, all their needs are met.

By recognizing that there are two distinct parables and two different points of view, we see that there is no contradiction between verses 3 and 9. The old fold was the Jewish; the new one is the Christian.

The Good Shepherd

"11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. 12 He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth *them*: 13 *he fleeth* because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, 15 even as the Father knowest me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd. 17 Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. 18 No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from my Father" (John 10:11-18).

In this block of Scripture Jesus gives us some idea as to what He as the Good Shepherd does for His sheep. In the first parable He is the shepherd to whom the porter opened the fold. In the second parable, He is the gate or the door by or through which the sheep—those who know Him, hear his voice, and follow Him—go in and out of the place of protection, for their pasturage, for everything that is necessary for their wellbeing.

But this shepherd is the Good Shepherd; He is the Good Shepherd because He is the true shepherd; He lays down His life for His sheep. If He were simply a hireling and not a real shepherd, He would not lay down His life for His sheep, but would flee in time of danger. When the hireling knows that the wolf is coming, he flees. The wolf both seizes some of the sheep and scatters the rest. He follows his human standards, thinking that self-preservation is the first law of nature, which is the ideal of unregenerated man.

Jesus is represented in Psalm 22:1-21 as the good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep—for the redemption of all who believe, regardless of whether they are Jews or Gentiles. He tasted death for every man. It is the will of God that none should perish, but that all should come unto repentance.

According to verse 15 Jesus knows His own sheep and they know Him—"Even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep." What makes a person one of the Lord's sheep? The fact that he longs for truth and wants to do the will of God is proof that he is one of the Lord's sheep. Palestinian sheep know the voice of their shepherd and will not trail behind a stranger, but will always follow their own shepherd. Those who have a longing for God and for His service are divinely enabled to detect the voice of the true shepherd. May I illustrate this point? When Paul went to Philippi, he attended a prayer meeting that was held by some Jewish women by the riverside. One of those attending that meeting was Lydia, whose heart God opened to give heed to the things that were spoken by the Apostle Paul (Acts 16). She was one of the Lord's sheep. Why was she one of His sheep? She was hungering and thirsting after righteousness. When one longs for the will of God, He opens the heart, inclines the soul, and leads

such a one to see the truth, in order that he might come to the Saviour and be gloriously and eternally saved.

Those who are genuinely the Lord's sheep—those hungering and thirsting after righteousness—know the Lord Jesus Christ in a most intimate way, as is stated in these words "and I know mine own, and mine own know me, 15 even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father..." The Good Shepherd, therefore, lays down His life for His sheep.

Verse 16 is a prophecy concerning the new fold to which Christ leads His sheep: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd." In this verse Christ is speaking of His church into which all, both Jews and Gentiles, are brought and enjoy one glorious fellowship. A little before this time Jesus foretold the establishment of the Church, as we see in Matthew 16:18 "... upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." The middle wall of partition has now been broken down, and believers from all nations are brought together and are united in Christ—in one spiritual fellowship.

The Father loved the Son because He laid down His life for His sheep, that He might take it up again. No one took the life of Jesus, but He laid it down voluntarily. At the time of the arrest, He could have called upon God who would have sent Him twelve legions of angels and delivered Him, but that was not His will nor the will of God. Thus, Jesus laid down his life. At various times different ones tried to accomplish His death, but were unable to do so because his hour was not yet come. While it is absolutely true that Jesus laid down His life and took it up again, it is also true that God raised Him from the dead, as we are repeatedly told in the Scriptures. There was perfect harmony and cooperation between the Father and the Son in the matter of His death, burial, and resurrection.

Division Among the Jews

When Christ uttered these profound, eternal truths, His auditors did not understand. Some thought that He was actually possessed by a demon and that an evil spirit was speaking in and through Him. They therefore said, "He is mad," that is, He has lost His mind. Others, speaking in His behalf, affirmed that He was not possessed of a demon. The reason for their saying that He was not demonized was that one could not open the eyes of the blind as Jesus had done (John 9) if he were under the power of a demon. Whenever the truth is preached, the honest heart readily accepts; the dishonest ones who are not caring for truth—who are not Christ's sheep—stop their ears and turn away from the truth. Let us always ask God to help us to be sincere and to desire the truth above everything in the world.

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JESUS AT JERUSALEM DURING THE FEAST OF DEDICATION

According to Leviticus, chapter 23, there were six feasts in Israel's religious calendar. These were as follows: Passover, fourteenth day of the first month; Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), fifty days later in the third month; Feast of Trumpets, the first day of the seventh month; and finally, seven days after Yom Kippur was the Feast of Tabernacles, also called the feast of ingathering.

Originally, Israel had the old agricultural year, the beginning of which, Rosh Hashanah, was in the fall—falling either in our September or October.

When, however, Israel was brought out of Egyptian bondage, the Lord gave him a religious calendar, beginning six months later—about our Easter. Each of these feasts set forth in symbolic, pictorial manner some of the great epochs in the life of the Chosen People. The significance of Passover and of Pentecost have already been fulfilled nationally with Israel. The Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles await their fulfillment in the future.

In John 7:1-10:21 we read of happenings at Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles during the last full year of Jesus' personal ministry. As stated above, the Feast of Tabernacles—the feast of joy over the crops God had given Israel—occurred in the late fall.

About three months after the Feast of Tabernacles was the Feast of Dedication. But, let us remember that this latter feast was not of divine origin. It was purely a Jewish feast which was inaugurated to celebrate the victories which Judas Maccabees won over the Syrians in Israel's war of independence. In the year 161 B.C. Judas, by his great generalship, won a decisive victory and delivered Jerusalem out from under the heel of the oppressor. To commemorate this day of deliverance, the Feast of Dedication or Feast of Lights was inaugurated. It is held around the time of our Christmas and is a time of special rejoicing.

The events which we have to study today, John 10:22-42, occurred at the time of the Feast of Dedication.

Jesus at the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem

According to John 10:22, Jesus was at Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication, which was celebrated in the winter. When Jesus was walking in the temple, in Solomon's porch, the Jews who had become indeed hostile to Him approached Him, saying, "How long doest thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." It is clear, from what we know of these Jewish leaders and what they did on this occasion and later, that they were not asking this question concerning Christ's being the Messiah in order to learn the truth; but were simply asking Him in an attempt to ensnare Him in some way.

Jesus' First Address

The Lord Jesus sensed the entire situation. He therefore replied to them, saying "I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me. 26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; 28 and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who hath given *them* unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one" (John 10:25-30). In this statement Jesus called the attention of His opponents to the fact that he had told them on some former occasion who He was and that they would not believe Him. The speech to which He referred is found in John 5:19-47. In this long passage we find the conversation which He had with the leaders and the statements that He made when He healed the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda (in Jerusalem) on the Sabbath. At that time they attacked Jesus for healing this man on the Sabbath. When they began persecuting Him because of His healing this man Jesus declared, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." For this cause, therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill Him because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also called God His own Father. In making this statement He made Himself equal with God (John 5:17,18).

In this first statement that Jesus made publicly concerning His being equal with God and His doing the work of God as He had done, Jesus set forth clearly and unequivocally who He was. Those opposed to Him did not want the truth. They ignored what He said. In a pious, hypocritical manner they came and asked Him, on the occasion of which we are studying, that, if He were the Christ, He should tell them plainly.

Jesus also called their attention to the fact that they did not believe Him. Then He insisted that the works which He was doing in His Father's name bore ample witness of Him—concerning who He was.

Continuing His answer to these opponents, the Lord Jesus declared, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:26,27). On several occasions Jesus spoke of certain ones who would hear His voice and said that they were His sheep. Just as the Palestinian sheep harken to the voice of their own shepherd, so Jesus said that those who were His Sheep hear His voice and follow Him. Everyone who wants the truth and will accept it when it is presented to him will follow the Lord Jesus and recognize Him as the Great Shepherd of the sheep. No one need have any doubt as to whether or not he is one of the Lord's sheep. Everybody can look into the depth of his heart and discern whether or not he really and truly wants to know and do the will of God. Whenever one is of this attitude, the Lord will bring the truth to him that he may have an opportunity to accept it. When it is presented, he will accept Christ and will follow the Lord. The fact that a person wants truth and accepts the Lord and acts accordingly is proof that he is one of the Lord's sheep.

The Lord Jesus said concerning His sheep, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand." This interpretation is in perfect accord with John 5:24, which states that the one who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ has eternal life and has passed out of death into life. The believer who accepts the Lord Jesus as his Saviour has life now and shall never perish. No one is able to snatch one of the Lord's sheep out of His hand. This is a

glorious, wonderful doctrine which is taught throughout the Scriptures. In verse 29 the Lord Jesus emphasizes the security of the believer by stating that His Father holds the sheep in His hands and that no one can snatch them out of the Father's hands: "My Father, who hath given *them* unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand." Some of the Lord's sheep may wander far away and go off into sin and transgression, but the one who is genuinely born again can never be snatched out of the hands of either the Father or the Son.

In order to emphasize the close cooperation and fellowship that exist between the Lord Jesus and the Father, Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." They are one in essence, nature, and substance. At the same time they are one in plan, purpose, and co-operation. When Jesus uttered this tremendous truth, the Jews picked up stones again that they might kill Him.

Second Address of the Lord Jesus

"Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from the Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou being a man, makest thyself God. 34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken), 36 say ye of him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am *the* Son of God? 37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do them, though ye believe not me believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father. 39 they sought again to take him: and he went forth out of their hand" (10:32-39).

When the Jews picked up stones to kill Jesus, He asked them this question, "Many good works have I showed you from the Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?" Immediately their reply was, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." The opponents of Jesus had blinded themselves. They knew not the Scriptures; neither did they know God in a personal manner. Hence, they could not see the truth as it was. Naturally, they asserted that they were not condemning Him for good works, but for blasphemy. The blasphemy of which they thought He was guilty was based upon His claim that He and the Father were one and that He was doing nothing but what He had seen the Father doing. They thought that He was an ordinary man—the same as they. When He spoke of His being in continual fellowship with God, they interpreted His language correctly, understanding Him to assert that He bore a unique, special relationship to the Father. They could not see how an ordinary man could sustain this special relation to the Almighty. They jumped to the conclusion that He was blaspheming. Had they known the Scriptures, they would have known that God was sending His Son into the world to redeem it. For instance, if they had only known and interpreted Isaiah 7:14 and Isaiah 9:6 correctly, they would have understood His language. "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Is. 7:14). "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6). People make a fatal mistake in not studying the Scriptures and not taking them at their face value. A number of passages of Scripture found in the Old Testament foretold that God would appear in human form for the redemption of humanity. When Jesus performed miracles in the name of the Father and delivered the messages that He did,

those who knew God and the Scriptures recognized instantly that He was the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

The Jews were condemning the Lord Jesus for making Himself equal with God. In order to show their inconsistency and the emptiness of their argument, the Lord Jesus quoted from Psalm 82 and asked them this question, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken), 36 say ye of him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am *the* Son of God?" (John 10:34-36). A careful study of the use of the word *Elohim* in the Hebrew Bible, translated *gods*, can enable us to understand the meaning of Psalm 82, where it is applied to heathen gods or idols. Still, in other connections, it is used to indicate angels. And in still other contexts it refers to the men of Israel, especially the leaders to whom the Word of God came. One has to study the context of each passage to know which of these four meanings it has in a given passage. When we study carefully Psalm 82, we see that the Lord was referring to the men of Israel to whom the Word of God came. Because of their being lifted to such a high and exalted position as to receive the Word of God, the Lord called them gods, meaning of course men granted such unique privileges in the spiritual economy of God.

The leaders of Israel did not complain against God for His using the word *god* in this special sense. Jesus said, in substance, to His opponents that they did not object to the Lord's using the word *gods* with reference to their leaders. But, because He used the phrase, "Son of God," and applied it to Himself, they were strenuously objecting. Thus, He showed their inconsistency.

Continuing His condemnation of His opponents and His proving Himself to be what He claimed, the Lord Jesus said, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" (John 10:37, 38). In this sentence Jesus was appealing to their sense of reason, righteousness, and justice by asking them if they would not receive His testimony concerning Himself to examine carefully the works which He had wrought; because they proved definitely that He, Jesus, was the Son of God and was working in co-operation with God the Father.

When a person's heart is not right and he cannot answer the arguments that are presented, often he resorts to violence. The opponents of Jesus on this occasion did this very thing: "They sought again to take him: and he went forth out of their hand." Knowing that these men were not wanting truth, but were bent on causing trouble, Jesus withdrew from the scene and left them to their fate.

Jesus in Retirement

"And he went away again beyond the Jordan into the place where John was at the first baptizing; and there he abode. 41 And many came unto Him; and they said, John indeed did no sign: but all things whatsoever John spake of this man were true. 42 And many believed on him there" (John 10:40-42). Jesus retired from the country of Judaea to a place east of the Jordan where John was originally baptizing, and remained there awhile. Many people hearing of His whereabouts resorted to Him, some of whom believed that He was the Messiah. They reasoned as follows, "John indeed did no sign: but all things whatsoever John spake of this man were true." People, as a rule, believed John's message. In introducing Christ to the Jewish nation, John pointed Him out as the Lamb of

God that taketh away the sin of the world. He held Christ up before the people as the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel. The people were convinced that Jesus was exactly what John said that He was. Many of them, therefore, believed on Him.

If anyone is honestly in doubt as to who Jesus of Nazareth was, let him be honest with himself and courageous at the same time. If a man is honest and conscientiously is seeking the truth, he will make an effort to find out what is truth. The God of truth will see that he has the opportunity of learning it in order that he might accept Jesus and be saved for time and eternity. Oh, the riches of the grace of God!

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Dr. David L. Cooper
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THE RAISING OF LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD

This month we are to study the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. In the last study we examined what occurred at the Feast of Dedication, about three months before the Passover, when Christ was crucified. This Feast came about the time of our Christmas. After the Feast of Dedication Jesus repaired to a place east of the Jordan where he engaged in a teaching ministry (John 10:40-42).

Just before the Passover, Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, who lived at Bethany on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem, took sick and died. John tells us about the two sisters of Lazarus, mentioning, however, the fact that Mary is the one who anointed Jesus with precious ointment and wiped His feet with her hair. The account of this incident is found in John 12:1-8. Jesus was a frequent visitor to the home of these friends, who appeared to be in very good financial shape, and who entertained Him on various occasions. For the full text of our study today read John, chapter 11.

The Preparation

In John 11:3-16 we have the information constituting the background of this miracle which is the subject of our investigation this month.

The sisters evidently saw that their brother was critically ill. Seeing the seriousness of Lazarus' condition, they sent word to Jesus, informing Him concerning the unusual sickness. Their message was in the following words: "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." The sisters realized that Jesus was Lord—that is, that He was God in human form. Hence they addressed Him as such. They spoke of their brother as "he whom thou lovest." When this message reached Jesus He made a startling statement: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." In verse 4 Jesus said that the sickness which Lazarus had was not unto death. But in verse 14 He spoke plainly, saying: "Lazarus is dead." Some skeptics say that Jesus contradicted Himself, for at first He said that the sickness was not unto death and then He made the statement that Lazarus had died. There is no contradiction at all between the two statements. What the first one means is that it was not going to result in permanent death. The facts in the case prove that this interpretation is correct. Lazarus died, as we see in the account, but was raised and restored to life after four days of being in the tomb. Thus that sickness was not unto death in the sense that Jesus meant it.

Why was it that God allowed Lazarus to have the experience of dying and being raised from the dead? Jesus stated the reason: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God..." His dying and being in the tomb for four days and being raised by the mighty power of God in the way in which Jesus raised him, reflected the glory of God and of the Lord Jesus. All unprejudiced people who want the truth can see the facts in the case and glorify God who gave such power to

the Redeemer as to raise Lazarus from the dead. It was a demonstration of the possibility of the resurrection of the believer at the return of our Lord (I Thess. 4:13-5:11).

We are told that Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. The word which occurs in the original is one which is dignified—rather than the one of intimate association or feeling.

We are told that, when Jesus heard of Lazarus' sickness, He did not go immediately, but stayed for two days in the place where He was. Why did He delay His going to the relief of the situation? Someone has suggested—the thought is undoubtedly true—that Jesus always waited upon God the Father to lead Him in everything that He did and said. According to Isaiah, chapter 50:4-9, the Lord enjoyed communion and fellowship with God in prayer early every morning. God revealed to Him what was necessary for Him to know during the coming day. Thus we see that Jesus waited for His orders from His Father in heaven to go for the raising of Lazarus and for the comfort and consolation of his sisters.

At the conclusion of those two days Jesus said to His disciples that they should go into Judaea. The latter were surprised and wondered why He would attempt to go back into Judaea since the Jews had only recently—at the Feast of Dedication—picked up stones to kill him. In reply to them, Jesus said that there were twelve hours in the day. If a man walk in the light, he does not stumble, because he has the light of the world. But if he walk in the night he stumbles because he lacks the light. In these statements Jesus was thinking of the period of His earthly ministry as a literal day when the light is shining and one can see what to do and where to go. He used the same figures when He said that we must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day for the night is coming in which no man can work. Our lifetime is the period of labor and toil. When this life is over, the night comes, as far as we are concerned. We must therefore work while it is day, because the night might come to us suddenly—and possibly sooner than we expect.

Finally, Jesus spoke plainly to the disciples and said, "Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." To this statement the disciples said that, if Lazarus had fallen asleep, he would recover or would awake, regardless of the cause of the sleep. Then Jesus told them that he had died and that He was glad for their sakes that He had not been present. Then He urged the disciples to go with Him to Judaea. Thomas, who was also called Didymus, urged the other apostles to go with Jesus, and, if need be, die with Him there.

The Miracle—the Raising of Lazarus

In verses 17-27 we have an account of Martha's leaving the house and going out to meet the Lord. When Jesus arrived in the community, He learned that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Can we account for the four days? Yes. From Bethany, which is on the Mount of Olives, to Peraea, where Jesus was, it was about a day's journey. Thus the first of the four days was consumed by the messenger in going, who was sent by the sisters to Jesus. After receiving the message concerning Lazarus, Jesus remained in the place where He was two days. Then it took at least a day for Jesus to make the trip from Peraea to Bethany. Thus the four days are accounted for. But we learn that he had been already in the tomb four days. When we take these facts into consideration we see that the crisis had come and that Lazarus had died the very day that the messenger started out to inform Jesus regarding Lazarus's condition.

Since Bethany was only about a mile and seven-eighths distance from Jerusalem, many of the Jews had gone out to comfort Martha and Mary over their brother's death. The two sisters were overwhelmed by this sudden, unexpected loss that had come into their lives. When, however, the report came that Jesus had arrived, Martha left the house and went to meet Him. The first thing recorded which she said to Him was, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 22 And even now I know that, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee" (John 11:21,22). Martha's clear perception of spiritual matters, of the power of God, and of the relationship existing between God the Father and God the Son is obvious. The Lord Jesus lived in utter dependence upon God daily. She knew that Christ constantly prayed and that God heard and answered every petition of His. His love for Lazarus caused her to believe that, had Jesus been present when the crisis came, He would have prevented the death of Lazarus.

In response the Lord Jesus said to her, "Thy brother shall rise again." She declared her faith that he would rise in the resurrection at the last day. The resurrection of the righteous occurs before the Millennium begins, as we see in Revelation, chapter 20. There were those who were raised when Jesus was brought forth from the tomb. These constitute the first fruits of the resurrection (I Cor. 15:23). The second installment will be at the Rapture of the Church, which occurs before the Tribulation begins. The third and last group constituting the first resurrection occurs at the end of the Tribulation and the beginning of the Millennium. It was to the first resurrection (the total of the three installments) to which Martha referred in the quotation "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus replied to her, saying, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; 26 and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Jesus affirmed that He was the resurrection in that He was the One who causes the resurrection of the believer to eternal life and association with God and Christ and the Holy Spirit throughout all eternity. This language is again a play on words. Martha and Jesus were talking about the resurrection. Hence Jesus said that He was the resurrection. Those who have believed on Jesus and have died will be raised in the first resurrection. Those who are living at the time of the Rapture will not die, but will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (Thess. 4:13; 5:11; I Cor. 15:50-58). To our Lord's question concerning whether or not Martha believed what He said concerning His being the resurrection, she replied: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the son of God, *even* he that cometh into the world." In this statement Martha declared her faith that Jesus was the Hebrew Messiah who was to redeem humanity and to establish a reign of righteousness over the whole earth; that He, being the Messiah, was the Son of God in a peculiar and special sense; and that He was the One who was promised to the world by the various prophets. To the Apostle Peter the Holy Spirit revealed that Jesus was the Messiah, was the Son of the Living God (Matt. 16:16). Caiaphas put Christ under oath by saying, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the son of God" (Matt. 26:63). To him Jesus replied, "Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of Heaven" (Matt. 26:64). Thus Jesus claimed to be the Messiah of Israel and the Son of the Living God in a peculiar and special sense.

In verses 28-37 we read of Jesus and Mary and the conversation that took place between them. Martha left Jesus where she met Him, returning to the house and speaking to Mary secretly, saying,

"The Teacher is here, and calleth thee." When Mary heard these words, she quickly arose and went to meet Him. According to verse 30, Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met Him. When the Jews who were present saw Mary leave, they evidently thought that she overwhelmed with grief, wanted to go to the tomb, there to weep. They followed her. When she came to the place where Jesus was, she fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." When Jesus noted she was weeping and that the Jews who accompanied her were doing the same, He groaned in spirit, was troubled, and said, "Where have ye laid him?" They urged Him to come and see. Then Jesus burst into tears. The Jews were amazed that He had such strong attachment for Lazarus. There were some in the audience who said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die?" The blind man of whom they were speaking was the man of whom we have studied in the ninth chapter of John. These Jews reasoned that, if Christ had the power—and they did not question that proposition—to heal a man of his blindness who had been in that condition from birth, He also would have the power to prevent the death of Lazarus. They were correct in their reasoning.

At this point, Jesus, groaning in Himself, came to the tomb where Lazarus was buried. In verses 38-44 we have an account of the raising of Lazarus—the actual miracle. The tomb, as we learn in verse 38, was in a cave, and a stone lay against the mouth of this cave. Jesus instructed those present to take it away. Then Martha interrupted, saying, "Lord, by this time the body decayeth; for he hath been *dead* four days." At this point Jesus asked her, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" Jesus had told the disciples that Lazarus was not dead but that the experience of death through which he had passed was for the glory of God. He reiterated the same thought to Martha just before He called Lazarus forth from the tomb.

The stone was removed. Jesus lifted His eyes heavenward and said, "Father I thank thee that thou hearest me. 42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me." God had answered every petition that Jesus had made. Hence He said to the Father "thou hearest me always . . ." He was confident that God would hear Him when He called upon Him for power to bring Lazarus from the tomb. After this prayer He cried with a loud voice, saying, "Lazarus, come forth." Then Lazarus was made alive again and came forth, bound with the grave-clothes. Then Jesus commanded to loose him and let him go. It is needless to say that these instructions were carried out.

The Effects Produced by the Miracle

According to verses 45 and 46 many of the Jews who were present with Mary beheld that which Christ did in bringing Lazarus from the tomb, and believed on Him. Others, especially those of the Pharisees, not wanting the truth, went and reported to the Pharisees, telling them what Jesus had done. It is needless to say that they gave a perverted version of the facts.

When the raising of Lazarus was reported to the Pharisees, they called a council meeting to deliberate upon what they should do. They admitted that Christ was performing many signs. But they were determined to stop Him and His work for God. Then Caiaphas, the high priest that year, told the conference, saying, "Ye know nothing at all, 50 nor do ye take account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51 Now this

he said not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation; 52 and not for the nation only, but that he might also gather together into one the children of God that are scattered abroad."

Originally the high priest had the ephod, a device which he, when acting officially, wore on his breast. It was by means of this arrangement that God often revealed His will through the high priest. But it seems that this means of revealing the will of God to His people was not carried out all the time. God therefore raised up prophets who delivered various messages for His people. Since originally the high priest was the one to whom the revelation should be made, God spoke through the Holy Spirit by Caiaphas, unworthy as he was. God spoke through Balaam's ass prophecies regarding the Messiah. The Holy Spirit spoke through unworthy Caiaphas this marvelous prophecy concerning the redemption which Christ would accomplish by His death, burial, and resurrection. It was by His atoning blood upon the cross that God will gather together all the people of God scattered throughout the nations.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Holy Spirit spoke this marvelous prophecy through Caiaphas, the council adopted measures that they might kill Jesus.

When this plot was formed, Jesus left Jerusalem and went into the district near Ephraim, a small community northeast of Jerusalem, where He stayed until the time arrived for Him to attend the Passover at Jerusalem, at which He was crucified.

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
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ARRIVAL OF JESUS IN JERUSALEM

In our studies of John we have come to the consideration of the 12th chapter, which recounts the events that occurred when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem at the time of the crucifixion. As we have already seen, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, many people believed on Him. Because of that marvelous miracle the Jerusalem authorities became indignant and planned to kill Him. He therefore left and went to Ephraim, which was on the edge of the desert. Then He went down to the Jordan and joined the caravan of pilgrims going up to Jerusalem for the Passover. In chapter 12 we have the events which filled the transitional period between the active ministry of our Lord and His execution, burial, and resurrection. For this month's lesson we shall study John 12:1-36. This section of Scripture falls into three subdivisions: (1) a feast at Bethany given in honor of Jesus (verses 1-11); (2) Christ's entry into Jerusalem (verses 12-19); (3) the last scene of Christ's public ministry in the temple (verses 20-36a).

The Feast at Bethany in Honor of Jesus

In verse 1 we are told that Jesus came to Bethany six days before the Passover. This statement, together with other chronological events mentioned in John, has been the occasion of much controversy as scholars have studied John's message in the light of those of the synoptic gospels. Bible students are not completely agreed as to the day of the week that Jesus arrived in Bethany. Some think that He spent one Sabbath day in Jericho, left on Sunday morning, and journeyed with the pilgrims up to Jerusalem. But He stopped and lodged all night at Bethany, which is on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two miles distance from Jerusalem. Those thus interpreting the Scriptures make the first of these six days Sunday and the last, Friday. But since the data is so very meager, this question will doubtless remain unsettled. It is immaterial, even though we would like to arrive at a certainty on this question as well as on all other points pertaining to our Lord's life.

Many Bible students think that Martha, Mary, and Lazarus were the ones who prepared the feast for Jesus and that it was in their home. Others are of the opinion that this feast mentioned by John (12:1-11) is the feast that was held in the house of Simon the leper, of which we read in Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9. When all the accounts are studied carefully and microscopically, many Bible students are driven to the conclusion that it was in the house of Simon the leper where the feast was held. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus were invited guests at the feast. It is not likely that John would have spoken as he did concerning Martha, Mary, and Lazarus if the feast had been held in their home. Personally, I am of the opinion that this position is correct.

During the meal Mary took a pound of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Among the nations of the ancient East, Israel included, whenever a feast or banquet was held in honor of others, the host anointed the guests with oil that was perfumed, as in this case. It is presumable

that such was what occurred on this occasion. John, however, speaks about Mary's anointing the feet of Jesus. The probabilities are that she poured the ointment on His head first and then, since she had such a quantity of it, she wanted to use the rest of it for the glory and honor of the Lord Jesus. Hence she poured it on His feet.

In Luke 7:36-50 we have an account of Christ's being entertained in the home of Simon the Pharisee in Galilee, which occurred several months before the banquet to which Jesus was invited, and which forms the study for this occasion. Some, however, not studying carefully all the facts, have concluded that these two scriptures are speaking of the same feast. Those taking this position point out that in each instance the host was Simon, and that there was a woman who anointed Jesus in both stories. It is true that the host on both occasions is named Simon—one however was called Simon the leper and the other is called Simon the Pharisee. There are something like twelve or fifteen men who are mentioned in the New Testament, and who bore the name Simon, which was a very common name in Israel. The woman who did the anointing mentioned in the Luke passage was simply a notorious street woman. The woman who anointed Jesus in our present study was none other than Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, and who is held up as a devoted sincere person. It is reprehensible that the stigma attached to this women in Galilee should be thrust upon Mary, who lived an exemplary life.

When Mary anointed Jesus, Judas, who was a thief, and who carried the common purse of the group, began to complain, saying that this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, which could be used for helping the poor. He was not considerate of the poor and of helping them, but was thinking of the money and how he could obtain it.

Jesus reprimanded Judas, saying that Mary had performed a good work, which was by way of anticipation, by anointing His body for burial. Moreover, He declared that what Mary had done should be preached all over the world, whenever the Gospel is proclaimed, for her glory.

When the common people learned that Jesus was in Bethany, they went out, not simply to see Jesus but to see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. When the chief priests learned of the presence of Jesus and of Lazarus at this banquet, they laid plans to kill both of them. They were not, however, able to carry out their nefarious plans at this time. His enemies could not take His life at that time because His hour had not yet come.

The Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem

All four evangelists speak of Christ's entry into Jerusalem. Popularly His arrival there is called the triumphant entry. Since His visit to Jerusalem terminated in His ignominious death, I prefer not calling it His triumphal entry, but simply His arrival in the Holy City. All four accounts should be read in order to get a clear picture. See Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-10, Luke 19:29-48, and John 12:12-19.

Since there were those who preceded Jesus in the procession and those who followed, it seems likely that Jesus, as He left Jericho going to Jerusalem, fell in with the pilgrims who were journeying to Jerusalem for the feast. There were those in Jerusalem who heard of Jesus and of His being in the procession, and who came out to meet Him. As the procession was moving slowly

along, they cried out, "Hosanna: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel."

Jesus had sent two of His disciples ahead who procured an ass, on which Jesus rode into the City. This manner of entering into the Holy City was in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, 10. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass. 10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace unto the nations: and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth" (Zech. 9:9, 10). The prophet in vision saw this very scene which was being enacted before their eyes on this occasion. Zechariah called upon the people of the city to rejoice and shout because their King was coming to them meek and lowly, riding upon an ass, and having salvation for the people. An examination of the Zechariah passage shows that that prophet saw both the first and the second comings of Christ and blended them into a single picture. The present Christian Dispensation which separates these two comings of the one Messiah is in this passage passed over in silence. We see such a psychological and literary phenomenon frequently in the prophets.

Even though our Lord during His personal ministry had preached the truth fully and after His resurrection had talked to His disciples regarding spiritual things, they did not have the proper conception regarding Him. When they saw Jesus riding in the procession on the ass, they seemed not to think of Zechariah's prophecy. They never connected what was transpiring before their eyes with this prediction of Zechariah. Hence we are told by John that the disciples did not know the significance of these events until after the resurrection. But the multitude that was with Him when He raised Lazarus from the dead bore testimony to that fact to the rest of the multitude. Because of their testimony, the multitude went out from the city to meet Jesus when they learned He had performed this marvelous miracle.

Although it was evident that Jesus had performed the unprecedented miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead and had performed many other signs convincing the people that He was the Redeemer of man and the Messiah of Israel, the Pharisees, blinded by their ignorance and prejudice seemed to be frustrated on this occasion and realized that they were availing nothing in their efforts against Him.

The Last Scene of the Ministry of Jesus in the Temple

The unbelief which began at the very start of Christ's ministry continued to grow in Israel throughout the years of His personal ministry, until practically the whole nation had become opposed to Him. Humanly speaking, it seemed that His personal ministry was a failure as far as Israel was concerned. When we realize that He confined His efforts and ministry to Israel, and when we remember the conditions which existed at the time of the crucifixion, there is no wonder that according to Isaiah 49:1-4 He declared that He had labored in vain—in reality he had not.

In this dark, critical hour there were certain Greek proselytes who, like the Ethiopian eunuch, had gone up to Jerusalem to worship. When the temple was dedicated, Solomon prayed "God's blessing upon all foreigners who would come join themselves to Jehovah and would worship Him. As to

where these Greek proselytes to the Jewish religion lived, the record does not say. We are simply told that certain Greeks who went up to worship at Jerusalem at the feast came to Philip and asked that they might see Jesus. Philip found Andrew the brother of Peter, informing him concerning the desire of the Greeks. It was not that they simply wanted to look at Jesus as a man, but they wanted an interview. This fact seems certain from the context. Then Philip and Andrew went and told Jesus.

The request of these who were foreign to the race of Israel brought before the mind of our Lord a vision of the lost among the Gentiles who would seek after God. That they would do so is clearly revealed by Moses in Deuteronomy 32:19-22, Isaiah 65:1, and Malachi 1:10, 11. As just stated, Jesus had thus far confined His labors to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Now His horizon is enlarged and He sees in the coming of these Greeks, hungering and thirsting after God, the token of vast multitudes of Gentiles who, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, would come to God.

Jesus, with these thoughts flooding His soul, reveals to the apostles the price that He Himself would have to pay in order to bring the vast host of Gentiles to a saving knowledge of Himself. He therefore made the statement, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. 24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit" (John 12:23, 24). The illustration which Jesus used in these verses is very forceful. The germinal life of the wheat that lies in the garner remains encased in its outer covering and continues alone. But if the same grain is planted in the soil, the body in which the germ is encased decays and the germ springs into new life and produces manifold. Thus, said Jesus, it would be with Himself. As the grain of wheat must die, so must the Son of man die that He might bear much fruit. His death is essential to the life of the world.

Just as Jesus had to give up His life in order to bring life and immortality to light through the Gospel to all those who will accept, thus everyone must die to himself, come to the Saviour, and receive life eternal in order to bear much fruit. That the turning from the things of this world and accepting Christ are essential is set forth in the following words: "He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. 26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will the Father honor" (John 12:25,26).

The burden of the cross and of the excruciating suffering involved in it troubled His soul. Looking up toward heaven He said to the Father, "what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour." This petition was indeed short. People are not heard for their much speaking, but for their sincerity, their faith, and their utter reliance upon God and their surrender to Him. "Father, glorify thy name." Immediately a voice came from heaven saying to Jesus, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." During the personal ministry of Christ God had glorified Him in His ministry to Israel, which at that time had been completed. Then the Father affirmed that He would glorify it again. This promise doubtless refers to God's glorifying the name of Christ among the Gentiles which will result in an innumerable host of people saved from every nation, tongue, tribe, and language as we see in the Scriptures (Rev., chapter 7).

When the voice of God came to Jesus, the multitude was divided as to the significance of what they heard. Some who had no spiritual perception whatsoever said that it had thundered; others, who had a little more perception said that an angel had spoken; but it was God who was doing the speaking. At the baptism God spoke to Jesus, saying, "Thou art my beloved son." To John the Baptist the Lord said, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." Again, at the transfiguration scene God spoke to the apostles, saying, "This is my beloved son. Hear ye him."

The voice of God, whether audible or written, has different significances to many people. The reason for such a variety of meanings is that all men do not have spiritual understanding and proper perception. The message of God has one definite, specific meaning. It behooves all to be sincere, truth-lovers and seekers after God, following Him by faith. Then the Word of God will deliver its own message to us.

After the voice spoke to Jesus, He said, "This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes." He meant that it was not said especially for Him, though it was a blessing to Him. It was primarily sent for the sakes of those who were seeking after God and wanting truth.

In verses 31-32 Jesus made a prediction concerning His crucifixion and the results growing therefrom. He said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." From the context we see that the judgment of which Jesus was speaking was the cross, His dying for the sins of the world. Those who look upon Him as the Lamb of God are saved; those who reject Him are condemned. In this sense judgment comes to the world. The prince of this world, the devil, was cast out on the day that Jesus was lifted up. He was not immediately deposed from the position which he occupied, but eventually will be.

The Christ Abides Forever

The multitude rejoined by saying, "We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up, who is this Son of man?" (John 12:34). In the thinking of the multitude they were undecided as to whether or not Messiah was the Son of man. Of course, according to Old Testament Scriptures, these two terms refer to the one person, the Messiah of Israel, who is one of the persons of the Holy Trinity; who came to earth, entering it by miraculous conception and virgin birth; who, after His resurrection ascended to heaven; and who will come back and reign for a thousand years upon the earth. The Messiah of Israel abides forever.

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
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THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF FAITH AND UNBELIEF

In the present study we come to the consideration of the epilogue to the section John 5:1-12:50. In the discussion of these chapters we have seen the limited growth of faith on the part of the disciples, and the amazing development of unbelief on the part of the Jews as a people toward Jesus and His message. This section divides naturally into two parts: I. the causes of Jewish unbelief (John 12:36b-43); II. The consequences of faith and unbelief (John 12:44-50).

According to verse 36b Jesus delivered His message, departed, then hid Himself because he saw the threatening storm brewing. He was not afraid, but it was the part of wisdom for Him to retire from the scene without having a clash with His opponents—the Jerusalem authorities. His hour had not yet come.

The Causes of Jewish Unbelief

Satan, the prince of this world, blinds the minds of those who do not believe so that they cannot see, comprehend, and understand the truth. This fact is true, not only of Gentiles, but of Jews likewise. Concerning Jewish unbelief, John tells us that, "though he [Jesus] had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him ..." (v. 37). Though Jesus performed many types of miracles that had a definite signification before the people, the Jews as a group did not believe. There are none so blind as those who will not see. A person, on the other hand, must will to do the will of God if he is to see the teachings of Christ and understand that they are of God (John 7:17).

John, continuing the same thought, declared that the people could not see because Isaiah the prophet had foretold that they would not believe. It is very important that we notice this language minutely. According to John they did not believe "that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake ..." This language does not imply that the Jews did not believe because God's decree had made it impossible for them to believe. On the other hand, Isaiah the prophet was carried forward by the Spirit of God and in vision looked into the depths of the hearts of the people of the generation of Jesus' day and revealed their spiritual condition; namely, that they would not believe because they had no spiritual hungering and thirsting for righteousness or for God. He therefore foretold this condition which was fulfilled to the very letter. Isaiah foretold the voluntary, determined unbelief of the Jews of the first century in these words:

"Who hath believed our message?
 And to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed?"

This quotation is the first verse of Isaiah, chapter 53. Though the thought is put in the form of two rhetorical questions, this prediction is a prophecy that the Jews would not believe—at least the majority would not. The arm of the Lord mentioned here is none other than the Messiah of Israel who is thus called by Isaiah on several occasions.

In this connection may I digress for a moment and say that Isaiah 53:1-9 is the verbal confession that penitent Israel will make at the end of the Tribulation, acknowledging the national sin of Israel—the rejection of the Messiah when He came the first time. When the convicted nation makes the confession that is foretold in these verses, the Messiah will return and solve the Jewish problem—and all the problems of the nations of the world.

In verse 39 of John, chapter 12, the Apostle continues by saying:

"For this cause they could not believe for that Isaiah said again,
40 He hath blinded their eyes, and he hardened their heart:
Lest they should see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart,
And should turn, And I should heal them."

Again, let me call attention to the fact that God did not decree and determine that any man should disbelieve or should believe. The liberty to believe or not to believe is a moral quality. To exercise the will and to make definite choices is the prized possession of free moral agents. Remember that Isaiah, in chapter 6, saw by the Spirit of God the condition of the people living in the first century when the Messiah would appear and foretold their reaction to Him and to His ministry.

If a student will study carefully Isaiah, chapter 6, the passage from which this quotation is taken, he will see that God blinded the eyes of the unbelieving Jews by having the truth preached to them continually. The preaching of the Word is like the sun which hardens the clay but melts the wax. The truth of God, when preached and when falling upon honest hearts, convinces people and moves them to accept the Saviour. On the other hand, the gospel, when preached and when falling upon the hearts of men who do not want the truth, hardens their hearts, blinds their eyes, and stops their ears.

The vision which Isaiah saw, and which is recorded in Isaiah, chapter 6, is a vision of the glorified Son of God as He will reign upon this earth during His thousand years of righteous rule. Such was the vision of Isaiah which John mentioned in verse 41. "These things said Isaiah, because he saw his glory; and he spake of him." We know that Isaiah, according to this verse, saw Christ in His glory, reigning upon the earth when the glory of God shall encircle the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Notwithstanding the fact that Jesus had performed many signs and wonders which were sufficient and ample to convince all truthseekers, the bulk of the nation did not believe that He was the promised Messiah. According to verse 42, however, we see that "Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *it*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: 43 for they loved the glory *that is* of men more than the glory *that is* of God." These rulers had greater advantages than the masses, in that they were ministering in spiritual matters constantly and had access to and time for study of the Scriptures. Many of them, therefore, having these advantages, believed that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the long-promised Messiah, but they did not accept Him. The reason for their not accepting Him was that they were afraid of being excommunicated from the synagogue, thus losing their positions as leaders of the nation. They were moral cowards. They saw and understood what the truth was and knew the consequences of rejecting it. Nevertheless they preferred the favor of men rather than the favor

and the grace of God. What is the applause of man, anyway? It is vanity and vexation of spirit. It is like a soap bubble that looks beautiful, reflecting various colors of the rainbow. Suddenly it bursts, vanishing instantly. Such is the glory and praise of men. May God give us true, loyal hearts that want to do His will above everything, and may He help us not to court the favor and the good pleasure of men. While we do not wish to offend anyone, we want to be faithful and true to God and engage in His service during life's short day. God is looking on. He sees down into the depths of the hearts of all men and will deal with each one accordingly.

Consequences of Faith and of Unbelief

In verses 44 and 45 Jesus spoke this: "And Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. 45 And he that beholdeth me beholdeth him that sent me." If a person believes on Jesus Christ, he will not believe on Him alone, but will see that He was God in human form and is associated with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. If one believes on Jesus in reality, he believes on God the Father. One who beholds with his spiritual vision, Jesus, will also see God. This is what the Lord Jesus said to Philip: "He that hath seen me has seen the Father..." (John 14:9). Had God the Father laid aside the glory that He had in all eternity with the other persons of the Holy Trinity and had entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, as Jesus did, He would have reacted toward all situations exactly as Jesus did and would have expressed the same thoughts that Jesus set forth. Thus He said that he who had seen Him [Jesus] had seen God the Father. Such is the import of verse 45.

At the Feast of the Tabernacles, as we learn in John, chapter 7 and 8, Jesus declared that He was the light of the world. In verse 46 of the passage which we are studying, Jesus declared that: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness." Christ is the eternal light. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 3 All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (John 1:1,3,4). Light of a physical, material nature and all spiritual light come from Him. It is in Him that we live, move and have our continual being. It is from him that we have all comprehension and understanding, both materially and spiritually. The closer we walk with him, the brighter the light will be for us. Anybody can come to Him and walk in the light. He who comes to Jesus, declared the Saviour, shall not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

In verses 47 and 48 Jesus spoke about those who hear but do not receive: "And if any man hear my sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day." Jesus Christ left heaven and came to the world in order that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life. It is possible that every mortal may have light and life, for Jesus declared that He came not to judge the world but to save the world. This statement shows that all may hear, accept, and believe—and be saved for time and eternity. The ones who hear the sayings of Jesus and reject them have that which will judge them in the last day—the Word, the message of the Gospel will judge them in the day of judgement. (Matt. 10:15). The judgement is that of the Great White Throne, mentioned in Revelation 20:11-15. This judgement of the last day occurs after the thousand-year reign of our Lord.

In verse 49 Jesus declares that He did not speak from Himself personally—that is, that He did not conceive certain ideas and propagate them. On the other hand, He saw the glory of God and enjoyed the closest fellowship with the Father, before he entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth and became the God-man. All during His personal ministry, as we see from Isaiah, chapter 50, Jesus was in closest touch and fellowship with the Father. He enjoyed this communion in prayer. God showed Him what He should say and do and how to react to every situation that might arise before Him. Hence Jesus declares, "the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak." Thus the message and the instructions that Jesus gave were not those of Himself only. He, as the God-man, received constantly messages from God and acted accordingly.

This epilogue or summary of this first section—consisting of chapters 5 through 12—closes with His statement: "And I know that his commandment is life eternal: the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak." Moses foretold that the Messiah would speak the very words that God would put in His mouth and warned the people not to disobey Him or reject His message. Whenever one rejects the message of the Lord Jesus, he does so to his eternal ruin and condemnation.

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Dr. David L. Cooper
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THE LAST SUPPER

In our study of the Gospel of John we have come to the consideration of John 13:1-30, which narrates an account of the Last Supper, that is, the last Passover supper which Jesus observed with His disciples. Each of the four evangelists give a short account of this supper. See Matthew 26:20-29; Mark 14:17-25; and Luke 22:14-23. After Jesus had observed the Passover supper with His disciples, He instituted what is known as the Lord's Supper. This fact is brought out very clearly in Luke's record. In Luke 22:14-18 obviously Luke is speaking of Christ's observance of the Passover. In verse 19 and 20 we see that he is talking about Christ instituting the Lord's Supper. That this interpretation is correct is seen clearly by the following facts. According to verse 19 Jesus brake the bread and said that it was His body and that the disciples were to partake of it in remembrance of Him. Then, in verse 20 Luke tells us that Christ took the cup *in like manner after* supper—after the Passover supper. Thus, it is clear that the Lord's supper was instituted after the Passover supper was over. A failure to observe this fact has brought much confusion into many circles.

In John 13:1-3 the Apostle gives us an introduction to the material found in chapters 13-17. John follows this method all through his book, here and there.

John tells us that Jesus knew before the Feast of the Passover that the fatal hour had come, the hour for Him to depart out of this life. On several occasions He had referred to this same time. On a certain occasion He told enemies that they could not do anything against Him because His hour was not yet come. He knew God was protecting Him and that Satan and the forces of evil could not take him until they were permitted to do so by the Almighty.

In this introduction John tells us that Jesus loved His disciples unto the end, that is, until the very end of His life—even unto His resurrection life. He not only loved them, but loved them to the very end of His earthly career.

The Devil is always present to thwart the plan and purpose of God and to hinder in every way possible. According to verse 2 the Devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus. We have reason to believe that Jesus knew what Satan had done and that He was taking steps to counteract the evil influence, to check-mate Satan at every turn.

The Lord Jesus was conscious of the fact that the Father had placed all things in His hands, and that He came from God and was going back to God—after His resurrection from the dead. With an undimmed knowledge of the entire situation, Jesus, in the calmness and quietness of an abiding faith—an unshakeable conviction—arose from the supper and performed an extraordinary act.

Jesus, the Creator of the universe, the Lord, Master, and Saviour of the disciples, took the lowliest position that anyone could take, that of a menial servant. He, therefore, arose from the supper, laid

aside His garments, took a towel, girded Himself. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. We may be certain that the disciples were dumbfounded at His actions.

When Jesus came to Peter, immediately in an impetuous manner, Peter asked, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter." Then Peter, ignorantly yet boldly, declared, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." The Lord Jesus answered him saying, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Then Peter, in his characteristic manner, went to the other extreme and said, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Jesus closed this part of the conversation by saying, "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all." The reason for Jesus making this statement is, "He knew him that should betray him. Therefore said he, Ye are not all clean."

There are reflected in this language facts and social customs that were well known to orientals of that day. Those who had taken a bath prior to leaving on a visit to the home of a friend were to do so. In making the journey to the place of visitation, they would, wearing sandals, get their feet dirty. Thus, they would not need to have a complete bath, but simply to wash their feet. Doubtless the disciples' feet at the time really needed washing since they had probably walked some distance on a dusty road. Jesus took these homely facts and created a parable or drama to teach a profound spiritual lesson. Those who have taken a bath are the ones who are clean, having made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. After they have washed their robes, they are clean—every whit whole. They, however, make mistakes or do some things that are wrong. Such sins are here thought of as the dirt on the feet that can be washed away very quickly and easily. The one who is washed in the blood of the Lamb needs only to have his feet washed. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life and cometh not into judgment, but is passed out of death into life (John 5:24). Whenever those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb commit any wrong, in genuine repentance they are to ask forgiveness of their errors—their sins. In the language of this passage they have their feet washed.

It seems that Peter was the only one who said anything in regard to what Jesus was doing. When Jesus finished, as we see in chapter 13:12-17, He took His garment, sat down again, and then spoke, asking them, "Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done you. 16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17 If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them."

Why did Jesus on this occasion take the place of a servant and wash the disciples' feet? This question is important. The probable answer is found in Luke 22:24-30. Here we see that the disciples had a dispute among themselves as to which of them was the greatest. They were thinking of positions in the Kingdom which they might occupy, positions of honor and glory in the sight of men. Each was thinking of his own selfish interests and was oblivious to the need and desires of the others. Doubtless, Jesus, the Lord and Master, played the role of a servant in order to teach them the folly of wanting positions of honor and of glory in the eyes of men.

Jesus gave them an example as to how they should honor the others and humble themselves in the true spirit of meekness, declaring that He had given them an example which they should follow.

Does Jesus mean for His disciples to practice foot-washing today? Some earnest, sincere Bible believers are convinced that we are literally to wash one another's feet. Thus, in some groups foot-washing is practiced in connection with the observance of the Lord's Supper. Those taking this position understand the passage literally and act accordingly. Others who are just as sincere, who are as genuinely saved as those belonging to the other groups, to which I just referred, and who do not take this passage literally, are convinced that Jesus was simply giving an object lesson of humility and of preferring others to one's self. There can be no doubt that Jesus meant for the disciples to follow His example because He plainly stated that fact.

I believe the answer to the question can be found in the light of the following facts. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would bring to the memory of the Apostles all things whatsoever He had commanded them and that He would bring new truths to them. But in the teaching of the Apostles as found in the New Testament, we do not see that any church or any group under their care and supervision observed foot-washing as a church ordinance. On the other hand, we see that there is reflected in the language of Peter the spiritual lesson which Jesus doubtless was teaching on this occasion. In I Peter 5:5 the Apostle urged the brethren saying, "Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." There can be little doubt that this language is an echo of Christ's washing the disciples' feet. Peter urged the Christians to whom he wrote this letter to gird themselves with humility and serve one another—just as Jesus had showed in His object lesson on the occasion which we are studying.

If any brother or sister thinks that foot-washing should be practiced literally by the people of God today, I have no objection—even though I think that the Lord was teaching an object lesson and that Peter echoed it in the passage to which I have just referred. As we see in verses 18-20, Jesus, urging the disciples to do as He had done, did so in full view of the knowledge of those whom He had chosen and of the one who was to betray Him.

According to verse 21 Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." Each of the evangelists tells us of this incident. When Jesus made this remark, the disciples looked at one another, doubting of whom He spoke. At that time there was one of the disciples who was nearest Jesus and was reclining on his bosom. Peter, in his impulsive manner, beckoned to this disciple, saying "Tell *us* who it is of whom he speaketh." Then, this disciple, leaning backward on Jesus' breast said, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus then replied that it was the one for whom He would dip the sop and to whom He would give it. So when He dipped it, He gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

After Jesus gave the sop to Judas, He said to him, "What thou doest, do quickly." No one at the table understood what Jesus had in mind. Some thought, however, that, because Judas carried the bag in which the money of the party was deposited, Jesus said to him, "Buy what things we have need of for the feast"; or, that he should give something to the poor.

When Jesus made this remark, Judas received the sop and went straightway out into the darkness of the night. But we see that, the sop was given during the Passover supper, Judas left while the

Passover was being observed. Since the Lord's Supper, as we have already seen, was instituted after the Passover supper was over, we may be absolutely certain that Judas was not present when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. This position is incontrovertible.

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
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QUIET TALKS WITH THE APOSTLES

In this day of hustle and bustle and of stress and strain, it is comforting to read the words of Jesus to His apostles upon their return from an exhausting preaching mission, only to be surrounded by so many going and coming that they had no leisure even to eat. "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while," he said (Mark 6:31). Jesus frequently went apart to be alone with God. In Isaiah, chapter 50, which records the intimate life of the Lord, one learns of Him: "The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I may know how to sustain with words him that is weary: he awakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught" (v. 4). Thus He was daily instructed of God.

In the Upper Room

In John 13:31-14:31 is the account of the withdrawal of Jesus with His apostles into the upper room. There He observed with them for the last time until the Millennium the Feast of Passover and established what has come to be known as the Lord's Supper. John does not record the establishment of the Lord's Super, but he does show, beyond question, that Judas Iscariot had left beforehand, during the observance of the Passover.

Peter's Question

Knowing well where Judas had gone and why, Jesus nevertheless took occasion in the seclusion of the upper room to have a quiet talk with His apostles. He told them that the hour of His glorification was at hand and that soon He would go where they could not come. Then He gave them a new commandment, to love one another as He had loved them. Their love one to another would make them known to all men as His disciples. Peter, who some six months before had rebuked Him for determining to go to Jerusalem to be killed (Matt. 16:22), asked immediately, "Lord, whither goest thou?" He replied, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow afterwards." But the persistent Peter asked, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee even now?" He could not go with Jesus then because the new and living way was not yet open. Jesus had first to die on the cross and then ascend into heaven to appear before the face of God, having sacrificed Himself to put away sin (Heb. 9:23-28).

Thomas's Question

Aware of the dismay of the apostles because of the impending separation, Jesus bade them, "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also. 4 And whither I go, ye know the way" (John 14:1-4).

On this occasion Thomas interrupted, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?" This statement shows clearly that the disciples could not comprehend what was about to occur. Nor had they understood when Jesus previously told them that He was going to Jerusalem to be delivered up (Luke 18:31-34).

In reply to Thomas Jesus resorted to paronomasia, or a play on words. The question being "How know we the way?" He replied, "I am the way." Since the apostles were already believers, Jesus was not stressing here that He was the way to salvation—although He is the only way. He was referring particularly to His being the way to Eternal Jerusalem, the place that He had just said He was going away to prepare. He said also that He was the truth. In Him is perfect correspondence between fact and idea. He declared further that He was the life, even as he had said to the grieving Martha, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me though he die, yet shall he live; 26 and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26).

Philip's Question

Concluding His reply to Thomas's question, He said, "No one cometh unto the Father, but by me. 7 If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him" (John 14:6b,7). In this declaration, Jesus proved false any teaching that one can inherit eternal life through mere good works and moral living or in any way except through Him. His statement concerning knowing the Father, however, caused Philip to request, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (v. 8). The reply is one of the many passages in the Scriptures attesting that Jesus Christ is one of the Persons of the Trinity, identical in substance with God the Father, but different in personality. "9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father? 10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."

Had God the Father entered the world as Jesus had done, He would have acted as Jesus did, for in Jesus Christ the complete revelation of God to man was made. His nature and character were fully revealed.

The quiet talk in the upper room was not the only occasion that Jesus Christ identified Himself with God the Father. About three months earlier, at the time of the Feast of the Dedication, as He was walking in the temple in Solomon's porch, He had declared to the Jews who had demanded that He tell them plainly whether He was the Christ, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). The Jews thereupon took up stones to stone Him for blasphemy. His statement was an affirmation that He and God the Father were one, not in personality, but in essence, nature, character, and purpose.

Jesus also declared His Divinity to the multitudes after He had paid high tribute to John the Baptist, who had sent from prison by his disciples his inquiry concerning Jesus. "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal *him*" (Matt. 11:27). In this passage He recognized the infinity of God, yet affirmed that only He and those whom He

willed to make the revelation could comprehend God and that only God could comprehend Him. He thus declared His Divinity, because only a Divine Being can comprehend a Divine Being.

His statement to Philip that the one who had seen Him had seen the Father means fundamentally that He was of the same essence or substance as the Father and that the nature of the Father was manifested in His own life.

Greater Works

In this quiet talk with the apostles, Jesus next declared, "12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also: and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father." How could any human being do more than the Son of God? One should remember that, when the Son entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth, He took upon Himself human limitations. Now He was to return unto the Father. His earthly mission was almost completed. After the cross, He would carry on His work through those who believed on Him and were obedient unto Him. Two instances of the apostles' doing greater works than He had manifested are the evangelization at Pentecost, when the Lord added to them in one day "about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41), and the giving of the gospel to the whole world (Rom. 10:16-18; Col. 1:6, 21-23). For such events to take place, Jesus Christ had first to die on the cross to atone for sin, so that the separation between God and man might be destroyed. He had also to send the Holy Spirit to man.

Prayer

In John 14:13,14 is one of the greatest passages on prayer in all the Scriptures. "13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do." When Jesus specified that the apostles were to petition in His name, He gave them no magical formula. Simply to say, as one should when he prays, "In Jesus' name" is not enough. What else is needed? Faith that involves a knowledge of the Son. To pray in His name, then, is to pray on the basis of the revelation that He has given of Himself and with this knowledge of Him reflected in one's thoughts. For example, should one ask in the name of justice that an unjust act be done? Certainly not. Neither, then, should one ask in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that something contrary to His nature be done. But all petitions in the name of the Son, in accordance with His nature, will be granted—"Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do."

Holy Spirit, the Comforter

In verse 15, Jesus sets forth the infallible proof of love of Him: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." Then in verses 16-21 appears His promise to send the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to dwell forever within the believer. He had been with the apostles, but now He was going away. He would, therefore, send the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, not to be with them bodily, as He had been, but to dwell within them, in their hearts. That He would manifest Himself to them through the Holy Spirit is made clear by His statement "I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you" (v. 18).

The Question of Judas, not Iscariot

Still preparing the apostles for the impending separation, Jesus declared: "19 Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me: because I live, ye shall live also. 20 In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. 21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him."

Here Judas, not Iscariot, interrupted to ask, "Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Jesus replied to this question by repeating that which He had just said, but which Judas, or Jude, also called Lebbeus and Thaddeus (Matt. 10:3, Mark 3:18), could not understand because of his expectation of an external manifestation of the Messianic kingdom. Jesus reiterated the moral condition necessary for Him to manifest Himself to anyone. The person must love Jesus, keep His word, and be loved of the father. Worldly people do none of these; therefore Jesus manifests Himself, not to them, but to believers only. Through the Holy Spirit He indwells those who believe on Him.

The Purpose of the Quiet Talk

In conclusion, Jesus told why He had had this quiet talk with the apostles. He wanted to prepare them for what was to come. The Comforter would teach them all things and remind them of all that He had told them. Having been told beforehand what was to come, they would believe it when it occurred.

His statement "I go unto the Father: for the Father is greater than I" (vs. 28) is not a contradiction of His earlier statement "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). It is simply another reference to Himself as the God-man. God was greater than Jesus Christ because, by assuming human form, the Son had voluntarily imposed limitations upon Himself.

In closing this talk, Jesus made a prediction concerning Satan, the prince of the world (John 14:30). He declared that Satan was coming, but had nothing in Him. His statement is, in effect, a declaration of His sinlessness. Because Jesus was without sin, Satan could lay no claim upon Him.

Jesus would no more speak with the apostles after this quiet talk, which He continued on the way to Gethsemane; but, He declared, "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do" (v. 31). He then bade the apostles, "Arise, let us go hence" and willingly departed to Gethsemane where He knew that He would be betrayed.

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
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CHRIST'S FINAL WORDS WITH HIS DISCIPLES

From John 13:31 to 16:33 we have the two quiet talks that Christ had with His disciples before he was arrested. In 13:31-14:31 Jesus was speaking to His disciples concerning the necessity of His going away—returning to heaven. This message filled the hearts of the disciples with sorrow and grief. It was spoken in the Upper Room where Jesus and the disciples observed the Passover and also the Lord's Supper. The last quiet talk recorded in 15:1-16:33 was spoken on the way from the Upper Room to the Kidron Valley. In 15:1-16:15 Jesus talks to His disciples concerning them and their relationship to Him after His departure and after the Holy Spirit has come upon them. In 16:16-33 Jesus gives His final farewell to His disciples.

The Parable of the Vine and the Branches

In 15:1-15 Jesus gave the parable of the vine and branches in order to show the close relationship that must exist between Himself and the disciples if they are to live and work for Him. He declared that He is the vine and they are the branches and that His Father is the husbandman who cares for the vineyard. The reason for His mentioning this parable doubtless grew out of the fact that, at the Passover Supper and at the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus had spoken of the fruit of the vine.

It is clear to all that the branch must be connected with the vine in order for it to have the life of the vine and to bear fruit. But every branch that does not bear fruit is pruned off by the good husbandman and is destroyed. This statement of the Lord Jesus probably was an echo of the fate that would come to Judas who would betray Him. Outwardly he had the same connection with Jesus that the rest of the apostles did, but in reality did not. The rest of the apostles were clean because of the words that Jesus had spoken to them, but Judas was not clean because he was a murderer from beginning—in his heart. On one occasion, as we learn in the sixth chapter of John, many of the disciples of Jesus forsook Him, saying they could not accept His teaching concerning the necessity of their eating His body and drinking His blood. These persons were outwardly His disciples and seemingly had connection with Him; but, when the test came, they flickered and forsook Him. So it became evident that they were pruned off by the Great Husbandman.

Every branch in the vine that bears fruit is purged and cleansed that it may bear more fruit. Continuing the thought of fruit-bearing, Jesus said, "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." God's scale for fruit-bearing is no fruit, fruit, more fruit, and much fruit. The fruit of which He is speaking is the fruit that is borne of the indwelling Christ and the Holy Spirit. Apart from the strength that Christ gives and the Holy Spirit imparts, no one can bear any fruit in the sight of God. Doubtless, much that is accepted as fruit of the Spirit will be found to be bogus and the result of human effort apart from the indwelling Christ.

Jesus said, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing." To bear fruit a branch, the individual believer, must abide in Christ, and Christ, in him—if the fruit which he bears is to be acceptable in the sight of God. To abide in Christ is to be in spiritual fellowship and communion with the Lord. Christ's abiding in the believer is His residing in the heart of the believer. Thus the reciprocal relationship of each to the other is set forth in this statement.

If this reciprocal relationship of abiding is maintained by believers, whatsoever they ask the Father in His name shall be granted. God answers prayer. James told believers that they had not because they asked not. He also told them that they asked, but did not receive because they were praying for things to be used on their own pleasure—and not for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. When two or three abiding in Christ come together and agree as concerning any one thing for which they shall make request, the prayer will be answered. Prayer, believing prayer, is the most powerful weapon that the believer has.

Jesus insisted that if the disciples love Him, they will keep His commandments. Love is a mighty force and power. If they, said He, keep His commandments, they shall abide in Him. His revealing the secrets of the victorious life to them was given that their joy might be made full.

Jesus insisted that He was not calling the disciples slaves or servants, but, rather, friends, because the servant knows not what the master intends to do. But Jesus took His disciples into an intimate fellowship with Himself and revealed to them the secrets of His heart. The basis of the fellowship with the Lord is revealed in Psalm 25:14: "The friendship of Jehovah is with them that fear him; And he will show them his covenant." The word *friendship* in the footnote of this verse is given as *secret*. The Lord delights to reveal His secrets to His faithful followers.

The Position in the World of the Believer Filled with the Spirit

As we see in 15:16, Jesus reminded that He had chosen His followers out of the world—and that they had not chosen Him. Moreover, He appointed them that they should go and bear fruit and that their fruit should abide. In this connection He assured them that, whatever they were to ask of the Father in His name, He would grant to them. The scriptural way to pray is to approach the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy spirit. This type of praying is what we see in the New Testament. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the great intercessors for the people of God. Hence, when the believer prays to the Father in the name of Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, God will grant the petition provided it is in accordance with His will concerning them.

Jesus revealed to His disciples that, since they were His chosen ones, the world would hate them because it had hated Him first. Anyone who is on God's side will be hated by the Devil and all the forces of evil. Satan swears eternal vengeance against all the people of God and is constantly fighting against them. We may expect to have constant warfare with Satan, as is seen Ephesians 6:10-20. Our warfare is against the powers of evil. We can be victorious if we put on the whole armor of God and trust Him, committing everything to the Lord in earnest, real prayer.

The disciples are not to be surprised at the opposition which they meet from Satan and the forces of evil. They opposed Jesus, and they will oppose everyone who knows Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

If the Lord Jesus had not come to the world and had not performed the miracles which no one else had ever wrought, the people of His generation would not have been held responsible for rejecting the light shining from His ministry. But, since He worked unprecedented miracles, there was no excuse for their sin (verses 15-22). It is quite evident that His enemies hated Him with an inveterate venom. He assured them that those who hated Him also hated the Father (verses 23 and 24). In the attitude which the enemies of Christ took, one sees the fulfilment of the prediction "They hated me without a cause" (verse 25).

Though the enemies of Christ opposed Him and did their uttermost to counteract His influence, Jesus said that the Comforter would come, whom He would send from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth who proceedeth from the Father and who would bear testimony concerning Him (verse 26). The disciples, likewise, would bear witness to Him, as we see in verse 27.

Jesus spoke plainly concerning the hatred and the opposition with which the disciples would meet in order that they might not be caused to stumble when, after His departure, it would arise. Then He made the astounding statement that many would put them to death, thinking that by so doing they would be rendering service to God (John 16:1-4).

Saul of Tarsus was a notable example of this prophecy. He verily thought that he should do many things contrary to the name of the Lord Jesus, and thus became the arch enemy of the early church. But, since he was doing them in ignorance, mercy was extended to him, as we see in I Timothy 1:12-16.

This prediction made a profound impression upon the Apostles. The revelation He made to them was hard for them to comprehend. Jesus declared, "But because I have spoken these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart." Then He added that it was necessary for Him to leave them; for, if He did not, the Comforter would not come. But, if He did go away, He and the Father would send the Comforter—the Holy Spirit—who would do a very definite work of grace in the world. The special work which the Holy Spirit was to perform, as set forth in this passage, is convicting the world in reference to sin, righteousness, and judgment (16:8). He would, said Jesus, convict the world in respect of sin. On the day of Pentecost, as we see in Acts, chapter 2, the Holy Spirit spoke to a vast crowd of people in Jerusalem, using the Apostle Peter as the human spokesman. The impact of this great message was so powerful that the audience shouted, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They were pricked in their hearts and realized the enormity of their sin of rejecting Jesus as Lord, Saviour, and Messiah. The convicting power of the Holy Spirit apparently came upon the entire audience on that occasion. The result of His convicting was that about three thousand persons who had been opposed to Christ renounced their sin of rejecting Him and accepted Him as their Lord and Saviour. These people took a definite stand for Christ and were baptized on that day. Again, the Holy Spirit used the Apostle Peter, as we see in Acts, chapter 3, in bringing conviction to a vast audience in Jerusalem on another occasion. As a result of this second recorded sermon, the number of disciples came to be about 5,000. We cannot be positive whether 5,000 accepted the Lord as the result of the second sermon or whether the 5,000 included the 3,000 that accepted the Lord on the day of Pentecost. But we can see the fulfillment of the

promise that the Holy Spirit would convict the world in respect to sin because it believed not on Christ.

In the second place, the Holy Spirit would convict people, according to this promise in John 16, of righteousness because Christ went to the Father and the disciples beheld Him no more. The Holy Spirit brought to the minds of convicted sinners that Christ was righteous, that He made the proper offering for sin, and that God accepted His offering. A good commentary on this verse is found in Romans 4:23-25: "23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; 24 but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification." The original text says in verse twenty-five that Christ was delivered up because of our trespasses and was raised because of our justification. It was proper for Christ to offer Himself. He was delivered up because of our transgressions; He was raised from the dead because of our justification, because God's scheme of redemption was righteous and He accepted the atonement of Christ. The Holy Spirit, therefore, made clear to the people the righteousness and the holiness of the atonement which Christ made for all who accept Him. The believer is acceptable to God, not because of anything that he has in himself or has done or will do, but purely and simply because of the righteousness of Christ and His suffering and dying in our behalf—taking our place upon the cross.

The third thing of which the Holy spirit convicts the world is judgment, because the "Prince of this world hath been judged." The entire life of Christ was a battle with Satan from beginning to end, but the crucial point was reached when Christ was nailed to the cross, and when He poured out His blood for the remission of our sins. Christ himself laid down His life and took it up again. His atonement was acceptable to the holiness and righteousness of God. When He arose He brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Satan was defeated on every count; he is a conquered foe. The Holy Spirit convicts the world in regard to the judgment of Satan.

The Final Farewell of Jesus with His Apostles

In John 16:16-33 we have the final farewell between Jesus and the Apostles before His arrest and crucifixion. In verses 16-24 Jesus spoke of His departing again and their not seeing Him for a long time. An examination of these verses shows that He was talking about two different departures and of His coming again. It was within a few hours from the time of the talk that He would be killed, and then after three days He would rise from the dead and see them again in His glorified resurrection-body. Then He would go away, returning to heaven, and will see them at His second coming—that is when He comes for His saints, which is known as the Rapture of the saints. This coming occurs before the great Tribulation begins, for, said Paul to the Thessalonians, believers turn from idols to God to serve the living God and to wait for the Son from heaven, even Jesus who delivereth believers from the wrath to come. Thus there is a blending of the two experiences in these verses.

In verses 25-33 Jesus began to speak very clearly to His disciples concerning His departure and of His return. They began to comprehend more clearly what He was talking about when He spoke of His going and coming back again and then going away again. They felt, therefore, that He was no longer speaking in dark sayings, but was talking plainly. Finally, in verse 32 He declared that the

hour had come when they would be scattered abroad, but He assured them that he would not leave them alone. In fulfillment of the prediction found in Zechariah 13:7, when God allows the sword to strike His Shepherd, He takes care of the little ones who are scattered—that is, the disciples. This promise is the assuring message that Jesus gave to His disciples in the last few words that He had with them before His arrest and crucifixion. He closed His farewell message to them with the following words, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Jesus overcame; Satan is a conquered foe. We can be more than conquerors through Christ who loved us and gave Himself up for us. May we realize the depth of His victory and live triumphantly in Him, awaiting the day of His return.

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
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CHRIST'S GREAT INTERCESSORY PRAYER

While Christ and the Apostles were still in the Upper Room, where they had observed the Passover and He had instituted the Lord's Supper, he had a quiet talk with them (John chapter 14). On the way to the Garden of Gethsemane, He spoke further, encouraging His disciples (John, chapters 15 and 16). Before reaching the Kidron Valley and the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed the great intercessory petition recorded in John, chapter 17.

This prayer divides into three sections: first, His prayer for Himself (verses 1-5); second, His prayer for His Apostles (verses 6-9); and, third, His prayer for His church (verses 20-26).

Christ's Prayer for Himself

When Christ had completed His quiet talk with the Apostles on the way, He lifted up His eyes to heaven and prayed to the Father. He realized from the depths of His heart that the tragic hour had come. He, therefore, said, "The hour is come." He then prayed, "Glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee ..." He was very unselfish in this petition; He wanted God to glorify Him, the Son in order that He, in turn, would be in a position to glorify God in a newer and fuller way than ever before. It is clear from the drift of thought that Christ was wanting to glorify God in connection with the Apostles and believers. This fact is seen in the following statement, "... even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, that to all whom thou hast given him, he should give eternal life." Thus in the plan of God, Jesus was given authority over all nations, tribes, and tongues, in order that He might give eternal life to those who hunger and thirst after God. In thus seeking lost mankind, He was glorifying God.

In verse 3 the Lord reveals that to know God and Himself, whom the Lord God Almighty sent into the world, is to have life eternal. Man lost his standing with God in the Garden of Eden; he is brought back into fellowship with the Lord by Jesus Christ. Whenever one accepts the Lord Jesus Christ, he comes to know God in a personal, intimate manner.

Christ glorified God, accomplishing the work that the Father had given Him to do. Man cannot glorify God while walking contrary to the will and the plan of God. Jesus constantly repeated that He had not come to do His own will, but the will of God who had sent Him. Thus, in doing the will of God at all times, He glorified the Father.

Jesus prayed the Father to glorify Him with the glory that He had had with Him before the foundation of the world. (v. 5). A good commentary on this petition may be had by investigating Philippians 2:5-11. Christ existed in the form of God and was robed in the divine glory. However, He laid aside that glory—not His nature—in order that He might come to earth, entering it by miraculous conception and virgin birth. Thus, when He was here upon earth, the glory of God did not scintillate from His person as it had done throughout all eternity of the past. Christ rightfully

prayed for the glory which He had laid aside at the time of the incarnation to be restored to Him. It was in the plan and purpose of God to do so. Hence the time was practically ripe for God to restore that glory to Him.

Christ's Prayer for the Apostles

In verses 6-19 is the prayer of Christ in behalf of the Apostles. He began this part of His petition by asserting that He had manifested God's name unto the men whom God had given Him out of the world. He used the word *name* in the same way in which it is frequently used in the Old Testament. An excellent example occurs in Exodus 23:20,21. In this passage Moses speaks of the angel who has delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage and will bring the people into the liberty of the land of promise. The great lawgiver, therefore, urges the people not to provoke this angel to wrath "for he will not pardon your transgression: for my name is in him." Here the word *name* means nature. In other words, the angel who was delivering Israel was none other than one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, God the Son. Christ manifested God's name to the Apostles; that is, He demonstrated to them that He was God in human form. He associated with the Apostles for three and a fraction years; and they could see, understand, and know that He was God. He said that he who had seen Him had seen the Father also. Had the Father come as Jesus had, He would have acted exactly as the Lord Jesus did on all occasions, and He would have spoken just as Jesus did. Thus, in seeing Christ, the Apostles saw God the Father. Though they were, from one standpoint, the special possession of God the Father, He gave them to Jesus in a special manner to do a particular work, for which Jesus trained them, namely, to be witnesses of Him after His return to glory. They were in the closest touch and fellowship with Him and kept His word.

According to verses 7 and 8, their association with Christ was such that they were of the profound conviction that the words which Jesus spoke were the words of God the Father. They received His words and knew of a truth that Christ had come forth from God, and they believed that God had sent Him. From Pentecost and onward, as they preached here and there concerning the Lord Jesus, they emphasized the truth that He was one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity who had laid aside His glory, entering the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth.

Jesus stated that He prayed, not for the world, but for those whom God had given Him out of the world, namely the Apostles (vv. 9,10). He stated that He would be glorified in them, as subsequent events showed.

According to verses 11 and 12, His public ministry was over; He was no longer in touch with the world. All events were shaping up to cause Him to go out of the world, back to the Father. He realized that His earthly work was over, so far as ministering to the people was concerned; He also well knew that the Apostles were to remain here; hence He said that they were in the world, but that He was going to the Father. He, therefore, prayed, "Keep them in thy name which thou hast given me that they may be one, even as we are one." The Lord wanted all the Apostles to be one in spirit, one in purpose, one in co-operation.

According to verse 12, while He was with them He kept them in God's name; that is He kept them by the power of the Father in the center of God's holy directive will. He guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the son of perdition, Judas, who was the betrayer of the Son of God. Since

Jesus would shortly leave this earth and go back to the Father, He spoke and prayed while He was still in the world that the Apostles might have their joy made full.

The world hated Jesus because His life and teachings condemned worldly lives and conduct. He had chosen the Apostles out of the world and had given His word to them; therefore the world hated them because they were not of the world. The unregenerate heart is at enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither can be. According to verse 15, Jesus did not pray that God would take the Apostles out of the world, but that He would keep them from the evil one; that is from the Devil. As the Apostle Peter said, the Devil like a roaring lion is going to and fro throughout the earth, seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8). He did his best in attempting to destroy the Apostles, but was unsuccessful. They went forth doing the will of God and spreading the truth concerning salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ to the entire world. Though they would be in the world, according to verse 16 they were not of the world. Christians are in the world today, but they are not of it; their citizenship is in a different country; they are simply strangers and pilgrims passing through this life to the better country, for which Abraham looked and yearned (Heb. 11:13-16).

The Lord Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them [the Apostles] in the truth: thy word is truth" (v. 17)—sanctify or set them apart to the special duty of the ministry by the word of truth; God's Word is Truth. The Psalmist declared that the sum of God's Word is Truth (Psalm 119:160). As God had sent forth Christ into the world, Christ said that He was sending the Apostles into the world. According to Hebrews 3:1, the Lord Jesus was an Apostle: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, *even* Jesus." He was the greatest missionary that the world has ever seen. According to Psalm 40, he volunteered to become a missionary to this earth and to lay down His life for the redemption of the human family. When He offered to do so, God sent Him in due time. As reflected in the Gospel of John, God had sent Jesus manifestly to be His missionary to the world. On account of the Apostles, Jesus sanctified or limited Himself to certain things, that they might be sanctified or set apart in the truth.

Christ's Prayer in Behalf of His Church

Verses 20-26 of the prayer are devoted to those who believe on Jesus through the Apostles' word. According to verse 20, Christ prayed not simply, as He stated for the Apostles, but for all who believed on Him through their word. This statement is all inclusive, including all believers of every generation of the Christian dispensation, because we believe on Christ because of the Apostles' preaching. If it had not been for their preaching and the New Testament, we would not have the Truth and could not believe on Him.

In verses 20-23 is the petition that all who believe on Jesus may be one as He and the Father are one. There is a unique oneness existing between God the Father and God the Son. They are one, not only in nature, substance, and essence, but also in plan, purpose and co-operation. They have the same thoughts, the same ideas, the same aspirations; and they work together in perfect harmony. Jesus prayed that all who believe on Him might be similarly united. The only way that this unity can be accomplished is by the regeneration of the heart on the part of the Holy Spirit and His indwelling the heart.

People have tried to maintain unity by creedal statements and declarations of faith. While those things may be an aid, and doubtless are in some particulars, they can never bind the people of God together in the way that Jesus prayed about here.

Not realizing the spiritual significance of this prayer, some people think that it can be accomplished by strict discipline on the part of the leaders in the church. It is true that Paul urged the Corinthian believers to speak the same thing and to be joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. He also urged that there be no division among them (I Cor. 1:10). Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, all exhortations fail.

Jesus prayed that those who believe on Him might behold the glory which God would give Him (v. 24). Those of us who accept Him now and follow Him do so by faith. Eventually, we shall see Him as He is. We are now the children of God, but it has not been made manifest what we shall be; but we know one thing, that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. There will radiate from His being the glory of God; He will be adorned with the glory which He had with the Father before the foundation of the world.

Jesus concluded His prayer by saying: "O righteous Father, the world knew thee not, but I knew thee; and these knew that thou didst send me; and I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them." Jesus in prayer addressed God as Righteous Father or Holy Father. The world, He said, did not know God, but He knew the Father. This teaching is in perfect alignment with Matthew 11:27: "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal *him*." No man could understand Christ; God alone could understand Him, and Christ alone could understand God. Concerning the Apostles, Jesus said they knew that God had sent Him into the world. In His concluding statement He said, "I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known." He revealed the true nature of God to them by His intimate association with them and by acting exactly as God would act on all occasions. "He that has seen me hath seen the Father," said Jesus.

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THE ARREST AND TRIALS OF JESUS

In John 18:1-19:16, the Apostle discusses two phases of the final experience of Christ—the arrest and trials. Each of the four evangelists is very expressive in his description of these experiences. After Jesus had finished His high-priestly prayer (John, chapter 17), He went with His disciples over the brook Kidron into a garden, which in other places in the Scriptures is called Gethsemane; and there He prayed. The three synoptic writers tell us about His praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, but John omits it.

The Arrest of Jesus

John 18:1-11 gives the account of the arrest of Jesus. During the observance of the Passover Supper, Jesus told Judas to do quickly what he intended to do. Then Judas went out. We do not see him again until he appears with the soldiers to arrest Jesus. Judas knew the place where Jesus was accustomed to go for prayer. Having made his deal with the Chief Priest to betray Jesus to them, he came with a band of soldiers and officers from the High Priest and Pharisees, as if they were going out against a thief or robber. When they approached the Lord Jesus, He asked, "Whom seek ye?" They replied that they were seeking Jesus. Stepping forward boldly and bravely, He immediately informed them that He was the One for whom they were looking. The soldiers with Judas went backward and fell to the ground. Once more Jesus asked for whom they were looking. Their reply was the same as the first. If they were seeking for Him, He declared, they should let His disciples go away. He spoke thus in order that the Word might be fulfilled which He had spoken, "While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou has given me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17:12).

In preparation for that which was about to be enacted, Jesus had said to the disciples that he that had no sword should sell his cloak and buy one. "For I say unto you that this which is written must be fulfilled in me, And he was reckoned with transgressors: for that which concerneth me hath fulfillment" (Luke 22:37). Isaiah had foretold that Christ would be numbered among transgressors (Isaiah 53:12). Since that Scripture had to be fulfilled, Jesus saw to their having a sword. The Apostles told Him that they had two swords. They were sufficient for the purpose. Thus the soldiers came out against Jesus as against a robber, a bandit. When the soldiers attempted to arrest Jesus, Peter drew his sword, struck at a servant of the High Priest, and cut off his right ear. Jesus then told him to put up his sword in its sheath. The Apostles were to make no resistance, for it was the will of God that Jesus should suffer and die; hence He said, "The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11b). Thus Jesus was arrested without any resistance on His part and without any further opposition from His disciples.

Trials of Jesus

When the officers arrested Jesus, they bound Him and led Him away to Annas, who was father-in-law to Caiaphas, high priest that year. Thus Jesus had a preliminary trial before the ex-high priest. According to the law of Moses, there should be one high priest at a time; but, when the Romans took possession of Palestine, they changed the government of high priest at will, usually allowing one year for the term of office. Then they removed him and put another in his place. This practice was apparently a precautionary measure to prevent a high priest from gaining too much authority and power.

In John 18:12-24 is an account of the trial before Annas. Simon Peter followed Jesus along with another disciple who was none other than John, the writer of the Gospel. When Jesus was arrested and was being led to the court of the high priest, the Apostle Peter followed afar off. Upon arrival at the court of Annas, Peter stopped and stood without the door. The other disciple talked to the maid at the door and brought Peter in. This maid asked Peter, "Art thou also *one* of this man's disciples?" Peter made an emphatic denial, saying, "I am not."

Apparently the high priest started the trial by asking Jesus concerning His teaching. His reply was that He had spoken in synagogues and in the Temple and that He had not spoken in secret; the high priest, therefore, could inquire from those who had heard Him what His teaching was. At this reply, one of the attendants struck Jesus with his hand saying, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" Jesus said that, if He had spoken any evil, the attendant should call attention to the evil. If, however, He had not spoken anything wrong, He asked why the attendant had smitten Him. This incident seems to have stopped the trial. Annas, therefore, sent Jesus to Caiaphas.

Being bound and sent to Caiaphas, Christ was put on trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin. John records this trial in only three verses (John, 18:25-27). At the palace of Caiaphas, Peter was again standing before the fire, warming himself. Someone approached him asking, "Art thou also *one* of his disciples?" Peter denied, saying "I am not." At this point a kinsman of Malchus, the servant of the high priest whose ear Peter had cut off, said to him "Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" Peter denied, and straightway the cock crew. This trial before Caiaphas and a part, at least, of the Sanhedrin occurred at night (Luke 22:54-71). In verse 66 appears this statement, "And as soon as it was day, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes; and they led him away into their council. . ." This statement shows that the first part of the trial was at night. According to Jewish law, no criminal could be tried for his life at a night session of the Jewish Sanhedrin, Supreme Court. Doubtless because of this enactment, the entire Sanhedrin was called together as soon as it was day. In this day session, the court pronounced the death sentence upon Jesus.

To get a clear picture of the three Jewish trials of Jesus, one must study the four records of the Gospels, because the information given by one is frequently supplementary to facts given by the others.

As soon as Jesus was found guilty, according to the testimony of false witnesses, He was led away from Caiaphas to Pilate. The account of the trial before Pilate is found in John 18:28-19:16.

When the Jewish officials turned Jesus over to the Roman authorities, it was still early in the day. Because it was the Passover season, the Jews would not enter into the Praetorium lest they should defile themselves ceremonially. Pilate, therefore, went out to them and asked what accusation they were bringing against Jesus. Having nothing which they could bring against Him, they dodged the issue, saying, "If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee." Seeing the situation clearly, Pilate said, "Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law." The Jewish authorities replied, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death..." This statement shows that they had already found Him guilty and had condemned Him to death.

Sometime during the trial before Pilate, an incidental remark was made concerning Jesus' having taught in Galilee. Pilate instantly seized this opportunity to send Jesus to Herod, who was governor of Galilee, and who was at that time in Jerusalem.

Having for a long time been very eager to see Jesus, interview Him, and observe His performing a miracle, Herod was delighted at the prospect of having his desire regarding Jesus. Herod asked Him many questions, but He replied to none of them. Baffled by this conduct, Herod became enraged and had his soldiers mock Jesus. Then he sent Jesus back to Pilate (Luke 23:1-12). Up to this time, Pilate and Herod had been enemies, but this circumstance brought them together, and they became friends.

It is quite possible that, when Jesus was brought back to Pilate, the governor entered into the Praetorium and spoke to Jesus again, saying, "Art thou King of the Jews?" In reply Jesus asked Pilate, "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me?" (John 18:34). This question enraged Pilate, who said "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what has thou done?" (v. 35). In reply Jesus told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world, adding, "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (v. 36). This statement confounded Pilate. Again he asked Jesus, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus replied in the affirmative and then made a marvelous revelation: "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (v. 37). Jesus was conscious of His having been in Heaven; of His having laid aside the glory which He had had with the Father from all eternity; and of His having entered the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth. He, therefore, could speak of His birth as His coming into the world, something that no one else can say. He came for one purpose, namely, to bear witness to the truth, the truth of God. The sum of God's Word is Truth. Everything that Jesus did was in accordance with the truth, with the revelation of God.

Jesus added this significant statement, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (v. 37). This truth is one that Jesus frequently expressed. He said that His sheep know His voice and follow Him. Those who are of the truth respond to the truth, said Jesus, and follow Him. Sometimes people doubt as to whether they have been born again. A sure way to know that the one who has accepted Christ is one of His sheep is to see whether or not such a one hears the voice of Christ gladly and follows Him. The fact that one hears His voice, loves Him, and follows Him is proof that that one is His sheep.

Convinced that Jesus was innocent, Pilate did all within his power to have Him released, but the opponents were blinded and were determined on His destruction. As a last resort, Pilate fell back upon the custom of releasing at the Passover season whatever prisoner might be in Roman custody whom the Jews wanted set free. At that time there was a notorious criminal by the name of Barabbas. Pilate offered to release either of the two whom the Jews would designate. He thought that surely they would want Jesus, their king, but their prejudice and hatred would not allow them to ask for Him. Rather, they cried for His execution.

Pilate finally resorted to an unusual measure in order to have Jesus delivered from crucifixion. He had Jesus scourged in order that His appearance might be most appealing for sympathy. Then he had a crown of thorns placed on the head of Jesus and a purple robe put on Him. He had Jesus, thus attired, brought out to the Jews and the multitudes, His enemies. Then Pilate declared to the Jews that he found no fault with Christ. He called their attention to Jesus by saying, "Behold, the man!" Their cry was, "Crucify him, crucify him." They were so very insistent that all the efforts of Pilate availed nothing. He, therefore, delivered Christ to be crucified.

Jesus was executed about nine o'clock in the morning and expired on the cross around three in the afternoon. Thus ended the tragedy of the ages.

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 Dr. David L. Cooper
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THE CRUCIFIXION AND BURIAL OF JESUS

The Place of the Crucifixion

The beloved disciple, John, gives a very straightforward, but moving, account of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus, which is rendered even more poignant by its very simplicity. "They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha: ..." (John 19:17). The other Gospel writers record that Simon of Cyrene was impressed into service to aid in bearing the cross, which, at the outset, Jesus Himself bore (Matt. 27:32, Mark 15:21, Luke 23:26). Only Luke relates what occurred as Jesus was en route to Golgotha, or the place of a skull, north of Jerusalem, outside the city walls. The reason that His crucifixion was outside the city walls is found in Hebrews 13:11-13.

"For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest *as an offering* for sin, are burned without the camp. 12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13 Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."

These verses reveal that burning the bodies of the sacrificial animals outside the city of Jerusalem was a symbol foretelling that the Messiah would be offered up for the sins of the world outside the camp of Judaism—beyond the legalism and the ritualism of the law. In verse 13 is the plea of the inspired writer to the Hebrew Christians to come out of Judaism: "Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."

The Act of Crucifying Jesus

Matthew and Mark tell of Jesus' being offered and refusing a cup of wine mingled with gall (Matthew 27:34) or myrrh (Mark 15:23). Very likely this drink had a stupefying effect designed to lessen the agony of the sufferers, who sometimes lingered for hours, even days. Crucifixion, therefore, was not only one of the most ignominious, but also one of the most prolonged and excruciating, methods of execution. Jesus, however, declined the proffered drink. He faced death in full possession of His faculties.

John states that Jesus was crucified at Golgotha "and with him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst" (John 19:18). He gives no account of the behavior of the two malefactors, robbers—their railing at Jesus (Matthew 27:44, Mark 15:32, Luke 23:32), the repentance, confession, and consequent salvation of the one:

"39 And one of the malefactors that were hanged railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? Save thyself and us. 40 But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due

reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom. 43 And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:39-43).

The Superscription Above Jesus

Passing over the account of the penitent thief, John goes immediately to that of the sign which Pilate placed on the cross over Jesus' head, and which offended the chief priests. This account he gives in more detail than the other Gospel writers do: "19 And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20 This title therefore read many of the Jews, for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, *and* in Latin, *and* in Greek. 21 The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but, that he said, I am King of the Jews. 22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written" (John 19:19-22).

The Roman custom was to affix a sign on the cross to indicate the crime for which the person had been executed. The time that the superscription was placed on Jesus' cross, whether during or after the crucifixion, is a debated point; but, by having it in three languages—Hebrew (Aramaic), the language of the Jewish nation; Greek, a universal language; and Latin, the language of Rome, the ruling power—and by placing it on the cross, which was erected "nigh to the city," Pilate gave it the widest publicity possible. "This title therefore read many of the Jews," and, doubtless, many Gentiles, also. The ease with which the title "King of the Jews" could be read by the many passersby added to the vexation of the chief priests, who vainly attempted to have the statement changed to read that Jesus said He was King of the Jews.

The Soldiers' Parting the Garments of Jesus

John also gives the account of the soldiers' parting the garments of Jesus in greater detail than the other Gospel writers do:

"23 The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout, 24 They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith,

They parted my garments among them,
And upon my vesture did they cast lots" (John 19:23, 24).

The usual apparel was the headgear; an outer garment; a girdle; sandals; and a coat, or tunic, worn next to the body and reaching from shoulder to ankle. Whether the four soldiers mentioned divided only the clothing of Jesus or that, also, of the malefactors, and whether they cast lots for all of Jesus' clothing or for only the one garment are both moot points. But obviously the soldiers did not want to rend the inner coat, or tunic, which was woven without seam; so they cast lots for it. Thus they fulfilled the prophecy in Psalm 22:18, which John quotes.

The Seven Sayings of Jesus on the Cross

John is the only one of the Gospel writers to record the presence of the mother of Jesus at the cross. Why he, in particular, would have included it is obvious: "... But there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son! 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own *home*" (John 19:25-27).

John includes two more of the seven sayings on the cross (vv. 28, 30); Mathew gives one; Mark, none; Luke, three (Matt. 27:46; Luke 23:34,43,46).

"28 After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst. 29 There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit" (John 19:28-30).

The words "after this" do not necessarily indicate that Jesus said, "I thirst," immediately after the touching scene of committing His mother into John's keeping. Some time could have elapsed. He did, however, die more quickly than those crucified usually died. Mark states that Pilate marveled at the early death (Mark 15:44). John reveals that Jesus was already dead when the soldiers came to hasten His death by breaking His legs:

"31 The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high *day*), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. 32 The soldiers therefore came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him: 33 but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: 34 howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and straightway there came out blood and water... 36 For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken, 37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced" (John 19:31-34,36,37).

When Jesus said that He thirsted, he was given vinegar which contained no stupefying ingredients. He, therefore, drank it. His outcry of thirst is an evidence of His human nature. Very possibly He had had neither food nor drink from the time of His arrest, but had endured the trials, the scourging and other physical attacks and the excruciating agony of the crucifixion without the slightest morsel of nourishment or a drop of water to sustain or to relieve Him.

Other instances among the many which show that Jesus acted toward and reacted to people and situations as a normal human being are His hunger (Matt. 4:2); His weariness (John 4:6); His falling asleep (Matt. 8:24); His looking upon and loving a young man (Mark 10:21); His compassion for the multitudes (Matt. 9:36); His indignation, anger, and grief because of the hardness of hearts (Mark 3:5); His supplications and prayers to God with tears and groaning (Heb. 5:7; John 12:27; Luke 22:39-44).

When Jesus had drunk the vinegar, He said, "It is finished," bowed His head, and gave up His spirit. His work was indeed finished. All that had been ordained from the beginning, all that had been foretold in regard to His first coming and earthly mission, from His entering the world by miraculous conception and virgin birth to His death upon the cross, He had accomplished.

A Bone of Christ Not Broken

John repeatedly points out the fulfillment of prophecy pertaining to the death of Jesus: the parting of His garments and casting lots for them, His accomplishing all that had been foretold concerning His first coming and earthly mission, His thirsting and being given vinegar to drink, His bones not being broken, and His side being pierced.

Psalm 69:19-28 gives a striking account of Jesus' sorrow and suffering. These verses illustrate the law of double reference; the plea of David, in verses 1-18, blending with that of Christ "great David's greater Son." Note particularly, in this instance, verse 21:

"They gave me also gall for my food;
And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

That the bones of Jesus would not be broken had been foretold in Scriptures pertaining to the paschal lamb of which He is the antitype (Ex. 12:46, Num. 9:12). John the Baptist, seeing Jesus approaching, exclaimed, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! (John 1:36). The Apostle John, in his account of the Revelation granted him while in exile on Patmos, repeatedly refers to Jesus as the Lamb.

The prophecy "they shall look on him whom they pierced" (John 19:37) is found in Zechariah 12:10: "... and they look unto me whom they have pierced." The word translated *unto*, which unfortunately is rendered *upon* in the King James Version, is of great significance. It shows that, instead of Israel's being converted by looking visibly upon the Lord Jesus when He returns, the nation will be converted during the Tribulation. Evangelized by the 144,000 (Rev., ch. 7), the convicted remnant will in faith look unto Him, and will pray for His Return. The third day He will come and deliver them. (See, especially, Hosea 5:15-6:3).

John does not record the miraculous events that occurred at the Crucifixion (Matt. 27:45-56, Mark 15:33-41, Luke 23:44-49), but instead he vouches for the truth of his Gospel record and tells why he has written it: 35 And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe" (John 19:35). John was an eye-witness and knew whereof he spoke. He had had the testimony of his physical senses as he eloquently declares in the introductory verses of his First Epistle.

The Burial of Jesus

Each of the Gospel writers tells of the burial of Jesus, but John gives more details concerning the preparation of the body by Joseph of Arimathea, in whose tomb the body was laid, and by Nicodemus who brought "a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds" (John 19:39). Only John tells the amount of mixture that was brought, an interesting and significant detail, as

John himself reveals later in his account of his going with Peter into the tomb and finding it empty, the grave clothes undisturbed, still retaining the shape into which they had been hardened by the mixture.

John 19:42 concludes the beloved disciple's account of the passion of Jesus which began in John 18:1.

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THE EMPTY TOMB

Because of the approaching Sabbath, the body of Jesus was removed from the cross and laid in the new tomb nearby which Joseph of Arimathea had hewn out of the rock for his own burial place (Matt. 27:60). With the mixture of myrrh and aloes (about a hundred pounds) that Nicodemus had brought, the two secret believers—one a wealthy man and a councillor, the other a Pharisee, and both probably members of the Sanhedrin—had bound the crucified body in linen cloths, "as the custom of the Jews is to bury" (John 19:40). But the women also prepared spices and ointments for the body. The synoptic Gospels name these women and tell of their going to the tomb and finding it empty, but John confines his account to Mary Magdalene. Seeing the stone rolled away, she ran to Peter and John, exclaiming, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him." She was unaware that He had arisen.

The two disciples ran to the tomb. John arrived first, saw the grave cloths, but did not enter. Peter, however, went into the tomb and saw the linen cloths, as well as the napkin that had been placed upon Jesus' head, but that was now rolled up and lying in a place by itself. "8 Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed. 9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. 10 So the disciples went away again unto their own home" (John 20:8-10). The sight in the empty tomb of the grave cloths, stiffened by the juices from the spices that Nicodemus had brought, yet retaining the same shape that they had had when they were bound about the body of Jesus, was convincing proof that He had arisen.

Christ's Appearance to Mary Magdalene

The disciples left, but Mary remained outside the tomb, weeping, still unaware that the One for whom she mourned had arisen triumphant from the grave in fulfillment of prophecy. Looking into the tomb, she beheld two angels, who asked her why she wept. She replied, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Apparently she was so stunned with grief that the sight of the angels did not seem extraordinary to her. She may not even have been aware that they were celestial beings; for, after replying to them, she turned away. Then she saw Jesus, but did not recognize Him even when He asked, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom sleekest thou?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Not until He called her by name did she realize that the person addressing her was the one whom she was mourning as dead:

"16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to say, Teacher. 17 Jesus saith to her, Touch me not [or, Take not hold on me]; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God. 18 Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples, I have seen the Lord; and *that* he had said these things unto her" (John 20:16-18).

The statement of Jesus "Touch me not [or, Take not hold on me]; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father" has been variously interpreted. One cannot be dogmatic on this point. Some scholars believe that Jesus forbade Mary to touch Him, but permitted the other women (Matt. 28:9) and Thomas to do so because, in the interim between His meeting with Mary and with the others, He ascended unto His Father. Other scholars believe that He ascended into heaven after each of His appearances and remained there during the intervening periods. Yet other scholars hold that Mary assumed the Resurrection of the Lord to be His complete victory over death, whereupon He endeavored to make her realize that it was actually only the beginning of His triumph and the forerunner of other glorious events. His Resurrection was not to be mistaken for His Second Coming, nor was He to continue to be known only "after the flesh" (II Cor. 5:16).

Christ's Appearance to the Apostles in the Absence of Thomas

The evening of the Resurrection day, the first day of the week, Jesus appeared to the Apostles in the absence of Thomas:

"19 When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first *day* of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. 20 And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: 23 whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:18-23).

Although "Peace *be* unto you" was a common salutation at that time, it also was a reassurance to the Apostles, who were astounded by the presence of Jesus among them. The sight of His hands and His side, along with the sound of His voice, was sufficient evidence to them that they were beholding no phantom, but the Lord; and they rejoiced. His appearance in the room though the doors were closed, like His vanishing from sight at Emmaus and the passing of His body through the grave cloths without disturbing them, is proof that He was in the spiritual state after His Resurrection. But He was no bodiless spirit. He later bade Thomas to touch Him. He had flesh and bones; He also ate (Luke 24:39, 41-43).

His breathing on the Apostles and saying, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," were probably a symbolic act, predictive of Pentecost.

The statement "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained" has been interpreted as bestowing upon the disciples the power of judging; but the meaning here is the same as in the statement of Jesus to Peter, recorded in Matthew 16:19, which literally translated reads: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of the heavens and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." As in the case of Peter, Jesus was stating that the Apostles were to express what had already been determined in heaven. The fact that He here made to the ten Apostles present the same statement that He had made to Peter alone is proof that Peter was accorded no special power. Nor did Peter consider himself to be in authority over,

but rather on a level with, the other Apostles and, later, with the church elders: "the elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder ..." (I Peter 5:1).

Christ's Appearance to the Apostles, Including Thomas

When the ten Apostles told Thomas of the appearance of Jesus to them, he replied, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). Thomas apparently believed that the ten were the victims of hallucination. He, therefore, emphatically declared that he would not believe that he was actually in the presence of Jesus until he could not only see, but also touch, the nail-torn hands and the spear-wounded side. While this doubt is regrettable, God has turned it to good, for it led to further evidence which in the passing centuries has helped many naturally incredulous individuals to realize the actuality of the Resurrection.

"26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you. 27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach *hither* thy hand and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28 Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed" (John 20:26-29).

John does not record whether Thomas actually touched Jesus; but the statement "Because thou hast seen me," instead of "Because thou has seen and touched me," implies that Thomas needed no further evidence than the ten had at the earlier appearance.

Thomas called Jesus his Lord and his God, acknowledging not only that he beheld his former leader and teacher, but also that this One who had risen from the grave was God incarnate. The statement of Jesus upon this recognition is of great significance, "Because thou has seen me, thou hast believed [or, hast thou believed?]: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed." All the evidence of the Scriptures, all the teachings of Jesus, as well as the testimony of the ten, should have sufficed Thomas without his having to see for himself. Even so should mankind today believe in the Son of God without requiring the corroboration of the physical senses, as Abraham and David did. As these patriarchs looked forward to His coming and believed, so mankind can now look back upon the accomplished fact and believe and can await with joy His Return.

Purpose of the Gospel of John

The confession of Thomas and the consequent statement of Jesus are the closing event that John records in his Gospel. He fittingly concludes with his purpose in writing it:

"30 Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20:30, 31).

Thus John proclaimed Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah, the Son of God.

Epilogue to the Gospel of John

The twenty-first chapter of the Gospel of John is obviously an appendix, as the concluding verses of chapter twenty clearly show. The occasion for its writing may have been the saying that began to circulate among the brethren to the effect that John would not die, referred to in verse 23.

That John himself wrote the appendix, using the pronoun *we* editorially, is the view of some scholars. Others attribute it to the Ephesian elders. Yet another opinion is a combination of these two—that John wrote all of the appendix, or epilogue, except the twenty-fourth verse, which the Ephesian elders inserted to attest their faith in the witness of John.

1. Christ's Appearance to Seven Disciples by the Sea of Galilee

After Jesus had manifested himself to the ten Apostles and later to the eleven, He appeared to seven of them as they were fishing in the Sea of Galilee, which is called in the Epilogue the Sea of Tiberias. Their night's labor had yielded them nothing. "4 But when day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach: yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus therefore saith unto them, Children, have ye aught to eat? They answered him, No. 6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. 7 That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his coat about him (for he was naked [or, had on his undergarment only]), and cast himself into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat, (for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits off), dragging the net *full* of fishes. 9 So when they got out upon the land, they see a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. 10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now taken. 11 Simon Peter wherefore went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, the net was not rent. 12 Jesus saith unto them, come *and* break your fast. And none of the disciples durst inquire of him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus cometh, and taketh the bread, and giveth them, and the fish likewise" (John 21:4-13).

John, the beloved disciple, was quick to recognize Jesus. Impetuous Peter plunged into the sea to hasten ashore. But none doubted the identity or the reality of the One who had caused the net to be filled with fish, and who prepared breakfast for them by the seashore.

2. Christ's Charge to Peter

The purpose of this third manifestation to the disciples recorded by John soon became clear. "15 So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again a second time, Simon, *son* of John lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17).

Jesus came to the disciples by the seashore especially to give a charge to Peter. Possibly He asked Peter three times, "Lovest thou me?", because Peter had denied Him three times. Again He may have done so only to emphasize what He wanted Peter to do—to feed the lambs, the newborn in Christ, and the sheep, the more mature Christians. The use of two different words for love, the one signifying a higher, spiritual love than the other natural affection on the merely human level, was probably for more than euphonious reasons, as some scholars suggest. Very likely Jesus wished to impress upon Peter that the love required to carry out this charge is a deep, spiritual devotion which will prevail despite persecution, even martyrdom.

3. Christ's Prediction Regarding Peter's Death

Following the charge to Peter, Jesus foretold the manner of the Apostle's death. According to tradition, Peter was crucified head down, at his own request, because he considered himself unworthy to be put to death in the same manner as his Lord had been. John reveals that the death would glorify God (v. 19). After this prediction, Jesus bade Peter to follow Him, possibly to speak with the Apostle privately after making the charge before the others. John, however, followed, probably at a respectful distance, his great love causing him to want to talk also with Jesus. Having received a commission and a prediction of death, Peter naturally wondered about the duty and the fate of John. "Lord, and what shall this man do?" To this question Jesus replied, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is* that to thee? follow thou me." According to tradition, John was the only Apostle of the eleven who was not put to death, but he suffered exile on the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote his Revelation: "I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience *which are* in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 1:9).

This reply gave rise to a saying which the author or authors of the Epilogue refute: "this saying therefore went forth among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, that he should not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is *that* to thee?" (v. 23).

4. John the Apostle the Author of the Gospel of John

When verse 24 of the Epilogue is read in connection with verse 20, to which it refers, one can see readily that the author of the Gospel of John is John the Apostle, the beloved disciple. "20 So Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; who also leaned back on his breast at the supper, and said Lord, who is he that betrayeth thee? ... 24 This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things: and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true."

5. The Greatness and the Glory of the Gospel

At the close of the Gospel proper, John states his purpose in writing: "... that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20:31). The Epilogue concludes with the greatness and the glory of the Gospel:

"25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."

Thus concludes the fourth Gospel, which, with the possible exception of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is the most profound, deepest revelation of God.

The End