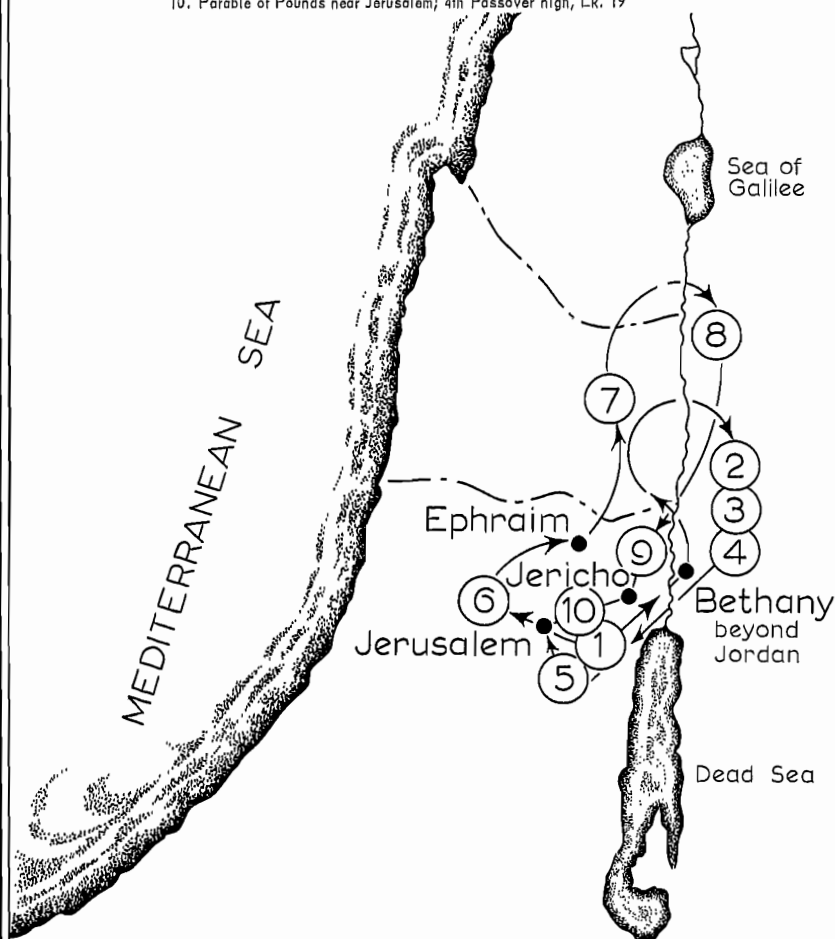


MAP NO. 6—THIRD YEAR, LATER PEREAN MINISTRY (about 3 months)

1. Feast of Dedication, Jerusalem; attempts to kill Jesus; retires to Bethabara (place of His baptism), Jn. 10
2. Perea; journey through cities and villages; few saved, Jn. 10
3. Home of a Pharisee; rules for feasting, Lk. 14
4. Place unknown; parables of lost sheep; lost coin; lost son; Lazarus and Rich man; Lawyer's question, Lk. 15 & 16
5. Receives call to come to Bethany; raises Lazarus; Jews seek to kill both, Jn. 11
6. Retirement to Ephraim with 12 disciples, Jn. 11
7. Journey through borders of Samaria; Galilee, Perea; heals ten lepers, Lk. 17
8. Sermon on time of Kingdom; teaching on Divorce; little children; Pharisee and publican; rich young ruler; parable of laborers in vineyard; plainest prediction of crucifixion; James & John seek chief honors, Mt. 19-20, Mk. 10, Lk. 17-18
9. Jericho; two blind men healed; Zacchaeus, Lk. 19
10. Parable of Pounds near Jerusalem; 4th Passover night, Lk. 19





Verses 17 and 18 are full of meaning. Jesus willingly lays down His life for the very purpose that He may take it up again. We like the statement of Hendriksen in this connection, "The dying and rising again are *deeds*, not merely *experiences*." Jesus was not helplessly caught up in a mesh of circumstances over which He had no power. There was purpose behind His death and that purpose was the resurrection! He did not lose His life: He gave it. He was not killed: He chose to die. Every word and every deed of Jesus had a purpose within the plan of redemption and none of it was accidental (e.g., John 7:30, 8:20, 12:23-28, 13:1, 17:1, 18:4-11, 37, 19:11).

The Son willingly "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (cf. Phil. 2:5-8). As an earthly father's love is the more drawn out when his child willingly and lovingly obeys—so "on account of this" willing obedience by Jesus, His Father's love is the more drawn out. "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name;" (Phil. 2:9-11).

Jesus possessed the prerogatives of Divine Omnipotence. No one had power or authority to take His life. When He died it was because He allowed it (Matt. 26:53; Jn. 19:11)! And He permitted wicked men to kill Him for the very purpose of Himself taking up His life again in three days! The Father presented the Son with this charge or commission ("commandment"), the Divine plan for man's salvation (cf. Jn. 3:14, 8:28, 12:32). This death and resurrection of the Incarnate Word was the Father's scheme of redemption for man because God's wisdom and love decreed it so; it was the only way to win man's heart! The Son, being the Son, is in perfect accord (in knowledge, love, authority) with the Father (cf. our comments on Jn. 5:19-23, Vol. I, pp. 183-186). Although equal with the Father and free to do that which He wills to do, He wills to lay down His life and take it up again. His will is motivated, directed and controlled by His divine love and trust in His Father and by His love for mankind.

All of this dissertation concerning the Good Shepherd (especially the power to lay down life and take it up again) has been sort of a parabolic statement of divine equality with God by Jesus. Evidently many of the Jews present understood clearly that Jesus was claiming what would be preposterous for any mortal to claim—divine power over life and death. This could only mean to the Jews that He was

claiming to be God; in their eyes blasphemous, demonical or insanity. Many of them did indeed speak out and call Him insane and possessed of demons. Others, remembering the great miracle they had witnessed could not, inspite of the consequences of disagreeing with the rulers, deny what they had seen. The choice still remains today; the claims which Jesus makes through the historical records of the Gospel writers are either the claims of a deluded maniac, a deliberate liar, or the Divine Son of God. In light of the empirical, historical and absolutely trustworthy evidence, the first two alternatives are absurd! We shall discuss the evidence for His deity more fully in the next section. Suffice it to say here, there is overwhelming evidence of verifiable nature sufficient to convince any honest-hearted searcher that Jesus is all He claims to be!

### *Quiz*

1. What is the evident purpose for declaring Himself to be The Good Shepherd?
2. What is the essential characteristic of the "hireling"?
3. What application may be made in the church from this allegory of the Good Shepherd and the sheep and the hireling?
4. What responsibilities do the elders have to the flock? The flock to the elders?
5. What is the very foundation stone to unity? How is unity expressed?
6. Was Jesus' death a mistake? Explain!
7. What alternatives present themselves in light of Jesus' claims?

### CLAIMS TO DEITY

#### *Text 10:22-31*

22 And it was the feast of the dedication at Jerusalem:  
 23 it was winter; and Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's porch.  
 24 The Jews therefore came round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly.  
 25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believe me 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.

31 The Jews took up stones again to stone him.

### *Queries*

- a. Why the inferences of a particular season (vs. 22-23)?
- b. Why did the Jews say, "... tell us plainly"?
- c. Is Jesus declaring "eternal security" in verses 28-29?

### *Paraphrase*

And the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple was in progress at Jerusalem. It was winter-time and Jesus was walking in the temple in the colonnade which is called Solomon's Porch. So the Jews encircled Him and demanded, How much longer are you going to keep us hanging in suspense? If you really are the Messiah, tell us so in plain words! Jesus answered them, I told you before and you do not believe. The miraculous works that I do in My Father's name bear sufficient testimony to prove my Messiahship. However, you do not believe because you are not willing to surrender to the implications of these works and become my obedient sheep. My sheep hear and obey my voice and I, in turn, recognize them as my own. My sheep follow me wherever I lead them, and I give them eternal life now. Furthermore, they will never, never lose this life for all eternity for no one is able to snatch them from the safety of my hand. My Father and I are equal; He gave me the sheep and He is certainly greater than all the enemies of the sheep—no one is able to snatch them from His hand. I and the Father are One!

At this declaration the Jews ran and picked up stones carrying them to Solomon's Porch to stone Jesus to death.

### *Summary*

The hostile Jews demand an unequivocal statement from Jesus as to His Messiahship. He states plainly that He and the Father are One, especially in omnipotence. The Jews, unwilling to have a Messiah who is God in the flesh, prepare to kill Him. The awfulness of unbelief!

### *Comment*

This section (10:22-31) takes us from the Feast of Tabernacles (September) to the Feast of Dedication (December). Three months of the ministry of Jesus is omitted by John between 10:21 and 10:22, but recorded by the Synoptics (cf. Map #5, page 12). The Feast

of Dedication came on the 25th of Chisleu (December). This is the beginning of winter in Jerusalem. The weather is stormy, with the rainy season well under way; snow has been known to fall on the mountain-tops of Judea at this time of the year. The seasonal note of verse 2 with the accompanying phrase picturing Jesus walking under the protection of the roof of Solomon's porch is very graphic.

The Feast of Dedication was founded on this wise: Upon the death of Alexander the Great, his Grecian world empire was divided three ways. Seleucus I, one of Alexander's army officers, obtained the satrapy of Babylonia. By later conquests, he became the ruler of Syria and the greater part of Asia Minor and founded the Seleucid era which lasted from about 312 B.C. to 65 B.C. (when Pompey reduced the kingdom of Syria to a Roman province).

During the era of the Seleucid rulers, one Antiochus Ephiphanes came to the throne at a time (175-164 B.C.) when all the Near East was under Seleucid rule. Antiochus Ephiphanes was a lover and devotee of Greek culture and very passionately so. He made up his mind that he would do away with Jewish religion and culture for good and introduce Greek culture and religion into Palestine. Some of the Jews welcomed Hellenization, but others were so patriotic and faithful to the Hebrew religion that many forfeited their lives in resistance. This great struggle, incidentally, gave birth to the sect of the Pharisees (also known as Separatists) who were men dedicated by vows to resist any heathen encroachment upon the Hebrew customs and religion. At first Antiochus tried to introduce his cultural renovation by peaceful methods, but found the resistance too strong. In 170 B.C., Antiochus attacked Jerusalem and it is said that 80,000 Jews perished and almost as many were taken away into slavery. About \$2,000,000 was stolen from the temple treasury. It became a capital offense to possess a copy of the Hebrew law, or to circumcise a child; and mothers who did circumcise their children were crucified with their children hanging around their necks. The temple courts were profaned with heathen intrusions; the temple chambers were turned into brothels; and the ultimate insult was when Antiochus ordered a sow (swine) sacrificed upon the altar of burnt offering in the temple of the Jews. This was the "straw that broke the camel's back," so to speak, and Judas Maccabaeus, with his brothers and an outnumbered and ill-equipped, but courageous army, arose to fight a war of six long, bloody years for independence. In 164 B.C., the first time for

about 400 years, the Jews were an independent kingdom. In this year the Temple was cleansed and purified of all heathen defilements. The altar was rebuilt; the robes and the utensils which had been stolen were replaced. The Temple was re-dedicated! It was to commemorate this re-dedication that the Feast of Dedication was instituted. I Maccabees 4:59 reads, ". . . the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year, by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month of Chisleu, with gladness and joy." Most historians point out the close similarity in the ritual of this feast with the Feast of Tabernacles (lighting of the great candleabra, singing of the Hallel, etc.).

There is a great nationalistic heritage connected with this festival. Furthermore, it was recent enough in Jewish history at Jesus' time to be extremely significant. Time and events in Jesus' day were pregnant with meaning. Many of the elders of the Jews could remember in their own lifetime the last days of the Maccabean freedom—then came the Roman oppression and domination. Then there came among the Jews a John the Baptist preaching repentance for the kingdom of God is near at hand; following him comes a miracle-working Nazarene claiming to be the Messiah.

Therefore, the intenseness of the challenge by the Jews in verse 24 is not difficult to understand. Political freedom and social reform is uppermost in their minds as they participate in this Feast of Dedication and hear hints and rumors concerning a Messiah.

B. F. Westcott says that the tense of the verb *ekuklosan* (encircled) indicates a definite, decisive act. They "had Him cornered" in a public place and this time He would not escape until they had what they wanted from Him—an unequivocal statement that He was the Messiah.

It is hardly in keeping with the context of this incident to maintain, as do some commentators, that the Jews surrounding Him were sincere in their question as to His claims. The multitudes, it is true, were hanging on His every word and calling Him the prophet (cf. Luke 12:1, 13:17). But John almost always means the rulers when he says "the Jews . . ." and the animosity of the rulers was coming to a fevered pitch (cf. John, Chapters 7 through 10:21 and see also Luke 11:53). All this makes us believe that these "Jews" who "encircled" Jesus were the rulers and their subordinates—all with a definite plan to trap Him and kill Him.

If they could not kill Him, they might at least discredit and denounce Him publicly. A literal rendering of the question of the Jews

in verse 24 would read, "Until when do you lift up our soul?" What these enemies probably aim at is a plain, straight-forward, not-to-be misunderstood statement, "I am the Messiah!" He was not behaving as they thought He ought—politically, militaristic—if He was the Messiah. Yet, though Jesus did not fulfill the popular concept of the Messiah, the multitudes were stirred up and of divided opinion concerning Him. Some were even opposing the rulers in favor of the Nazarene (cf. Jn. 7:12, 31, 43; 10:19-21). The rulers are actually challenging Jesus to either stop His meddling in morals, ethics, and doctrine, or come out and declare Himself plainly as their type of Messiah.

Jesus replies, "I did tell you, but you did not believe me!" Although He never said as plainly as they demanded, "I am the Christ," (except in two instances to individuals, cf. Jn. 4:26, 9:37), His works accomplished always in the name of the Father were plain enough—Nicodemus recognized Him as sent from God (cf. Jn. 3:2). Over and over again, Jesus told them that He and the Father were one (cf. Jn. 5:17-47; 8:16-19; 26-29, 42, 56-58; 10:11-18), and substantiated it with His miracles. The evidence was of the highest nature of credibility and verification—empirical! Their failure to accept Him as the Son of God was not due to insufficient evidence—it was their own sin! Greed and false pride led them into bigotry, prejudice and spiritual blindness. They did not believe because they did not *want* to believe! They were not like the humble, obedient, trusting sheep who listened to Jesus' voice (e.g., the Samaritan woman, John 4, and the blind beggar, John 9).

We have dealt with the subject of sheep and Shepherd in our comments on 10:11-18. However, there is one aspect of that relationship emphasized here in verses 27-29 that was not stressed in the previous section. Those who become obedient, trusting, and following sheep to the Good Shepherd will be *given* eternal life. The verb *didomi* (give) is in the present tense, indicating that one is given eternal life at the moment he becomes one of Jesus' sheep. Those who are believing in Jesus are possessing eternal life (cf. our comments, Jn. 5:24, Vol. I, p. 188). John the Apostle later wrote his First Epistle to give Christians assurance that they "might know that they have eternal life" (cf. I Jn. 5:13). They will never perish! Perish here does not mean annihilation, but eternal separation from the presence of God. The Greek idiom to express *never* is emphatic! Trans-



lated literally verse 28b would read, ". . . and they shall not perish, no, not even unto eternity!"

The main idea Jesus propogates in the last phrase of verse 28 ("and no one shall snatch them out of my hand") is the equality of power to protect the sheep He shares with the Father, Jehovah-God. He is leading up to the sublime, unfathomable, and astounding statement, "I and the Father are one." He wants these Jews to know that along with His promise of eternal life He promises omuipotent protection. He can promise divine security because the Father is omnipotent and He and the Father are one! The Father gave Him the sheep and sent Him into the world with all His power and authority (again we refer you to John 5:17-47). Lenski says, "Does the promise of Jesus, standing there in human form before the Jews, sound preposterous, that no one shall snatch his sheep out of his hand? To snatch them out of *his* hand is the same as snatching them out of *the Father's* hand." Paul speaks of the safety of our newly given life in Colossians 3:3, "For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

These two verses (28-29) certainly do not offer proof texts for the unscriptural doctrine of "once in grace, always in grace," or the more dignified, "eternal security." Westcott says concisely, "If man falls at any stage in his spiritual life, it is not from want of divine grace, nor from the overwhelming power of adversaries, but from his neglect to use that which he may or may not use. We cannot be protected against ourselves in spite of ourselves . . . The sense of the divine protection is at any moment sufficient to inspire confidence, but not to render effort unnecessary." Paul states plainly that salvation is given by God, but requires a continuing effort of faith and works on the part of man (cf. Eph. 2:8-10; Phil. 2:12-13). Romans, the eighth chapter, combines the two ideas that when man submits to the leading of the Holy Spirit and puts to death the deeds of the body, there is no principality, power, nor any other creature which is able to separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. As the old adage has it, "No one can snatch us out of the Lord's hand, but we can certainly jump out ourselves!" Perhaps Jesus has in mind the poor blind beggar who, three months before, had been excommunicated from the temple. The Jewish rulers might cast him out, but no one would be able to snatch him out of the Good Shepherd's hand, for he was one of the true sheep.

Having inferred His equality with the Father in the matter of protection for the true believer, Jesus says straight out in verse 30, "I and the Father are one." Commentators go to great lengths to argue whether this oneness is oneness of wills and works or oneness in essence. Some even attempt to explain how the Father and Son may be two persons yet be One. It is useless to bring earthly analogies into play to try to explain this unique relationship. All are untrue and fall far short of explaining this unity. We are forced to see that Jesus speaks distinctly about two persons and yet, they are one! Here we must walk by faith and not by sight. It is better to accept the profound statements of Scripture on this subject, e.g., ". . . for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily . . ." (Col. 2:9) and concern ourselves with interpreting His will for our lives. Of one thing we may be certain, the Son and the Father are equally God (cf. John 1:1, 14, 18; 5:17-23; 14:8-11).

This declaration was certainly plain enough! Perhaps it was too much! Perhaps if Jesus had said, "I am your Messiah," they would not have been so violent. It seems that the Jews, in spite of clear prophecy to the contrary, had an idea that the Messiah would be simply a powerful, personable, politically oriented human being. They certainly were not looking for Immanuel ("God with us"). When one stood before them in mortal flesh and claimed, "I am equal with the Father," they would have none of it. They had no time for God among them, convicting them of their sins and preaching a spiritual kingdom—they wanted a Messiah that would give them food in their stomachs (cf. Jn. 6:26). Therefore, they ran (as the Greek verb implies) to some section of the temple where there were stones, probably piled for repairs, and carried them to Solomon's Porch ready to stone Him to death for alleged blasphemy.

### *Quiz*

1. What is the history behind the Feast of Dedication?
2. Why did the Jews "encircle" Jesus near Solomon's Porch?
3. How did Jesus tell the Jews that He was the Christ?
4. Does verse 28 teach "once saved, always saved"?
5. Can you explain how The Father and The Son are One, yet two persons?
6. Why would these Jews suddenly become so violent as to want to kill Jesus for the simple statement, "I and the Father are one"?

## EVIDENCE FOR DEITY

*Text 10:32-42*

32 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.

40 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.

*Queries*

- a. Were the Jews *really* concerned that Jesus might be blaspheming or were they about to stone Him for other reasons?
- b. Who were those whom God called "gods" (v. 35)? And why does Jesus use this in His defense?
- c. Why the strong appeal to His works (vs. 37-38)?

*Paraphrase*

Jesus spoke to them calmly, I have shown you many miracles of mercy and goodness from the Father; for which of those good deeds do you now propose to stone me to death? The Jews replied angrily, We are not going to stone you for a good deed, but because you blaspheme the name of God—you are a man and yet you make yourself out to be God! Again Jesus spoke, It is written in your law, is it not, "I said, Ye are gods?" If, then, Jehovah called those judges of Israel gods, unto whom Jehovah gave authority to administer His

word (and the Scripture cannot be altered by man), why are you saying of Him whom the Father manifestly set apart and commissioned to a divine task, "You are a blasphemer," when I say, "I am the Son of God"? If I am not doing the works equal to God, my Father, do not believe me. But, on the other hand, If I do such works, although you can not believe in me through my teaching, you ought to believe in me because of my works so that you may know and recognize that the Father is in me and I am in the Father. They again tried to lay hands on him but he went out from their midst.

So he went away across the Jordan river to Bethany beyond the Jordan, the place where John the Baptist had first been baptizing, and there He stayed awhile. Many people followed Him and came to Him there saying, John the Baptist did no miraculous signs, it is true, but all the things he testified concerning Jesus of Nazareth were indeed true! And many people expressed their belief in Him there.

### *Summary*

Jesus appeals to the best type of evidence for His deity—empirical, experiential evidence. First, He reminds the Jews of the inviolability of Scripture. Second, He calls upon them to believe through what they themselves have seen. Then He attempts to retire from the public to prepare spiritually and physically for the final and terrible ordeal.

### *Comment*

As the Jews came running with stones in their hands, surrounding Jesus in the Temple court, He reminded them calmly and deliberately of the many miracles of mercy and goodness which He had done. There are at least thirteen recorded miracles of mercy performed by Jesus before this time. He raised the dead, opened blind eyes, cleansed lepers, cast out demons and healed many other physical infirmities. But the whole point of the statement is, as Jesus said, these many good works were "from the Father." The question of Jesus, "for which of those works do ye stone me?" is designed as a challenge; a challenge for the Jews to stop and think about their accusations. Jesus is not resting His claim on philosophical abstractions, but on empirical evidence.

How blinded by bigotry and envy were these Jews! Their jealousy for their cherished traditions and commandments of men made them not only blind to evidence of deity, but cruel and impervious to suffering. When the lame were made to walk and the blind to see on

the Sabbath, the Jews had not the least joy in their hearts for the healed ones—they were only enraged that their Sabbath traditions had been ignored. And so here the Jews not only gave no thought to the compassionate nature of His miracles, but they also missed their primary value—evidence for His Divine nature. Furthermore, the political undertones of the time probably agitated their desire to arrest Jesus and later accuse Him as a revolutionary (cf. Jn. 11:47-53)—they needed a scapegoat.

Jesus' answer to the charge of blasphemy is twofold. He appeals to the authority of Scripture and then to empirical testimony of His miraculous works. The Scripture which Jesus quotes and calls "law" is in Psalms 82:6. Our Lord used a varied terminology to speak of the Scriptures as a whole, or in part. Sometimes He said, "the law and the prophets"; sometimes "the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms"; sometimes "it is written"; sometimes "ye have heard that it hath been said."

In Psalms 82:6 God is speaking through the psalmist of impending judgment upon those whom He had appointed judges by Divine commission. These judges and magistrates God called "gods." They administered justice as direct representatives of God Himself and the Word of God had come to them—thus God called them "gods." Jesus reminds them that their highly cherished "torah" called men "gods" and they had never protested that! Furthermore, the Scripture cannot be broken! That which had been written must be accepted as authoritative—the Scriptures themselves had spoken of some men as gods. How then could the Jews have the right to accuse Jesus of blasphemy when He says, "I am the Son of God . . ." especially since all of His miraculous works indicate that He has been sanctified and sent into the world by the Father.

The parenthetical statement of Jesus ("and the Scripture cannot be broken") has far-reaching implications. It is the unequivocal, dogmatic assertion by the Incarnate Word that the revealed, recorded and canonical Word is divinely inspired, authoritative and imperishable. Edward J. Young says, "The Scriptures . . . possess an authority so great that they cannot be broken. What they say will stand and cannot be annulled or set aside. If the Scripture speaks, the issue is settled once and for all . . ." (*Thy Word Is Truth*, by Edward J. Young, p. 27, pub. by Eerdmans.) The contemporary existential and subjective validation of the Word is crushed by this statement of Jesus. However, we must be careful in our application of this principle.

"Cannot be broken" does *not* mean that a portion of Scripture may not be fulfilled, abrogated, or made unapplicable to man by God Himself; e.g., the Law of Moses as law and covenant was abrogated and replaced by a new covenant. "Cannot be broken" *does* mean that the Scripture cannot be altered as to historical factuality, and applicability in its own dispensation!

In verse 37 Jesus turns to an appeal to empirically verifiable evidence. The works that He has done can be tested by men themselves through their own senses. God placed the spirit of man within a fleshly tabernacle at man's creation. It was, therefore, necessary that God reveal Himself (to a degree sufficient to establish faith) in a sensory perceptible form. Thus, all through the ages God made Himself and His will known by miracles and signs which man could see and hear and feel and touch. At the end of the age, God Himself became Incarnate in His Son and did His works among men that men might know (cf. I John 1:1-4).

Jesus makes an emphatic appeal to His works in verse 38. His works were of such a nature that there were only two alternatives for the Jews. If they could not accept Him as God-sent on the basis of His teaching, then they must accept Him on the basis of His works. Either accept His works as divine and then learn that His teaching is also divine, or be found rejecting the Messiah. Of course, as we have tried to point out before, there is the moral element to faith as well as the intellectual. That is, a man must want to believe in order to believe. He must exercise his will in belief as well as his mind. All the evidence in the world will not convert a man and cause him to believe in Jesus Christ if he doesn't want to believe. There has to be a balance of three characteristics in man before real faith comes; will, reason and obedience or action. Every proclaimer of truth and righteousness has found this to be the primary barrier to bringing men to living faith—the desire, the will to believe in Jesus and surrender to Him! This was one of the purposes of the spectacle of the cross. The divine love evinced there was intended to break stubborn wills and turn them to God . . . "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

This moral rebelliousness had so hardened the hearts of the rulers of the Jews that they would not even consider the miraculous and merciful works of Jesus. All they could think of was taking Him and using Him for their evil purposes.

But Jesus "went forth out of their hand." How this was accomplished is purely conjectural on our part and so we simply accept the statement of the gospel writer. He retired to the place where John the Baptist was at the first baptizing which was probably Bethany beyond the Jordan (cf. Map #1, Vol. 1, p. 17). He evidently stayed there for a considerable length of time seeking rest, private communion with the Father in the environment of one of His momentous spiritual experiences—His own baptism and audible approval by the Father. He was not there long, however, until the crowds of the common people who always followed Him found Him and came to Him.

The memories of the people were also vividly aroused as they gathered here and heard Jesus teach and saw His signs. They remembered all that the great man, John the Baptist, had said about this One. They remembered that the Baptist in all his greatness had done no signs—yet it was evident that he was God-sent. Thus the wisdom of Jesus' words and the divine nature of His works confirmed the testimony of the Baptist and many believed on Jesus there. Jesus then went on to exercise a short ministry in Perea before He returned to Judea at the call of the sisters of Lazarus (cf. Map #6, p. 117-A).

### *Quiz*

1. Upon what kind of evidence does Jesus rest His claim to deity?
2. Why were the Jews blind to the evidence of His works?
3. What does ". . . and the scripture cannot be broken" mean?
4. Why was it necessary that God give evidence for His nature and will that man could see, hear, feel and touch?
5. What are the three characteristics of man that must be exercised in true belief?
6. Which of these three is of primary importance?

## EXPOSITORY SERMON NO. TEN

### THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP

John 10:1-16

#### *Introduction*

#### I. WHY DID JESUS USE THIS ALLEGORY?

- A. The Jewish rulers and Pharisees had just exhibited themselves as hirelings when they were supposed to be shepherds by casting out the blind man (John 9) (cf. also Ezek. 34:1).

- B. This was a term which Jesus used elsewhere to refer to the rulers and the people (cf. Matt. 9:36; Mk. 6:34).
  - C. The Old Testament is filled with this beautiful picture (cf. Psa. 23; Ezek. 34, etc.). Many prophetic passages depict the Messiah coming as a shepherd (cf. Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:23).
- FOR THESE REASONS JESUS USED THIS ALLEGORY.

## II. THIS ALLEGORICAL PICTURE WAS FAMILIAR TO THE PEOPLE

- A. For us to fully understand the depth of this allegory we need to study just how the shepherds of that place and time worked.
- B. Life was very hard for these shepherds. They were never off duty. There was little grass and the sheep were bound to wander often. There were no protecting fences and the sheep had to be watched every moment lest they get lost or be attacked by wild animals or robbers.
- C. Constant vigilance, fearless courage, patient love for his flock were the necessary characteristics of the Palestinian shepherd.

## *Discussion*

### I. THE SHEPHERD

- A. He knows his sheep. In Palestine the sheep are often with the shepherd for years. Often the sheep have names by which the shepherd calls them. They are each one known by name and by their individuality.
  1. Jesus knows every one of His sheep by name, occupation and address (cf. Saul of Tarsus, Ananias of Damascus; Simon the tanner of Joppa; Cornelius, etc.). He knows all men and needs not that any one bear witness to man for He Himself made man.
  2. He knows what man needs—knows that man has higher aspirations and needs higher goals and aims than mere animal satisfactions. He knows that man is both reasonable and emotional and appeals to both sides of man's nature. He knows that man needs a power beyond himself. JESUS SUPPLIES ALL THESE NEEDS. HE GIVES AN EXAMPLE OF PERFECTION TOWARD WHICH MAN MUST STRIVE; HE APPEALS BOTH TO THE REASON



AND EMOTIONS OF MAN THROUGH HIS WORD; HE GIVES MAN A POWER THAT IS ABLE TO SAVE HIS SOUL AND REGENERATE HIS LIFE THROUGH THE REVEALED WORD OF GOD.

3. The Great Shepherd knows us better than we know ourselves. Our trouble is that we do not trust Him enough to let Him have His way with us. He knows every man's problems and has the answer for each (He has the answer for broken homes; death; despondency; fear; anxiety; anger). He knows the secret hurts, secret longings and secret evils harbored in our hearts. He knows how we are tempted—He knows the strong desires of the flesh as they war against the spirit. He also knows that it is possible to resist the flesh (cf. Matt. 4:1-11)!
4. He does not shepherd us en masse, but as individuals. He guarded His little flock of twelve as individuals. He knew Peter's impetuosity, Thomas' incredulity, the fire of James and John, the guilelessness of Nathanael, the thievery of Judas, the political zeal of Simon. **INDEED THE SHEPHERD KNOWS YOU LIKE NO ONE ELSE KNOWS YOU—BETTER EVEN THAN YOU KNOW YOURSELF.**
- B. The Shepherd leads His sheep. He goes before the sheep. In Palestine the shepherd always went before his sheep and the sheep followed. The shepherd went first to see that the path was safe and that there were no hidden dangers. Sometimes the sheep had to be encouraged to follow. A traveler tells how he saw a shepherd leading his flock come to a ford in the stream. The sheep were unwilling to cross. The shepherd finally solved the problem by carrying one of the lambs across. When the mother of the lamb saw her lamb on the other side she crossed, too, and soon all the rest of the flock had followed her.
1. Our Shepherd has said, "Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Me," and so He took up His cross and led the way. He has said, "Be baptized," and He walked over 70 miles to be baptized of John the Baptist as He led the way. He has said, "Suffer hardship with me as a good soldier . . ." and He has led the way in suffering. He has said, "You will receive joy and abundance of joy" and He has shown the way. He has said, "Have compassion, forgive, love"

and He has led the way. WHATEVER BE THE ROAD YOU MUST TRAVEL, THE SHEPHERD HAS BEEN THERE BEFORE YOU TO SHOW THE WAY!

2. We glibly sing, "Where He leads me I will follow," but seldom follow where He leads. He leads to green pastures and feeds us fully on His Word (not on material luxuries). He leads beside the still and placid waters of safety and peace of soul (but not peace as this world thinks of peace). He also leads through the valley of the shadow often. The chastening of these dark valleys are sometimes necessary, for we learn to follow and depend upon the Shepherd more completely through these vales of tears, suffering and sorrows. He knows us well enough to know that at times this is the only way we will follow Him. Paul looked through a veil of tears and suffering all of his life here as a Christian. Notice how tenderly and patiently (rebuking when necessary) Jesus led the twelve disciples.
- C. There are hireling shepherds. They enter the fold not by the Door—Christ and His teachings. The hireling disregards God's authority. He does not really believe—he simply accommodates himself to the situation. The hireling has no concern for the sheep. He will not lay down his life for them. When the flock is endangered he surrenders or flees. When the sheep stray he is unconcerned and lets them go their own way without correcting them. When the wolves from without and from within attack the flock he loses his courage and runs.
1. The hireling is the preacher who has no spine and will not stand for the truth. When threatened with dismissal, he will compromise the Gospel rather than lose his pay check.
  2. The hireling is the elder or deacon who resigns rather than face the troubles and troublemakers of the church. Such hirelings see in the eldership only position, and prestige, while service, loving service, is the demand for shepherds of God's flock. The hireling is the Sunday School teacher who waters down the demands of the Gospel plan of salvation or holy living rather than allow a class member to think he is narrow-minded.
- D. The wolf against whom the flock of God is to be protected is more fierce than any animal. He is supernatural—he has powers we do not have. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood." How eternally important it is that we have a Divine Shepherd.

## II. THE SHEEP

A. They know the Shepherd. Many people today have deluded themselves into thinking they are the flock of Christ when they do not even know the Shepherd. God's people of the Old Testament lost their relationship to Him as Shepherd because they did not know Him. Hosea said the people were "perishing" because of lack of knowledge of their Shepherd (cf. also I Kings 22:17 Zech. 10:2). They refused to be fed by God their Shepherd. They sought the earthly pleasures offered by the hireling shepherds.

1. There is an alarming ignorance of Christ and His word, even among those who are professed believers. It is no wonder the world is in such a state of affairs. It is no wonder that the church loses about as many converts as she gains. The sheep must be fed. Elders, shepherds of the flock, must see to it that the members have opportunities and motivation to feed on the Bread of Life. Elders and evangelists (preachers) have no right to say, "We offer it, if they don't take it, it is not our fault." If these shepherds of the flock had a sick son or daughter, dying of malnutrition, they would try every way possible to coax them to eat. As shepherds of the flock "as those that shall give account," you have brothers and sisters in Christ dying of spiritual malnutrition—FEED THEM!
2. We know Him through His word, through what He has revealed to us. But how many of the sheep read their Bibles even thirty minutes each day in order to know Him better? Some take over three hours each day to eat bread and potatoes, but not even three minutes per day to partake of the food that perishes not.
3. We know Him by speaking to Him in prayer. But how many of the sheep spend fifteen minutes per day in prayer? Most people spend more time than that talking on the telephone each day. God has *never* heard the voice of many people ever lifted to Him in prayer!
4. We know Him by doing His will—by following Him. One of the best ways to know and trust the Shepherd is to do what He says and learn of the wisdom of His commands.

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

But how many of the sheep "seek first the kingdom of God," trusting Him to add all the necessities of life? How many trust Him enough to test His commands to go out and sow the seed and then expect fruits?

5. "If any man willet to do my will, he will know . . ."  
WHEN WE HAVE WALKED WITH HIM BY OBEDIENCE — WHEN WE HAVE TALKED WITH HIM THROUGH THE BIBLE — THEN WE BEGIN TO KNOW THE SHEPHERD AS WE OUGHT TO KNOW HIM!

B. The Sheep know His voice. It is true of Palestinian sheep that they know the tone of their shepherd's voice. Not only so, but they will follow only that voice and will flee when they hear a stranger's voice.

1. The true sheep of Christ know the difference between the true Shepherd and false shepherds. They know false doctrines whenever and by whomever they are taught.

2. No man need think he will remain long in the flock of God if he cannot distinguish the Shepherd's voice from the voice of the thief and robber.

C. They follow Him. Knowing the shepherd's voice and following it are two different things. Some who know the Bible thoroughly do not obey it. We cannot be one of God's flock without obeying God's Shepherd, Jesus Christ. There is but *ONE FLOCK* and *ONE SHEPHERD*.

### *Conclusion*

#### I. THE SHEPHERD

- A. He knows—temptations, needs, obedience.
- B. He leads—the way of the cross, into joy, through trials.
- C. He has all the answers for our lives . . . He can satisfy as none other.

#### II. THE SHEEP

- A. Know Him—walk, talk and listen to Him.
- B. Follow Him—they imitate Him, obey His voice.

#### III. ONE DARK VALLEY MUST BE CROSSED BY ALL

- A. The valley of the shadow of death.
- B. When you approach this valley, will you be able to see Jesus, your Shepherd, there with His hand outstretched, saying, *Follow me?*

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

HE HAS WALKED THE VALLEY BEFORE YOU . . . YOU CAN TRUST HIM. YOU CAN TAKE HIS HAND, FOR HE WILL LEAD YOU THROUGH TO THE OTHER SIDE WHERE THERE ARE GREEN PASTURES, THE TREE OF LIFE, AND THE RIVER OF WATER OF LIFE.

BUT IF HE IS NOT YOUR SHEPHERD, WHOM CAN YOU TRUST? WHO WILL BE THERE TO TAKE YOU THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH? HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS BEEN THERE AND IS ABLE TO LEAD YOU THROUGH.

LISTEN TO HIS PLEADING, COAXING VOICE TODAY. TENDERLY HE'S CALLING, HEAR HIS VOICE AND FOLLOW THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

### EXAMINATION, CHAPTERS 9 and 10 *What Did These Say*

*About the Blind Man:*

1. The disciples:
2. Jesus:
3. The neighbors:
4. The parents:
5. The Pharisees:

### *Explain These Statements*

1. Jesus: "We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."
2. The blind beggar: "I told you even now, and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? would ye also become his disciples?"
3. The blind beggar: "We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth."
4. Jesus: "For judgment came I into this world, that they that see not may see; and that they that see may become blind."
5. Jesus: "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see: your sin remaineth."

### *True or False?*

1. An allegory is the same as a parable.
2. Jesus is referring strictly to Himself as the shepherd in 10:2.
3. The "one flock" of 10:16 refers to the New Testament church.
4. There is an extensive interval of time between 10:21 and 10:22.
5. The Old Testament gives directions for the Feast of Dedication in the book of Leviticus.

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### *Make a List of*

1. Four things Jesus says about both a shepherd and the Good Shepherd.
2. Three things Jesus says about the hireling.
3. Five things Jesus says about His sheep.
4. Two things to which Jesus appealed to substantiate His claim to be the Son of God.

### *Locate These Places*

1. Pool of Siloam.
2. Solomon's porch.
3. The place where John was at the first baptizing.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

"I am the Resurrection and the Life"—this chapter must have no other title but this written over it. It is filled with comfort and strength in its revelation that Jesus holds death and life in His hands. It is a touchstone of evidence for the deity of Jesus. It shows the emotions of the very heart of the Master as He weeps for those whom He loves. Used as the text for countless thousands of funeral sermons it still remains the most vital and appropriate text for such occasions. We also see the frustration and malice of the Jewish rulers as they hold their murderous council.

The eleventh chapter tells of one incident among many in a Later Perea Ministry of about three months. After the Feast of Dedication Jesus retired into the region of Perea (cf. Jn. 10:40-42). In the interval between the feast and the raising of Lazarus He makes an evangelistic tour of Perea; dines in the home of a Pharisee; delivers the parables of the lost sheep, coin and son; parables of unjust steward, Lazarus and rich man and unprofitable servants. After the raising of Lazarus, many other incidents transpire before Jesus approaches (Jn. 12) Jerusalem for the final Passover (cf. Map #6, page 117A).

Let us, then, outline chapter eleven, following our general outline of the entire gospel of John, in this manner:

### II The Word Manifested to the Jews and their Rejection of Him, 1:19—12:50

#### D. Public Ministry, Third Year

4. Later Perea Ministry, 11:1—11:57
  - a. A Man Dies for a Purpose, 11:7-16
  - b. The Purpose explained, 11:7-16
  - c. I Am The Resurrection and the Life, 11:17-27
  - d. Jesus Wept, 11:28-37
  - e. He That Was Dead Came Forth, 11:38-46
  - f. Politics and Murder, 11:47-57

## A MAN DIES FOR A PURPOSE

*Text 11:1-6*

1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, of the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 And it was that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

3 The sisters therefore sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 But when Jesus heard it, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

6 When therefore he heard that he was sick, he abode at that time two days in the place where he was.

*Queries*

- a. When did Mary anoint the head of Jesus?
- b. Why say the sickness was not unto death?
- c. Why wait two days after receiving the bad news?

*Paraphrase*

Now there was a certain man who became seriously ill; this man was Lazarus of Bethany, the village where Mary and her sister Martha lived. (This is the same Mary who would anoint the Lord with perfume and wipe his feet with her hair, and Lazarus, the man who was ill, was her brother.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus saying, Lord, look! the one whom you love is seriously ill. When Jesus heard this message he replied, Death will not be the final result of this sickness. This sickness will ultimately end in the glory of God and especially will the glory of the Son of God be shown through it. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. But after he heard of Lazarus' illness he stayed two more days where he was in Perea.

*Summary*

Lazarus, of whom Jesus was especially fond as a friend, is seriously ill even at the point of death. But Jesus, with His divine foreknowledge, knows that although Lazarus will die he will be resurrected to the glory of the Father and the Son.

*Comment*

The gospel writer, John, is careful to identify the people involved in this glorious event. The Lazarus is distinguished from others (cf. Lk. 16:20) of the same name. The name Lazarus means "he whom God helped." Even this village of Bethany is distinguished from the "Bethany beyond the Jordan." This village is the Bethany where Mary

and Martha lived—the small village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, a “suburb” of Jerusalem. There are so many Marys in the gospels that John must also identify this Mary as the one who anointed the Lord with perfume. The word *anointed* is in the aorist tense in the Greek. The aorist tense is the “snap-shot” tense and does not necessarily mean the anointing happened in the past. We believe John simply uses an anachronism (statement of an event out of its historical sequence) here as he does with the betrayal of Judas later. The anointing by Mary took place just before the Triumphal Entry (Jn. 12) but John, writing years later, mentions it out of sequence to identify Mary. This anointing is not to be confused with the event of the sinful woman who wiped Jesus’ feet with her hair (cf. Lk. 7:36-50), but is the same anointing that is described by Matthew (Matt. 26:6-13), and Mark (Mk. 14:3-9).

The emphatic nature of the language used and the sending of the messenger the long distance into Perea indicates urgency. Lazarus was seriously ill and probably not expected to recover unless the Great Healer came at once! The messenger was instructed to be emphatic so he said, “Behold! the one whom you dearly love is at the point of death!” The word the sisters use for love is *phileo* which has a different shade of meaning in some instances than *agapao*. The words are also used interchangeably. We shall discuss them further in John 20.

The brevity of the Lord’s answer (at least the brevity with which it is recorded) *seems* to be a cold shrugging-off of the urgency of the sisters. No doubt the disciples understood Him to mean that the illness was not as serious as the messenger believed. But the Son of God was never more in command of the situation—never more tender and compassionate in His plans for all concerned. All that He will offer at the moment in the way of consolation is the prediction that the sickness of Lazarus will not end finally in death (although Jesus knew Lazarus would die), but in the ultimate glory of God the Father and God the Son.

John now inserts the important parenthetical statement, “Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus.” This is to inform the reader of his gospel record that Jesus was not turning His back upon their plea for help by His brief answer and intentional delay in Perea for two days. Something of significance seems to be inferred from the emphasis on Jesus’ love for Lazarus, Mary and Martha here. Jesus was both divine and human. On the human side He had very few really close friends in whom He might confide, and trust. Members of His own family were unbelievers and not even His disciples seems to have been sym-



pathetic with all His needs for such close friendship. Mary had some deep intimations within her of His approaching death (which is more than the disciples understood) when she anointed Him. What a great source of comfort this family must have been to the One with the shadow of the cross upon Him.

As Foster points out, the verse (v. 5) may mean that because Jesus loved them, He tarried, having something greater in store for them all than the mere healing of a sick man.

The primary objective in His delay was that upon Lazarus' death the Father and the Son would be glorified when the Son should raise him from the tomb (especially after the body had begun to deteriorate). But another purpose is stated in 11:15, the strengthening of the faith of the disciples. This resurrection, of course, would result also in the strengthening of the faith of the family of Lazarus. As Hendriksen says, "Hence, what may have looked like a cruel delay was in reality the tenderest concern for the spiritual welfare of true disciples." What would be the best way to give all concerned a faith and hope in Him as the resurrection and life?—to heal a sick man or to raise one from the dead whose body was already decaying? Which would give more glory to God? Raising of Lazarus from the dead, of course!

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;

"His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower."

### *Quiz*

1. Why does John mention the anointing by Mary out of its historical sequence?
2. What does the repetition of the fact that Jesus loved Lazarus, Mary and Martha indicate as to Jesus' human nature?
3. What two things did Jesus have in mind by waiting until Lazarus was dead before He answered the plea of the sisters?
4. What may we learn from these recorded instances of the "mysterious" ways in which the Lord works?

## THE PURPOSE EXPLAINED

*Text 11:7-16*

7 Then after this he saith to the disciples, Let us go into Judea again.

8 The disciples say unto him, Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him.

11 These things spake he: and after this he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

12 The disciples therefore said unto him, Lord, if he is fallen asleep, he will recover.

13 Now Jesus had spoken of his death: but they thought that he spake of taking rest in sleep.

14 Then Jesus therefore said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

16 Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

*Queries*

- a. Why the dissertation on "walking in the daylight"?
- b. Why was Jesus "glad" at not being present when Lazarus died?
- c. With whom did Thomas plan to die?

*Paraphrase*

At the end of two days Jesus said to His disciples, Let us return to Judea. The disciples were shocked and said to Him, Master, the Jews are even at this very hour seeking to stone you to death—and you are going to return to Judea? Jesus answered, Are there not a certain number of allotted hours of light for the day wherein a man is to work and walk? If a man walks in these allotted hours of light he need not fear obstacles or enemies. But if a man does not avail himself of the God-allotted light and walks in darkness he will stumble and be overcome because the light does not illuminate his path. After speaking these words Jesus said to His disciples, Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep and I am returning to Judea in order to awaken him out of this sleep. Hearing this the disciples replied, Lord, if he has merely fallen asleep he will all the better recover from his sickness.

(Now Jesus was speaking of Lazarus' death; however, the disciples thought He was speaking about the repose of sleep.) Then Jesus said to them plainly and openly, Lazarus is dead! For your sakes I am glad that I was not present when he died in order that what subsequently transpires may strengthen your faith in Me. Let us then go to Judea and to Lazarus. Then Thomas, who is called Twin, spoke boldly to his fellow-disciples, If our Master is determined to return to Judea, let us also go that we may die with him!

### Summary

After a delay Jesus now announces His determination to return to Judea. The disciples warn Him of the animosity of the Jews. Jesus tries to allay their fears by telling them that His intended return is within the divine plan of His Father and for the purpose of strengthening their faith. Thomas exhorts his fellow-disciples to courageously prepare to die with Jesus.

### Comment

The disciples had never been given cause to doubt the bravery and courage of their Master. In fact, He displayed the most dauntless courage time after time. But now His expressed intention to return to Judea is looked upon by the disciples as foolhardiness.

Verses 9 and 10 is another of the Lord's enigmatic figures by which He sought to stimulate the spiritual discernment of the disciples. Taken in its context and considering another statement (Jn. 9:4-5) of parallel figurativeness, we understand Jesus to be telling the disciples *by this figure* that it is safe to return to Judea because His hour has not yet come. Just as there is a certain amount of daylight hours allotted by God in which man can walk and work without fear of obstacles and enemies because he has light, so there is an allotted time in which the Son of God must accomplish His earthly ministry. The disciples have expressed urgent concern for His safety, but Jesus counters with this figurative affirmation that the time within the divine plan of the Father for His death is not yet, therefore they may safely return to Judea. Notice the similarity of thought between verses 9 and 10 here and John 9:4-5: "We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. When I am in the world, I am the light of the world." As Lenski puts it, "To walk and not to stumble means to go on with our life's work"; (as God has given to each one of us an allotted day in which to work) "to stumble means to come to the end of our life's work . . ." (Interp. of St. John's Gospel, p. 787, R. C. H. Lenski) (parenthesis mine).

Jesus goes from one figure to another immediately. Again He uses the enigmatic metaphor of "sleep" for "death" to excite their spiritual understanding. There may be two reasons for speaking of death thus: (a) to soften the harshness of the reality of death, and, (b) to re-emphasize His first statement, "This sickness is not unto death . . .," i.e., to hint more strongly at a resurrection from death. Throughout the Scriptures the word "sleep" is applied to death to intimate that death will not be final. It is used to comfort believers and remove all that is stark and dreadful about death. Below are a few of the other comforting references to believer's death:

- a. Precious in the sight of Jehovah, Psa. 116:15
- b. Carried away by the angels, Lk. 16:22
- c. Being in Paradise with Jesus, Lk. 23:43
- d. Going to a place with many dwelling places, Jn. 14:2
- e. A longed for departure, Phi. 1:23; II Tim. 4:6
- f. To be with Christ—at home with the Lord, Phil. 1:23; II Cor. 5:8
- g. A very far better gain, Phil. 1:21, 23
- h. A rest from labors, Rev. 14:13

It is well to mention here that the mere reference to death as "sleep" does not teach the doctrine of "soul-sleeping." As Hendriksen comments, "Though the soul is asleep to the world which it has left it is awake with respect to its own world" (cf. Lk. 16:19-31; 23:43; II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21-23; Rev. 7:15-17; 20:4).

But the disciples took Jesus literally. If Lazarus was sick and had *finally found restful repose*, their opinion was that he would recover for it was said among the Jews that "sleep in sickness is a sign of recovery, because it shows that the violence of the disease has abated." (Lightfoot)

So Jesus now felt the time was right to speak openly and plainly to the disciples. He wants to let them know that He knows Lazarus is dead and that his death is going to result in further evidence for their belief in Jesus. This, then, is the higher purpose that will be served by the death of Lazarus (cf. 11:4). Jesus was preparing these men to witness His greatest miracle (excepting, of course, His own resurrection). As one commentator has said, ". . . a miracle comes to be wrought that exceeds in its revelation of the glory of the Father and the Son all the other miracles of Jesus, that brings the most wonderful blessings to those that behold and believe."

Seeing the determination of Jesus to return into the face of the enraged rulers in Judea, Thomas resigns himself to go with his Master even if it means death by stoning. There is no reason to think Thomas is referring to Lazarus as the one with whom he is resigned to die. He is probably not certain yet whether Lazarus is sick or dead—but he is sure, as are the others, that if Jesus returns to Judea He faces certain death. The apostles were courageous men. One wonders if, when Jesus was about to be arrested, He had called upon them to fight they would not have fought valiantly (cf. Jn. 18:10-11). Peter was ready to die with Jesus (cf. Matt. 26:35)—but when Jesus submitted willingly to the humiliating torture and mockery, the disciples fled. This was not their idea of a Messiah—if He had fought they were ready and were courageous—they were not cowards. But humiliation—that was another story.

The groundwork has been laid well. The disciples are certain they face death in Judea. But Jesus knows they will see Him in all His glory as The Resurrection and the Life.

### *Quiz*

1. What is the message behind the enigmatic statement of verses 9 and 10?
2. When Jesus said that Lazarus was "asleep" did He mean that the soul is unconscious after death? Prove your answer by Scripture references.
3. What is the significance of the Lord's use of the word "sleep" to refer to death?
4. What is the ultimate purpose of the raising of Lazarus?
5. What of Thomas' statement, ". . . that we may die with him." Was it bravery, cowardice or pessimism?

### I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

#### *Text 11:17-27*

17 So when Jesus came, he found that he had been in the tomb four days already.

18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off;

19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother.

20 Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary still sat in the house.

21 Martha therefore said unto Jesus, 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.

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, 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?

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world.

### *Queries*

a. Who were the Jews "consoling" Martha and Mary?

b. What is Martha's attitude toward Jesus in verses 21-22?

c. Does Jesus adequately answer Martha's longing in verses 23-26?

### *Paraphrase*

So when Jesus arrived in Bethany, He found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Quite a number of the Jews of the city of Jerusalem had come out to Martha and Mary, Bethany being only about two miles from Jerusalem, to console them and mourn with them over their brother's death. When Martha was told that Jesus was on His way, she went out alone to meet Him—Mary stayed in the house. When Martha met Jesus she said to Him, Master, if you had only been able to get here in time my brother would not have died from his sickness. But even now, with my brother dead, I am sure that whatever you might ask of God, God will grant it. Jesus said to her, Your brother will rise again. Martha replied, Yes, Master, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. At this, Jesus said to her, I am even now the source of resurrection and the life that is eternal. Though a man may die physically, if he has believed in Me and obeyed Me he will live forever. Yes, whoever lives a life of obedient faith in Me never really dies. Do you believe this, Martha? She replied, Yes, Master, I have believed that you are the Messiah, the Son of God—even the One whom the prophets foretold would come into the world.

### *Summary*

Jesus finally arrives near Bethany four days after Lazarus' burial. Martha, informed of His approach, goes forth to meet Him. She expresses faith in Jesus, but in her sorrow her faith needs to be strengthened. Jesus challenges her to complete trust in Him—she confesses her faith in His deity as the Son of God.

*Comment*

There is no need to speculate on when Lazarus died (whether before the messenger arrived where Jesus was in Perea, or whether he died after the messenger returned to Bethany). We know that Jesus purposely waited until he was dead (cf. Jn. 11:14-15), that Jesus knew *when* Lazarus was dead; we therefore assume that He purposely did not hurry from Perea to Bethany, waiting until the body of Lazarus would start its decomposition in order that the miraculous raising would have even greater significance.

The statement of verse 19 that many of the Jews had come to the home of Mary and Martha may indicate two things. First, it may infer that Lazarus and his sisters were well thought of by many people. Second, it may mean that his funeral was a "big" funeral. Those families who could afford it usually hired mourners for Jewish funerals (cf. Eccl. 12:5; Jere. 9:17; Am. 5:16). Generally a meal was prepared for those attending the funeral after the entombment when they would "eat the bread of mourners" (cf. II Sam. 3:35; Hos. 9:4; Ezek. 24:17, 24). We know that all those attending the funeral were not friends of Lazarus. Some had undoubtedly been sent there by the rulers of the Jews to see if Jesus would come from His "hiding place" at the death of His beloved friend. Others of the Jews, neither avowed enemies nor avowed friends of Jesus, may have been there out of mere curiosity. Knowing, however, our Lord's estimation of Lazarus, we believe the greater portion of those at the home of the sisters were there out of their respect for the deceased who was undoubtedly a man of compassion and good works. John's explanation for one of the causes for a great crowd was the relatively short distance (15 stadia) of Bethany from Jerusalem—about two miles.

Martha, upon hearing that Jesus was arriving, probably hurried to meet Him outside the village in order that she might speak to Him privately. Her first words were, "If you had been here (or gotten here in time) my brother would not have died." Martha, knowing His past miracles of healing the sick, believed firmly in Jesus' ability to heal her sick brother—if only He had been there before Lazarus had died.

The next statement, verse 22, hints of her belief that even in the face of her brother's death Jesus will somehow rectify the situation. This short conversation of Martha with Jesus indicates that Martha had a beautiful, tenacious faith in Jesus as the Messiah. It had not yet blossomed into full trust in Him as the Resurrection and the Life and it was to this end that Jesus coaxed and fanned the flame of faith

within her heart. She certainly recognized that God was working through Jesus. Martha may have been the one who was before "cumbered about much serving," but she certainly maintained a strong belief in Jesus.

Watch now as Jesus seeks to lead Martha to a more perfect faith in His deity. It is as R. C. Foster says in his Syllabus, "A good teacher does not work everything out for the pupil, but gives just enough help to stimulate the utmost intellectual effort." So with the Great Teacher. He began to give obscure replies to her, as to His disciples beyond the Jordan. It was ever thus that He sought to draw out and enlarge the faith of those whom He would help." So Jesus simply said, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha quickly responded with her affirmation of belief in the final resurrection, verse 24. There are some of the liberal schools of theology who maintain that the Jews in the Old Testament did not believe in the future life. Or, if they did, they received their beliefs of the future life from heathen philosophies. For an excellent refutation of this impossible theory we refer you to Bro. R. C. Foster's essay entitled, "The Future Life." A few sample references from the Old Testament should suffice: I Kings 17:22; II Kings 4:35, 13:21, 2:11; Psalms 23; Isaiah 14:9, 25:8, 26:19, 53:10-12, 66:24; Daniel 12:2. Further, Hebrews, 11th chapter, teaches that the O. T. saints looked forward to heaven.

Jesus takes another step. He is slowly but firmly laying the groundwork for the stupendous miracle that will soon take place. His statement, "I am the resurrection and the life," is one of the most significant and comprehensive statements He made. Here the Lord Jesus identifies Himself as the source of the resurrection—even of life itself (cf. John 1:4; Col. 1:16-17). Jesus is saying to Martha, in a veiled way, that even though her brother is physically dead he is alive. Death for the believer (physical death, which is the mere separation of the soul from the body) is the mere beginning of life that is life indeed (cf. Phil. 1:21-23; II Cor. 5:1-8). Jesus claimed the same power months before at the Passover (John 5:19-29). Certainly He is the resurrection and life at the last day—but He is even now the granter of life to her brother because of her brother's belief in Him. This is what Jesus challenges Martha to believe by asking, "Believest thou this?"

We doubt that Martha fully understood the significance of Jesus' claim (even as we do not fully understand it), but there can be little doubt as to her unreserved surrender to Jesus. To the challenge to



simply trust Him she answers, "Yes, Lord, I believe . . ." Considering the state of mind Martha must have been in, this confession expresses a great faith. Further consider that the miracle of her brother's resurrection had not yet occurred. How her faith and love for Jesus must have increased after the miracle.

### Quiz

1. Why the mention of the fact that Lazarus had been dead four days?
2. How may the "many people" at Martha's home be explained?
3. What does verse 22 hint concerning Martha's faith in Jesus?
4. Why does Jesus make the obscure statement of verse 23?
5. Does the Old Testament teach a belief in the resurrection?
6. What is the significance of the statement, "I am the resurrection and the life"?
7. What of Martha's confession?

### JESUS WEPT

#### *Text 11:28-37*

28 And when she had said this, she went away, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Teacher is here, and calleth thee.

29 And she, when she heard it, arose quickly, and went unto him.

30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met him.

31 The Jews then who were with her in the house, and were consoling her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up quickly and went out, followed her, supposing that she was going unto the tomb to weep there.

32 Mary therefore, when she came where Jesus was, and saw him, fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping who came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.

34 and said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see.

35 Jesus wept.

36 The Jews therefore said, Behold how he loved him!

37 But some of them said, Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die?

### Queries

- a. Why did Jesus call Mary out to meet Him?
- b. Why would Mary fall down at Jesus' feet?

c. What caused Jesus to weep?

### *Paraphrase*

After Martha expressed her belief in Jesus she returned to the house and went in alone to her sister Mary and whispered to her secretly, The Teacher is here and is asking for you to come out and meet Him. Immediately upon getting this message Mary arose and started out to meet Him. (Now Jesus had not yet entered the village but was remaining at the place where Martha had met him.) When the Jews who were mourning with Mary in the house noticed that she had gone out in such a hurry, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep for her brother there. When Mary arrived at the place where Jesus was waiting, and saw Him, she fell at His feet sobbing, Lord if you had only been here my brother would not have died of his sickness. When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had followed her also weeping, He was deeply moved in the spirit and visibly distressed but He asked gently, Where have you buried him? Then some of them said, Lord, come and we will show you. Jesus wept openly. Some of the Jews beholding this said, to one another, See how much he loved Lazarus! Others of the Jews said, But He opened the eyes of the blind man—why could He not have kept this man from dying?

### *Summary*

Jesus, sending for Mary to meet Him, evidently wants to talk with her apart from the crowds. Aware of the deep grief of Mary and those who mourned for her brother, Jesus wept openly. The Divine Son of God and the Son of man manifested in Jesus—we behold His participation in the sufferings of our agonies.

### *Comment*

As close as Jesus was to this family, Mary, Martha and Lazarus, we can understand why He sent Martha to tell Mary that He wished to see her apart from the crowds of mourners. This family had no doubt tenderly cared for and befriended Jesus when it seemed as if the whole nation was against Him (cf. Luke 10:38-42). Further, Mary, at least, was sympathetic with the tragic end which would culminate His ministry (cf. John 11:1 and 12:1-8; cf. also Matt. 26:6-13; Mk. 14:3-9)—when even the closest of the disciples could not foresee it. So Jesus wanted to speak with these beloved friends in privacy and strengthen their faith and comfort them.

Mary, hearing that the Master was asking for her, fled to His side. How we all ought to hear Him call and flee to His side when our hearts are broken with grief. Hear Him call, "Come unto me all ye

that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). They met somewhere outside the village-proper. But their meeting was not as private as Jesus had wished for the Jews who had been with Mary in the house thought that she was going to the cemetery to mourn by her brother's tomb. We do not know why they followed her—perhaps out of curiosity, but more likely out of sympathy. Someone should be at her side there in the graveyard. A woman, so overcome with grief, should not be left all alone.

When Mary arrived where Jesus and His disciples were waiting, just outside the city, she fell down at His feet repeating what her sister had said to Him. "If you had only been here, my brother would not have died of his illness—you would have healed him." We believe this is expressive of the great faith of Mary in the Teacher. Of course, her faith was not yet strong enough to keep her from grief or from uttering the same lament that her sister had made. But which of us has such perfect faith? We believe that this manifestation of utter dependence upon Jesus in her hour of deep sorrow shows that Mary had as much faith in Him as Martha had just confessed.

Verses 33-35 picture the Son of God weeping unashamedly. Oh, sweet and comforting picture! The heart of God going out to suffering, sorrowing mankind in the tears of His Only Son. Our Saviour is not aloof and cold and unfeeling . . . "For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Seeing the woe and deep grief which sin caused among men, Jesus was visibly troubled of spirit—so visibly overwrought that John remembered it and recorded it here. There were other times when Jesus was visibly troubled within because of sin and unbelief. He was "grieved" at the unbelief of the Jews (Mk. 3:5). He was troubled at the last supper over the one who was about to betray Him (Jn. 13:21). He was troubled of soul when the Greeks were brought to Him and He was made vividly aware of the cruel suffering He was about to endure (Jn. 12:27).

But there is more than agitation of spirit here. His heart was touched with their grief! He wept with those who were weeping (cf. Rom. 12:15). Soon He would shed tears of grief and sympathy for the rebellious people of Jerusalem (cf. Lk. 19:41-44) because, seeing pro-

phetically the future holocaust of the city's destruction in 70 A.D., He knew the terrible grief that would be theirs. We also know that He must have wept many times as He prayed (Heb. 5:7-9).

Does Jesus care,  
    when I've said good-by  
To the dearest on earth to me,

And my sad heart aches,  
    till it nearly breaks—  
Is it aught to Him? Does He see?

O yes, He cares, I know He cares,  
    His heart is touched with my grief;  
When the days are weary, the long nights dreary,  
I know my Saviour cares.

This heart-touching demonstration of love by Jesus as He wept with Mary was not lost upon the Jews. They marvelled at His love for Lazarus. But many of them were critical of Him. No doubt some of the Jews knew that Martha and Mary had sent for Him when Lazarus was only ill—perhaps they felt that He should have come sooner and healed Lazarus. After all, He had just a few months before opened the eyes of the man born blind. On the other hand, perhaps this was not a criticism, but an expression of a halting faith.

In this section we have another of John's word-pictures of the Divine Son expressing His participation in the infirmities of His brethren of flesh and blood (cf. Heb. 2:14-18). When Jesus wept, He wept with Mary and Martha—but He also wept with all humanity.

### *Quiz*

1. How close was the relationship of Jesus to this family—on the human side?
2. How does Mary express her dependence upon the Master here?
3. May we all have the same dependence upon Jesus?
4. Why was Jesus troubled in His soul? Can you give other incidents when He was thus troubled?
5. What is the significance of His tears? Did He cry at any other time? When?
6. What did the Jews say about His tears?
7. Were Jesus' tears only for Mary and Martha? Explain.

## HE THAT WAS DEAD CAME FORTH

*Text 11:38-46*

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

39 Jesus saith, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time, the body decayeth; for he hath been dead four days.

40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heardest 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.

43 And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

45 Many therefore of the Jews, who came to Mary and beheld that which he did, believed on him.

46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done.

*Queries*

- a. Why did Jesus continue to groan?
- b. Why did Jesus say Martha would see the "glory of God"?
- c. What was the purpose of the "loud" cry, v. 43?

*Paraphrase*

Upon hearing these expressions of grief and doubt Jesus again groaned deeply within Himself as He approached the tomb. Now the tomb of Lazarus was a cave-type tomb hewn out of the rock of the hillside and a huge round stone was rolled against its opening. Jesus then commanded some of the people, Roll away the stone from the tomb! But Martha, sister of the dead man, said, Lord, by now there will be the stench of decomposition for he has been in the tomb four days! Jesus replied, Did I not say to you, Martha, that if you have faith in Me you will see the glory of God manifested? While some were rolling the stone away from the tomb Jesus looked toward the heavens and prayed, Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I know that You always hear Me, but I have prayed this especially

for the sake of these people standing here in order that they may believe that You have sent Me. And when He had prayed, Jesus called with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out! Then out came the man who had been dead, his hands and feet bound with burial linen and with a burial napkin bound around his face. Jesus then commanded, Free him of the burial wrappings and let him go.

Upon seeing what Jesus had done, many of the Jews who had accompanied Mary to the tomb believed on Him. But some of them hurried off to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

### *Summary*

Jesus performs one of His greatest miracles. Both friends and enemies witness it. In many, faith in Jesus as the Son of God is strengthened. In others the miracle becomes an occasion for betraying Him to those who have vowed to kill Him.

### *Comment*

After hearing the doubt expressed by the bystanders (v. 37) and coming to the tomb, the agitation of spirit that gripped His soul before (v. 33) caused Him to groan within again. Our Lord was deeply moved during this experience with His beloved friends of Bethany.

John inserts another of his incidental, but graphic, notes which helps to familiarize us with this family. The family burial place (Lazarus' tomb) was one probably hewn out of stone. It was cave-like—in the side of a hill, not a hole in the ground. The cave-type tombs were usually available only to the rich for only the rich could afford to have them hewn out of the rock. There are other indications that this family was one of above average financial means (cf. Jn. 12:1-3). These tombs cut into the side of a hill were usually sealed off with a huge circular (but flat) stone which rested in a sort of trough—along which it was rolled back and forth as necessary to gain entrance.

Jesus had no more than finished commanding, "Remove the stone from the entrance," when Martha, in a moment of mixed emotions, protested. No doubt the impropriety of opening the tomb allowing curious eyes to look upon the already decaying body, prompted, in part, her protest. But the reply of Jesus indicates that her faith was also wavering. In the Palestinian climate, and in view of the mechanics of burial in that day, it did not take long for decomposition to set in upon dead bodies. The dead were buried almost immediately upon death. Of course, the Hebrews (and all other peoples since) were never able to duplicate the embalming arts of the Egyptians. Egyptians knew a secret method of preserving bodies for centuries (even for milleniums) that has eluded man ever since their civilization melted into the dust.

According to Lenski, "The Egyptians disemboweled the body and removed the brain and then soaked the body in a chemical solution for seventy days and thus prevented decay." The Hebrews merely anointed the body, wrapped it in linen strips with fragrant spices sprinkled in the folds (cf. II Chron. 16:14).

However, the primary purpose behind John's recording Martha's statement is to increase for his readers the magnificence of the miracle that is about to take place. The resurrection of one who has been dead four days—even after decomposition has set in—precludes any possibility of enemies claiming that Lazarus was not really dead! Lazarus had not merely lapsed into a coma. The reader will please *take careful notice* that when the enemies of Jesus counseled about their strategy in answer to this miracle, not one minute inference can be found that Lazarus was not really dead—nor indeed, that the miracle had not really happened (cf. Jn. 11:47-53; 12:9-10, 17-19)!

So the Lord turns to Martha rebuking her mildly for her wavering faith after she had so positively expressed her confession of Him (v. 27).

As the stone was being rolled away, Jesus looked toward the heavens reverently and prayed. There is a noticeable contrast between our Lord's public prayers and the public prayers of many religious men today. His were brief; theirs long and extended. His were simple and conversational—though not at all disrespectful; theirs filled with impressive vocabulary and oratorical eloquence; (cf. Matt. 11:25-26; Lk. 10:21; 24:30; Jn. 12:27-28). The absolute and perfect faith Jesus has in His Father is shown in His prayer. He thanks the Father for answering Him through the miracle even before the miracle takes place. The prayer also shows the perfect oneness of Son and Father. But again, the prayer was not necessarily for Christ's benefit, but for the people standing there in His presence. He made sure that they would recognize His unique relationship to Jehovah by praying to Him just before the miracle. The emphasis is that He is working the miracle in complete harmony with God—He has been given a unique commission from the Father (cf. Jn. 5:19-36).

When He had thus prayed, He cried with a loud voice. He did not merely speak loudly, but, as the Greek verb *ekrangasen* indicates, He *cried loudly*. Again, the loud cry was for the benefit of the many people present. Jesus needed no loud cry to bring back the dead . . . just a touch or thought would have done. But to insure that all present would know Him as the source of the miracle He cried loudly.

He that was dead came forth! How cryptic! How our hearts burn within us for more detail concerning this great miracle—but nothing more is said. We are not even told how Lazarus was able to come out of the tomb bound, as he was, hand and foot with grave wrappings! Did he hop out? Did he float out? Where was he while his body lay decomposing in the tomb? What did he experience in the world of the spirits? Did he feel—did he know? How was his spirit united again with his body? **BUT WE ARE NOT INDULGED IN OUR IDLE CURIOSITIES!** As John so emphatically says—"these things are written that we might believe" (Jn. 20-30-31), not that we might theorize or theologize. How differently did the Holy Spirit inspired apostles record the gospel story than finite eloquence-minded and curiosity-minded man would have recorded it! The *brevity* of the gospel accounts testify to their God-breathed origin!

Not even any vividness in reporting the reaction of the crowds is indulged in! Surely they must have gasped, stared with mouths agape.

As we have stated before, the reaction of the Lord's enemies to this miracle establishes its authenticity. We cannot allegorize or spiritualize the account of this miracle and sidestep the implications of its attestation to His deity. The account of his miracle is plain and forthright enough in its claim to be a historical even that we must accept it as historical fact or reject it, the consequence being that Jesus and His disciples are the most demonical liars that ever lived.

The evidence was and is sufficient that rejection of this miracle cannot be intellectual. The only other reason for denial is moral! The Pharisees admitted the historicity of it, but denied it because they simply did not want to surrender to its implication—Jesus Christ, Divine Son of God, King and Commander of man's entire being—so men deny it today from the same motive.

### Quiz

1. What does the mention of Lazarus' tomb being "cave" tell us about his financial status?
2. Why did Martha object to having the stone taken away from the opening of the tomb?
3. What is the primary purpose of mentioning of Lazarus being dead four days and his body beginning to decompose?
4. How does the reaction of the enemies of Jesus to this miracle help prove its historicity?
5. What does the prayer of Jesus teach concerning His relationship to the Father? Why did He pray at this time?
6. Is there any significance to the brevity of the account of this stupendous miracle?



7. If the evidence for the miracle is historically undeniable, why do men seek to explain away its historicity?

## POLITICS AND MURDER

*Text 11:47-57*

47 The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many signs.

48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.

49 But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said unto him, 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.

53 So from that day forth they took counsel that they might put him to death.

54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but departed thence into the country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there he tarried with the disciples.

55 Now the passover of the Jews was at hand: and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the passover, to purify themselves.

56 They sought therefore for Jesus, and spake one with another, as they stood in the temple, What think ye? That he will not come to the feast?

57 Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given commandment, that, if any man knew where he was, he should show it, that they might take him.

*Queries*

- a. What caused the excited concern of the council?
- b. How was Caiaphas a prophet?
- c. Why go up before the passover to purify themselves?

*Paraphrase*

Upon hearing of this stupendous miracle the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Council and began to say to one another excitedly, What's being done—what can we do about this

man—something must be done because he is doing many marvelous miracles. If we let him go on like this and do not stop him, he will gather such a tremendous following among all the people that the Romans, suspicious of sedition, will come and remove us from office for our incompetence, take away our temple and destroy us as a nation.

But one of the Council, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to those gathered, It is evident that none of you know what to do! None of you are smart enough to see what is going to have to be done. In view of the situation we must put to death some man as a political scapegoat in order to keep the Roman armies from coming and subduing our nation and killing many of our people. He made this statement not merely as a personal opinion but being high priest that year he made it as an official pronouncement that Jesus should die for the nation; and not for the people in Palestine only but that by his death all the Jews scattered all over the world might be drawn into closer national unity. So from that day forward the Council made definite plans as to how they might put Jesus to death and make it appear to be a political necessity.

Jesus, knowing the murderous plotting of the Council, did not walk publicly and openly any more among the Jews. He left Bethany and went into the uninhabited country north of Jerusalem and entered into a village called Ephraim and there He rested with His disciples. Now the passover of the Jews was approaching and many pilgrims were going up to Jerusalem from all over the countryside in order to make the necessary preliminary purifications before the feast. The Jewish rulers, looking for Jesus among the crowds of the pilgrims, were saying to one another, What do you think—do you think he will stay away from the feast? The reason they were asking these questions was because the Council had issued an order that, if any person knew where Jesus of Nazareth was, they should tell the authorities that they might arrest Him.

### *Summary*

The astounding miracle of raising Lazarus from the tomb has caused such furor and so great a following for Jesus that the Jewish rulers fear catastrophic political repercussions from Rome. The high priest resolves the solution by giving official pronouncement that Jesus must die as a political scapegoat.

### *Comment*

The miracles of Jesus in and around Jerusalem since the Feast of Tabernacles (some three months previous) has caused a national crisis. There is frenzied confusion among the religious and political heads

of the nation. The ruling Council (comparable to our Congress) has been called into emergency session to declare war on the enemy—a meek, gentle, loving, compassionate spokesman for God. So many people have become enamored of the Galilean that the leaders fear for their positions and their national existence.

They were excited over the possibility of His popularity turning into a political revolt. Most of the Sadducees and some of the Pharisees were satisfied with the political status quo. That is, as long as the Romans allowed them to maintain their political and religious stranglehold on their own people they were satisfied. They endured the bitter occupation of their land by Roman soldiers and procurators as long as they themselves were allowed to control their religious customs for these were lucrative businesses. Furthermore, they knew well the history of their nation when it had rebelled against world empires. They were taken into captivity by Assyria and Babylon. Their ancestors during these rebellions had been scattered among foreign nations, their temple was destroyed and foreign peoples inhabited their beloved homeland. Jesus had openly claimed to be the Messiah, yet He made no political overtures. The great popularity He was now attracting coupled with His claims, might filter all the way to Rome and Caesar and then the Romans would do for them what Nebuchadnezzar had done for their ancestors. Can't you just see the council members wringing their hands in nervous anxiety?

But there is one evil schemer among them who has not let fear overcome his reason. He rudely insults the members, saying, "You are all bereft of any knowledge." The haughty one is none other than Caiaphas, present high priest, son-in-law to Annas, former high priest. Caiaphas was an opportunist who could be either uncompromising or compromising as the circumstances might dictate. He would not stop at bloodshed to serve his own ends. See these passages for clues to his personality (Matt. 26:3, 57; Luke 3:2; John 11:49; 18:13, 14, 24, 28; Acts 4:6).

Caiaphas' statement in verse 50 is a very shrewd political, but cunningly unscrupulous, solution to their problem. Actually, the high priest and his cohorts were not especially interested in either the temple, the nation, or the people except insofar as they must be concerned in order to protect their religious rackets. Jesus prophesied that the exact opposite would happen to the nation should they reject Him (cf. Luke 19:41-44; 21:10-28; Matt. 23:27-39). And it came to pass as it was prophesied by Jesus and as the Jews wished it to be when they cried, "Crucify him, crucify him, his blood be upon us and upon our children" (Matt. 27:25).

The traditional interpretation of verses 50-52 makes Caiaphas utter his scheme with full expression of his own free will and for evil purposes, but God also turned them into a prophecy concerning the atonement of Jesus for the Jews and for all nations. We quote Hendriksen, "Caiaphas was left entirely free, was not prevented in any way from saying what his wicked heart urged him to say. Nevertheless, God's will, without becoming even in the least degree defiled, so directed the choice of phraseology that the words which issue from the lips of this coldblooded murderer were exactly the ones that were needed to give expression to the most sublime and glorious truth regarding God's redemptive love. Without becoming aware of it, the villain had become the prophet!" Perhaps this is still the best interpretation. God could certainly cause unwilling subjects or unknowing subjects to become His mouthpieces (cf. Balaam, Numbers 22-24; Saul, I Sam. 19:20-24; the prophets of old who did not understand all they prophesied, I Pet. 1:10-12).

We believe (as our Paraphrase of these verses indicates) that another interpretation may possibly fit the context better. Caiaphas decided that in view of the situation, and secretly to serve his own personal ends, Jesus must be put to death as a political scapegoat. Why could not the phrase of verse 51 ("Now this he said not to himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation"), mean simply that he was making an official pronouncement? His statement was not merely a personal opinion as to what ought to be done—but it was in effect an order from the chief authority, the high priest, that Jesus is to be put to death. Notice the repeated reference to his position (vs. 49, 51). Verse 57 also shows that an official pronouncement had been published. Why does the word "prophesied" have to mean that it was divinely inspired? It does not always mean that. Perhaps he also told the council that by this political intrigue and machination they might further bring all the Jews of the dispersion, in other lands, under closer national unity and thus more under their control. "Perhaps" is all that we can offer—all interpretations of this passage hinge on the word "prophesied."

This sounded like an excellent solution to the crisis so the council voted the death penalty for Jesus and began definite plans to arrest Him as a subversive and kill Him for treason.

Verses 54-56 are all actions resulting from the public order issued by the Council for the arrest of Jesus in verse 57. From henceforth He became "public enemy number one," a fugitive from the authorities. Actually, Jesus was not a fugitive for He did not deliberately run

and hide from the authorities for His own personal safety. He retired to Ephraim for seclusion and privacy in order to rest up physically and strengthen both Himself and His disciples spiritually for the tremendously burdening events about to transpire. When the appointed hour set by the Father arrived, He faced the authorities and death with divine courage.

Ephraim was a village located probably northeast of Jerusalem about fourteen miles. After resting here a while, Jesus seems to have gone on a brief preaching tour "through the borders of Samaria, Galilee and Perea" (cf. Map #6, page 117A). Between verses 54 and 55 this tour takes place and in verse 55 the passover is probably only a week or two away. Jesus would be near Jericho and the pilgrims were flocking into the city to make sure they could be ceremonially purified before the passover arrived (cf. Ex. 10:10-15; Num. 9:9-14; II Chron. 30:17-18; Jn. 18:28). The Sanhedrin undoubtedly had their subordinates out searching among the crowds of pilgrims for the Galilean and His disciples. They nervously asked one another whether He would come to the feast or stay away.

Yes, He would come all right—in fact, He was probably already on the Jericho road. And, He would die for the nation and His death would ultimately gather together the scattered sheep, even sheep not of "this fold" (cf. Jn. 10:1-16). But His death would not fulfill the evil and covetous aspirations of Caiaphas and his cohorts.

### *Quiz*

1. Why did the Council call an emergency session? What did they fear?
2. Why were the rulers interested in the temple and the people?
3. What is Caiaphas' solution? What did happen to the nation for killing Jesus?
4. Did Caiaphas become an unwilling prophet of God or did he merely make an authoritative pronouncement in verses 51-52?
5. Why did Jesus retire to Ephraim?
6. What did His death accomplish for the nation and those scattered abroad?

## EXPOSITORY SERMON NO. ELEVEN THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

John 11:1-53

### *Introduction*

#### I. SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS INCIDENT

- A. This miracle second only to Christ's own resurrection.
- B. It has played a significant role in leading many to belief in Christ.

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- C. It has given strength and comfort to believers of every age.
- D. It precipitated such a fierce animosity by the rulers against Jesus as to become their "point of no return."
  - 1. The multitudes were so taken to Jesus by this miracle that the rulers cast aside craftiness and secrecy in their scheme to murder Him (cf. Jn. 12:9-19).
- E. It is also the climactic miracle of His ministry of miracles.

### II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS FAMILY

- A. They were some of the dearest friends of Jesus.
- B. From other visits Jesus made in their home it seems that He went there especially to rest and be strengthened through the sympathetic reception He received.
  - 1. His half-brothers, His twelve disciples, the multitudes might all misunderstand Him, but here He was loved and cared for and His teachings were believed, at least by Mary and perhaps by Lazarus.
- C. Relate the accounts of Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1-8.

### III. WHAT IS SEEN HERE ABOUT JESUS, THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE?

- A. His desire to be our Resurrection and Life.
- B. His proof that He is our Resurrection and Life.
- C. How He becomes our Resurrection and Life.

## *Discussion*

### I. HIS DESIRE TO BE OUR RESURRECTION AND LIFE

A. His great love and compassion led Him to the tomb of Lazarus (cf. 11:3, 5, 33, 35, 36). It was His great love that led Him from the ivory palaces into a world of woe (John 3:16). He saw all the sorrow of the whole world that Satan wrought through death. His heart went out to man and He Himself partook of flesh and blood that . . . He might bring to naught him that had the power of death . . . and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (cf. Heb. 2:14ff). Our God is indeed marvelous and divine. Even though He knows He has the remedy for our tears and anguish, He weeps over the fact that we must even suffer the bitterness of death.

*Illustration:* A father, sitting in his study one evening, looked up just in time to see his tiny daughter get her fingers caught in the door as she tried to come into the room. The father was very busy and called to the mother, "You'd better come and look after this little girl." The mother came hurriedly, took her up in her arms and asked,

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

"Does it hurt?" "Oh, it hurts real bad," replied the tiny tot, "but the worst is that Daddy didn't even kiss it." Our hurts seem easier to bear when we know friends are truly sympathetic. **WHAT A GREAT CONSOLATION TO KNOW OUR GOD LOVES US AND FEELS FOR US.**

B. There was a higher reason Jesus had for wanting to go to Bethany. He went to Bethany to do more than merely weep with the sisters—to do even more than bring Lazarus back to life. He went to perform a deed that would show beyond doubt His desire and ability to become The Resurrection and the Life. He expressed it a strange way. To thus give this gift of love He stayed away from Bethany until Lazarus had been dead a number of days. He stayed away *because* of His love for the family of Lazarus and because of His love for His disciples. An unbeliever calls Christ immoral to let Lazarus die just to glorify Himself later. But look at the great and glorious blessing Jesus gave to Mary, Martha, Lazarus, His disciples and the whole world—He revealed Himself absolutely as the divine Saviour with power of death.

### II. HIS PROOF THAT HE IS OUR RESURRECTION AND LIFE

A. To claim what Jesus claimed is easy (cf. 11:25). But to prove it is another thing! A Christian missionary and Hindu priest were each presenting the case for their religion. The Hindu priest had gone to great lengths to explain the mysticism and philosophies of concentration, reason and introspection. When opportunity came for the missionary to speak he said simply, "Could the founder of your religion say, 'I am the resurrection and the life?'" "Yes," replied the priest, "he has said that . . ." "But," asked the missionary, "has he ever proved it to eyewitnesses like my Jesus?"

B. Take a look at the evidence for this miraculous resurrection. There is no possibility of deception. (a) The friends of the family of Lazarus knew Lazarus was dead and thus their presence precludes the possibility of deception; (b) Lazarus was four days dead—his body was stinking from decomposition—this was not a case of "suspended animation," "swooning," etc.; (c) Jesus was away at his death and thus there were no schemes cooked up between them to deceive the people; (d) It would have been impossible to deceive Lazarus' sisters into believing that he was really resurrected if he had not been; (e) All present were convinced, believers and unbelievers alike.

There was no concealment, no secrecy connected with this miracle. It was done publicly, in open daylight and was witnessed by a great

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

many people. The enemies of Jesus saw it and went immediately to report it to the Pharisees. Notice, however, they did not deny that Jesus had actually raised Lazarus to life. They could not deny it and, as a matter of fact, the very reason for their alarm was that Jesus had really performed such a miracle. The Pharisees did not investigate it, which they surely would have done had there been any question at all (cf. John 9). Instead, they later decided that Lazarus must be killed in order to do away with the overwhelming evidence for Jesus' claims.

C. Notice the very apparent restraint of the account of this miracle. This certainly goes to substantiate the claim for Holy Spirit guidance in the gospel record. Had any writer reported this astounding event without the guidance of the Holy Spirit we would have had pages and pages rather than a few verses. We would no doubt have had some report from Lazarus about his experiences in death, entombment, the other world, etc., etc. There would have been interviews, reports of the excitement about the tomb and words from the sisters. But **ALL OF THAT IS OF NO IMPORTANCE TO THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL RECORDS.**

D. The conclusion is inevitable! Every circumstance in this account is plain, simple, consistent, factual and truthful. Jesus demonstrated His power over death and life. His claims are validated—His religion is the only religion—there is salvation in no other name but His—He IS the Resurrection and the Life!

### III. HOW HE BECOMES OUR RESURRECTION AND LIFE

A. He becomes the Resurrection and Life by faith—your faith in Him (cf. Jn. 11:25, 26). It is more than mere acknowledgment of Jesus as the "one that cometh into the world" (11:27). It is a *personal* trust and full surrender to Jesus as Lord and Saviour. It is saying with Peter, "Lord to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

B. Faith is equally reason and will. Faith is wanting to believe as much as it is knowing enough to believe.

C. The rulers, although they had plenty of evidence for faith did not want to believe. If they should surrender to Jesus their wills—it meant they would have to change their deeds and motives and lives. They would rather cling to the performance of a few ceremonies and thus fulfill their religious obligations. This left them free (they supposed) to be morally as corrupt as they wished.

D. Faith means obedience. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life to all those who will obey Him (cf. Heb. 5:9, and others).



## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### *Conclusion*

#### I JESUS DESIRES TO BECOME OUR RESURRECTION AND LIFE

- A. His great love and compassion led Him to Bethany and then to Calvary.

#### II THE EVIDENCE THAT *HE CAN* BE OUR RESURRECTION AND LIFE IS UNDENIABLE

- A. The conclusion that Jesus is all He claims to be is inevitable.

#### III WHETHER HE BECOMES YOUR RESURRECTION AND LIFE IS UP TO YOU

- A. This blessing of all blessings can be appropriated only by faith.
- B. What glorious words — what sweet and lovely words — founded on undeniable evidence! "I am the Resurrection and the Life, He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."
- C. The story is told of a missionary who had gone to Korea to preach. He preached faithfully for a number of years and then, while she was in the flower of her life, he lost his wife to one of the dread diseases of the Orient. Her last words to her husband, while the tears streamed down his cheeks, were, "Do not grieve for me, dear, you'll get me back." A month passed and again this missionary father sat beside a death bed—this time his little boy was dying. Again he heard these words . . . "Don't cry Daddy, Mommy said you'll get us back." Two Korean women were present and one was weeping softly. The other woman said to the one weeping, "Why do you weep?" She replied, "I am weeping for this poor father." The first one advised, "Do not weep for these Christians—they have a way of getting their dead back. Weep for yourself for you have lost a son and you shall never get him back." The missionary, overhearing this hopeless sigh, was challenged to many more years of zealous, fruitful preaching of the Gospel to the Korean people.

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### CHAPTER TWELVE

Between chapters eleven and twelve of John's Gospel Jesus takes a preaching tour through the borders of Samaria, Galilee and Perea recorded only in the synoptic gospels. Jesus no doubt took this tour for various reasons. First, He desired another opportunity to preach concerning His kingdom to the people of the countryside. Second, there was a reward being offered for information leading to His whereabouts and arrest. His time was not yet come and He avoids arousing increased animosity of the rulers, which He would most certainly have done had He gone directly to Jerusalem. Thus He proceeds north from Ephraim (11:54) through Samaria into the southern border of Galilee and joins the multitudes of pilgrims coming to the Passover as they travel down the eastern side of the Jordan in Perea.

There is no way to be certain how long a period was involved in this preaching tour—perhaps a month, perhaps more, perhaps less. During this time some very important instances in the earthly ministry of our Lord took place:

- a. Healing ten lepers (Lk. 17).
- b. Teaching on divorce (Mt. 19; Mk. 10).
- c. Parables of unjust judge, Pharisee and publican, laborers in vineyard (Lk. 18; Mt. 20).
- d. Jesus blesses little children.
- e. Healing two blind men and meeting Zacchaeus in Jericho (Lk. 19).

These and other incidents take place before the final and terrible last week (cf. Map #6, page 117 ).

The activities mentioned in John 12 seem to cover about four days if our chronology is comparatively accurate. We shall discuss this further in our comments.

The theme that runs throughout chapter twelve may well be summed up in an utterance of Jesus Himself when He cried aloud, "Now is my soul troubled . . ." The ominous shadows of the cross are becoming larger and darker. Everywhere He turns He is reminded of the agonizing torture just ahead—in Mary's anointing, in the entry into Jerusalem, in the coming of the Greeks. This will be His last opportunity to witness to the multitudes—from henceforth (John 13-21) He manifests Himself primarily to His chosen disciples.

Our outline continues:

- II The Word Manifested to the Jews and their Rejection of Him, 1:19—12:50.

## D. Public Ministry, Third Year

5. Last Public Presentation of the Word (Beginning of the Last Week), 12:1—12:50
  - a. An Act of Love with Ominous Overtones, 12:1-11
  - b. Thy King Cometh, 12:12-19
  - c. The Great Paradox—Death Brings Life, 12:20-26
  - d. The Magnetic Cross, 12:27-36
  - e. A Perpetual Prophecy, 12:37-43
  - f. The Imperative Words, 12:44-50

## AN ACT OF LOVE—WITH OMINOUS OVERTONES

*Text 12:1-11*

- 1 Jesus therefore six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus raised from the dead.
- 2 So they made him a supper there: and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with him.
- 3 Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of pure nard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.
- 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, that should betray him, saith,
- 5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings, and given to the poor?
- 6 Now this he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein.
7. Jesus therefore said, Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying.
- 8 For the poor ye have always with you; but me ye have not always.
- 9 The common people therefore of the Jews learned that he was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.
- 10 But the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death;
- 11 because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

*Queries*

- a. Why did Mary do such an extravagant thing?
- b. What motive was behind Judas' proposal (v. 5)?
- c. What is the meaning of Jesus' answer (vs. 7, 8)?

*Paraphrase (and harmony)\*\*\**

Friday afternoon, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany which is just outside of Jerusalem. Lazarus, the beloved friend whom Jesus had raised from the dead, was living here with his sisters, Mary and Martha. There, in the house of one of the faithful disciples, Simon the leper, they made a supper for Jesus out of love and gratitude to Him. And the resurrected Lazarus was one of those who reclined at the table with Jesus. Martha, as usual, was cooking and serving.

Sometime during the supper Mary approached Jesus with an alabaster jar containing a pound of very rare and costly perfume. Deliberately she broke the neck off the jar and began to pour the ointment upon Jesus' head. Then she poured the last of the ointment upon His feet and wiped the excess from His feet with her hair. The perfume was very precious and expensive and thus highly fragrant; so fragrant that its odor filled the whole house.

Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' disciples (the one who was later to betray Him for money), stirred up the other disciples, saying, Why all this waste? This perfume could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor. And so all the disciples began to reproach her. Judas, however, did not say this because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief. He carried the general funds of the twelve disciples and was stealing from them continually. Jesus replied, Leave her alone! Why are you troubling her? She has done a beautiful deed to me. You are not to criticize her for thus having kept this treasure with which to anoint me. You always have the poor with you and there are always opportunities to good for them. But you will not always have opportunity to perform loving deeds for me, for you will not always have me with you as I am now with you and need your loving concern. Mary, realizing that I will soon be departing in death, has shown her love for me before my departure by preparing my body for burial with this anointment. And I say to you most emphatically that, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what Mary has done will be told in memory of her great love for me and faith in me.

\*\*\*Note: We have taken the liberty of harmonizing John's account of Mary's anointing with those of Matthew and Mark in our paraphrase in order that the reader may receive the full beauty and significance of it.

When the great crowd of the Jews gathered for the Passover heard that Jesus was in Bethany many of them came to Bethany. They came, not only because Jesus was there, but also to see Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So it was, then, that the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus, along with Jesus, because he was the reason many of the Jews were deserting the rulers to follow Jesus.

### *Summary*

On His way to the final and tragic last Passover, Jesus pays a last visit with certain of His beloved friends in Bethany. Out of their love for Him they prepare a supper for Him. Mary, the devoted and discerning one, spontaneously expresses her adoration by anointing Jesus with very expensive perfume. Judas agitates the other disciples to criticize her, wishing he could have gotten control of the money represented by the perfume. Jesus commends her and predicts that her deed will be memorialized. The multitudes flock out to see both Jesus and Lazarus, the dead man returned to life, and the rulers plan to kill both Lazarus and Jesus.

### *Comment*

We have already discussed incidents which take place in the interval of time between chapters eleven and twelve (see the introduction to chapter twelve and Map #6, p. 117-A). Although this anointing does not occur exactly within the last week, for convenience' sake we have placed it on our map of the last week (cf. Map #7, page 263).

Jesus probably arrived in Bethany on Friday afternoon—the Friday of the week before the last Passover week. We believe He arrived Friday because we count backward six days *before* Thursday (excluding Thursday). Thursday happened to be the 14th of Nisan for this particular Passover (the day on which the lamb was slain and eaten) and we reckon this as the day upon which the Passover began. Furthermore, we believe that Jesus would, at this time, make a point of *not* traveling on the Sabbath. The Sabbath began, according to the Jews, Friday night just after sunset and upon the appearance of the first three stars in the heavens. Although as R. C. Foster says, "There is never a single instance in the N. T. where it is affirmed Jesus obeyed this tradition" (of not traveling over seven-eighths of a mile on the Sabbath), we think He must have exercised a cautious expediency here that the Jewish rulers not be any more agitated than they were. He had just before (11ff54) withdrawn from sharply antagonistic environments to avoid precipitous clashes with the rulers.

And so it seems most probable to us that Jesus hurried to arrive in Bethany Friday afternoon to avoid breaking the Sabbath tradition and provoking the rulers before He might have an opportunity to rest.

Arriving late in the afternoon Jesus finds that some of His closest friends have gathered at the home of Simon the leper and are there preparing a supper in His honor. It is the other gospel writers that tell us the supper was held in the home of Simon (cf. Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9). Simon's leprosy, whether present or past, seems so incidental that the gospel writers do not bother to inform us. We assume that he had been previously healed by Jesus. The gospel writers do inform us that Lazarus, the one whom Jesus had raised from the dead, was there, and that his sister Martha served and his other sister Mary gave Jesus a very costly gift. All of this indicates the supper and was being expressed by all present in their own way and gratitude on the part of Lazarus and his sisters and perhaps on the part of Simon.

The word "therefore" in verse 3 gives us a hint into the spontaneity of Mary's deed. The spirit of love and gratitude that pervaded the supper and was being expressed by all present in their own way was dwelling also in the heart of Mary. What could she do to express her gratefulness to Jesus—she was not as good at cooking and serving as Martha. Suddenly she thought of the very precious and expensive perfume which she had purchased for use at the Master's burial. The Greek word used here is *nardou* (*nard*) which is a fragrant oil, procured from the stem of a plant that grows in India. One pound of it, due to its genuine (*pistikes*) essence and the great distance from which it was imported, was worth three hundred denarii (cf. verse 5) (about \$51.00 then, or, multiplied by 100, about \$5,100 now) which is about a year's wages!

According to both Matthew and Mark, she began to pour the precious *litran myrou* (Greek for litre of myrrh) upon the Lord's head. This was usually the extent of customary anointing. Yet, so John supplements the synoptics, she used the entire pound (a large amount of perfume) and anointed His feet also. Abandoning the proprieties of the day, she let her hair down in public and wiped the excess of the ointment from Jesus' feet. It was bad enough to violate the custom of the day and loosen her tresses in public, but to wipe a man's feet with it was unthinkable! Her love and gratitude was uninhibited and unreserved indeed! She gave, not a part,

but all of her treasure. She would not cease until she had also laid her pride and honor at His feet in worship and adoration.

One can well imagine why perfume of such quality and quantity is described as filling the entire house with its fragrance. If Judas and the others had not seen Mary's deed, they certainly would have known when the jar was broken and its contents poured out. Perhaps it was the fragrance of the *nard* that caused Judas to estimate its value.

Whereas the two other gospel writers tell us that all the disciples were indignant and complained of what they called waste, John informs us that Judas was the instigator of the murmuring. Judas had persuaded the others to criticize Mary as being extravagantly wasteful. He even suggested that the money should have been given to the poor. But Judas was not at all interested in the poor! He was interested in Judas. He was the treasurer for the general fund of the Master and His twelve disciples. It seems that good people everywhere were eager to help Jesus in His ministry (cf. Luke 8:1-3) or, through Him and His disciples, give their alms to the poor. Judas was appointed treasurer of the little band. It is recorded here by John that Judas was stealing from the purse all the while he was keeping it. He allowed his heart to be obsessed with the inordinate desire for money — that was all his mind dwelt on. The very moment Mary began to anoint Jesus with the precious perfume, Judas began to estimate the value of the perfume and enviously criticize because he had no opportunity to get his hands on the money. We wonder why Jesus, knowing Judas to be a thief all along, allowed him to continue as the treasurer. Why does the Lord allow men to go on stubbornly in their own willful ways today—why does He not strike them dead as He did Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5)? For the same reason He allowed Judas to continue. He is longsuffering toward all men, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Judas was given a superabundance of grace and divine motivation to change, but he would not. Judas was not forced to steal. He was given every opportunity to exercise his free will to choose between good and evil. He simply chose to sell his soul to the devil for a few pieces of money. Judas was not only a thief, but he was a hypocrite. He pretended to be concerned for the welfare of the poor when he was not the least interested in them. Judas is not only criticizing Mary but is pointing his inuendo at Jesus, also, inferring that Jesus is allowing to be lavished upon Himself what should have been given to the poor. It is the way of sinners, should each of us admit

it, to seek to justify one's own sins by finding fault with another (cf. II Cor. 10:12).

Jesus rebukes the disciples for their carping at Mary. Mark reports that Jesus ordered them, "Leave her alone." Both Matthew and Mark report Him as saying, "Why do you trouble her?" The phrase, "Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying," probably means, "Do not criticize her and destroy her happiness but allow her the joy of knowing that the purpose for which she has kept this precious ointment, the anointing of my body for burial, is now being accomplished." Jesus certainly did not mean that she was to be allowed to keep part of it for a later anointing of His dead body, for she did not keep any of it, but broke the jar and poured it all out upon Him here.

Evidently, Mary had purchased this costly perfume for the very purpose of preparing the Lord's body for burial. The plain predictions Jesus Himself made concerning His death (cf. Matt. 16:21; 20:17; Mark 10:32, 33; Luke 18:31-34; John 7:33; 8:21-23; 10:11, 17, 18) and the very evident hostility of the Jewish rulers gave Mary cause to expect His death soon. The other two gospel writers tell us that Jesus said she was "anointing His body beforehand for burial." Perhaps she felt, in view of the hostility of the rulers, she would be unable to perform the loving deed of caring for His body after death—so she would throw propriety to the winds and perform this beautiful deed upon Him now before His death.

The second part of the Lord's reply is also interesting. Mark records it this way, "For ye have the poor always with you, and whenever ye will ye can do them good but me ye have not always." Jesus would not always be with them in the flesh—but while He was with them in the flesh He desired their companionship, their support and their loving concern as He faced the horror of the cross. There would always be opportunities to help the poor, but there would only be a few opportunities to help the Son of God bear the burden of the cross. Yes, He would be with them always, even after His death by His Spirit, but during His earthly ministry He was with them in a special dispensation and needed their fellowship in a special way. As Hendriksen puts it, "He is telling them that just now anointing him in anticipation of His burial is more important than the care of the poor." It is always correct to worship and adore Jesus—it is never out of place. No gift given to Him is ever too extravagant. As one writer has said, "Where Jesus is anointed the



poor will never suffer." If all the Judases would become Marys the Lord's church could take care of the poor.

How the disciples must have regretted their actions here in later days. How they must have felt the shame of criticizing Mary when they themselves allowed these precious opportunities of showing loving concern pass by. All are guilty of it—especially Christians.

There is a story about Thomas Carlyle which illustrates this so very well. Thomas Carlyle loved Jane Welsh Carlyle, but he was a cross-tempered, irritable creature and he never made life happy for her. She died very unexpectedly one day. A biographer tells us of Carlyle's feelings when he lost her. "He was looking through her papers, he rnotebooks and journals and old scenes came mercilessly back to him in the vistas of mournful memory. In his long sleepless nights, he recognized too late what she had felt and suffered under his childish irritabilities. His faults rose up in remorseless judgment, and as he had thought too little of them before, so now he exaggerated them to himself in his helpless repentance . . . 'Oh!' he cried again and again, 'if I could see her but once more, were it but for five minutes, to let her know that I always loved her through all that. She never did know it, never.'" There is a time for doing and for saying things; and, when that time is past, they can never be said and they can never be done. My friend, is this you? Is it me? Are we like the carping, childish disciples letting golden opportunities to worship and serve the Lord slip by, or are we like the devoted and faithful Mary, giving ourselves and our treasures extravagantly, unreservedly out of our deep love for His salvation. If you have something to do for the Lord that you are putting off—do it today!

This anointing by Mary certainly expressed a greater comprehension and understanding of the Lord's teaching on her part than the disciples manifested. When He plainly predicted His death to them they refused to believe Him. They stumbled at the idea of a cross for their Messiah (cf. I Cor. 1:23). But Mary believed Him and did what she could to express her loving concern .

Matthew and Mark tell us Jesus promised that Mary would be memorialized throughout the world because of her deed of faith and love. And indeed she has been, for her story, as John recorded it, has been told in the four corners of the earth and men and women have been drawn to Christ through it.

Great numbers of the pilgrims going up to the Feast of Passover and of those already in Jerusalem learned that Jesus the miracle-

worker and Lazarus, object of His most astounding miracle, were in Bethany. So they came, in great numbers, to see both of these men whose names and deeds were on the lips of the hundreds of thousands gathered for the feast. They were intensely interested, as one might imagine, in seeing and, if possible, talking to Lazarus who had been called back from the realm of the dead. You would be that interested, too—especially if the former dead man had been restored to life by one claiming to be Messiah, King, Saviour. There before their eyes stood irrefutable proof to substantiate Jesus' claims.

Word of the swelling tide of popularity toward Jesus and the increasing following He was gaining quickly reached the ears of the chief priests. Immediately they met in their council-chambers and made plans to kill Lazarus just as they had before put into action their plan to kill Jesus. The evidence presented for Jesus by the presence of a living Lazarus was so powerful that great multitudes of the common people were aligning themselves with Jesus. The rulers could see only one solution—kill Lazarus and get rid of the evidence. As Bro. Seth Wilson puts it, "Can you imagine trying to kill a man (Lazarus) who will not stay dead?" Lazarus has been dead once—usually enough for most men—but now he is alive again and the chief priests plan to put him to death again!

The same procedure is used, in a less violent manner, by the enemies of Christianity today. Rather than surrender to the overwhelming quantity and irrefutable quality of evidence for Christ and His claims, unbelievers spend fortunes and talents of a lifetime trying to discredit the evidence.

Before closing this section we quote a few outlines of this anointing by various authors:

*"Reasons for recording this?"* by R. C. Foster

- (1) It was an extraordinary example of supreme devotion to Jesus.
- (2) The particular fitness of the event (preparation for burial).
- (3) It offers explanation for the fall of Judas (cf Matt. 26:14-16; Mark 14:10-11). (Matthew and Mark introduce the anointing where they do, out of chronological order, for the purpose of giving a connected account of the conduct of Judas.) (All parentheses mine.)

*"Mary's Noble Act"* by Wm. Hendriksen

#### I. Its Character.

- A. It was prompted by thankfulness . . . love answered love.
- B. It was unique in its understandingness.
- C. It was regal in its lavishness.

D. It was beautiful in its timeliness . . . Now was the proper time for Mary's noble act.

## II. Its Evaluation.

A. By Judas: "To what purpose is this waste?" (Matt. 26:8)

B. By Jesus: "She has performed a noble deed" (a beautiful work, Mark 14:6). ". . . what this woman has done will be told for a memorial of her" (Matt. 26:13).

*"In this action of Mary we see three things about love,"*

by Wm. Barclay.

(a) We see love's extravagance.

(b) We see love's humility.

(c) We see love's entire unselfconsciousness.

## Quiz

1. Upon what day did Jesus most probably arrive in Bethany? Why?
2. What is nard? Where does it come from? How expensive was the jar of nard which Mary had purchased?
3. What is the significance of the fact that Mary anointed both His head and His feet? What is the significance of Mary's wiping the feet of Jesus with her hair?
4. Was Judas the only one who objected to the anointing? Why did he criticize? What was the "bag" that Judas carried?
5. Jesus knew that Judas was stealing—why allow him to continue with the band of disciples?
6. Why did Jesus say, ". . . but me ye have not always."?
7. Why did the chief priests plan to kill Lazarus?

## THY KING COMETH

### *Text 12:12-19*

12 On the morrow a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13 took the branches of the palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried out, Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.

14 And Jesus, having found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,

15 Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

17 The multitude therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, bare witness.

18 For this cause also the multitude went and met him, for that they heard that he had done this sign.

19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him.

### *Queries*

- a. What day did Jesus enter Jerusalem riding on the colt?
- b. Why the great excitement and popularity toward Jesus?
- c. Why did Jesus ride upon a colt to enter the city?

### *Paraphrase (and harmony)*

On the next day, which was Sunday, a great crowd of pilgrims on their way to the feast heard that Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. This multitude had been lodging in Bethany and the environs of Jerusalem and they took the branches of palm trees and went out to join Him as He walked toward Jerusalem, shouting, Save us now! Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord—God bless the King of Israel!

And shortly, when they drew near to Bethphage, a small village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of His disciples into the village, saying, Go into the village of Bethphage and straightway you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her upon which no one has ever ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone asks you, Why are you taking this colt, you shall reply, The Lord has need of them. The owner will not question you further, but will send them to me at once. The disciples went into the village and found the donkey and her colt tied at the courtyard door, out in the open street. As they were untying them the owner questioned them, saying, Why are you untying our colt? Then the disciples repeated what Jesus had said, The Lord has need of it! The owners then allowed them to take the animals. And so the disciples returned to Jesus bringing the colt and its mother along with it. When they got to where Jesus was waiting with the crowd some threw their cloaks upon the donkey and some upon the colt, not knowing which animal the Master would ride. Then some of the disciples assisted Him as He began to mount the colt.

All of this took place in fulfillment of that which was spoken by the prophet Zechariah, who said, Tell the daughter of Zion, Fear not, for behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Now His disciples did not realize the significance of what was happening at the time nor that prophecy

was being fulfilled, but after the resurrection and glorification of Jesus, then they recalled that these things had been written about Him and that they had participated in the fulfillment of prophecy.)

And as He rode along, most of the crowd spread their garments on the road and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road before Him. And among the multitudes following Him were many who had been with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb. They kept telling others about this astounding miracle and witnessing to His power so excitedly that a great crowd came out from Jerusalem also and met Him as He approached the city.

The crowds that came out to meet Him turned and went before Him toward the city and the multitudes from Bethany were following Him. Together they raised a tremendous ovation and cried, Send us, now, salvation! Jehovah bless the one who is coming in the name of the Lord! Jehovah bless the kingdom of our father David which is about to come! Save us now from on High!

As Jesus drew nearer to Jerusalem, at the place where the road begins to descend the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of thousands began to shout for joy and praise God with even more enthusiasm and clamoring as they recounted loudly the many mighty miracles they had seen Jesus do. They shouted with one voice, Blessed be the King who is coming in the name of the Lord! There is peace in heaven and glory in the highest! And some of the Pharisees among the multitude, beside themselves with envy, commanded Jesus, saying, Teacher, rebuke your disciples and tell them to stop this blasphemous tumult! Jesus replied, I tell you that if these people were to cease acclaiming my Messiahship, the very stones would cry out in acclamation! The whole creation should be acclaiming my Lordship.

And as He drew nearer still to the city, He looked upon its magnificence and wept over it, sobbing, Ah, if you only knew, even at this final hour, on what your peace depends—but your eyes are blinded by worldliness and you cannot see it. The time is soon coming when your enemies will encircle your city with battlements and they will surround you and besiege you on every side. Your enemies will dash you and your children to the ground and they will so devastate your city that one stone will not be left standing upon another! This is going to happen to you because you did not know when God Himself was visiting you!

When He entered Jerusalem, with the multitude of thousands accompanying Him, the entire city was stirred with great excitement and people were asking everywhere, Who is this one to whom the multitudes are shouting and acclaiming king? The multitudes who

had accompanied Him were answering back, This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee!

Then the Pharisees began to say to one another, You see? There is nothing that any of us can do now! The whole world is running after Him!

But Jesus proceeded directly to the temple and entered its courts. He looked around at everything going on in the temple and then, since it was already late in the evening, he went out to Bethany taking the twelve disciples with Him.

### *Summary*

Jesus heads for Jerusalem planning to deliberately force the issue of His spiritual Messiahship. The multitudes of Passover pilgrims, excitedly recounting His miracles, shout acclamations of Messianic triumph. The rulers, momentarily frustrated in their scheme to murder Jesus, can only watch helplessly and bide their time. Jesus enters the temple, surveys the activities there and then returns to Bethany for the night.

### *Comment*

"On the morrow" in verse twelve means Sunday—the day after the Sabbath. Jesus arrived in Bethany on Friday afternoon (cf. 12:1) and His friends prepared a supper in His honor, either that evening or the next evening (Sabbath). The supper was most probably on Friday evening while Jesus and the twelve disciples observed Saturday as a day of rest. Then on the first day of the week, about mid-day, Jesus started walking toward Jerusalem.

We believe, from a composite study of all four gospel accounts of the Triumphal Entry, that those whom John says "went forth to meet him," were the multitudes of Passover pilgrims temporarily housed in Bethany and other suburban villages of Jerusalem. At the Passover festival there were some two and a half to three million pilgrims and it would be almost impossible to provide lodging for that many people within the walls of Jerusalem proper. And so, many would find lodging just outside the walls in the villages. All pilgrims must, of course, go to the temple, obtain a lamb or have their own approved and sacrificially slain, purify themselves and do all the other ceremonial necessities connected with the feast. There seems to have been a multitude of people accompanying Jesus as He proceeded toward Jerusalem and later a great throng that went out from the city to meet Him and they also accompanied Him into the city. We have followed this interpretation in our paraphrase (which is also a harmony of the four accounts).

Some of those leaving Bethany with Jesus were eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Lazarus. They were telling over and over among the multitude the marvelousness of this mighty miracle. The news of this miracle had spread even into the city and eventually was the cause for the exodus of a great crowd from the city to meet Him (v. 18). Enthusiasm swept through the throng following Him up the dusty road. It was a happy, festive time. The common people were well aware of the claims of the Man from Nazareth. He had called Himself the Son of God—He had talked much about His kingdom. And if this Jesus was able to raise a man from the tomb who had been dead four days, one could expect Him to make all His other claims assured. Who could resist His power? He had not said emphatically that He is going to Jerusalem to assume the throne, but some of the crowd had heard Him talking in parables about the kingdom (cf. Luke 19:11-28).

The emotional tension was contagious! The entire crowd was caught up in the exuberance of the hour. Some of the more daring climbed the lofty palms along the road and flung down branches which others took up, waving them in His train. Palm branches were waved for rejoicing in triumph and victory (cf. Lev. 23:40; Rev. 7:9). Conquering kings and princes were usually honored in this manner at their triumphal entry—evergreen branches and garlands of flowers were strewn along the parade route. Josephus says that Alexander and Agrippa were received at Jerusalem in this manner. Simon Maccabeus and later his brother, Judas, were both accorded this honor (cf. I Macc. 13:51; II Macc. 10:7).

"Hosanna!" they shouted. Hosanna means literally, "save now, we pray." It seems to have been used as a prayer or shout of praise for help from on high. This is the way it is used in Psalm 118:25. This was a part (Psa. 118) of the great Hallel (Psa. 113—118) which was sung at all the great festivals commemorating triumph and victory (especially at the Feast of Tabernacles). Psalm 118 is emphatically a Messianic Psalm! The shouts of the people are replete with quotations from this Psalm. There can be little doubt that this multitude is anticipating in Jesus the long-awaited Messiah who is about to set up His throne in Jerusalem in all the earthly splendor of David (cf. John 12:13b; Mark 11:9-10). In essence, this is what the crowd was shouting: "Hosanna, now is the long-awaited hour of salvation and prosperity about to be realized through establishment of the kingdom of our father David. God bless this One who is coming with the authority of Jehovah.

Far from stifling this charged situation, Jeuss gave approval and impetus to its continuation by riding the rest of the way into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. Although the ass was symbolic of peace (cf. Judg. 10:4; 12:14; II Sam. 17:23; 19:26; Isa. 1:3), whereas the horse is symbolic of war (cf. Ex. 15:1, 19, 21; Psalms 33:17; 76:6; 147:10; Prov. 21:31; Jer. 8:6; Rev. 6:4), still by the very fact that He entered the city riding emphasized more strongly His Messianic claims. Furthermore, God had predicted such an event hundreds of years before through His prophets (cf. Zech. 9:9 Isa. 62:11). Hendriksen points out that the entire section of Zechariah from which this particular prophecy in verse 15 is taken is all Messianic. Says Hendriksen, "The daughter of Zion is told that its king, its spiritual Messiah, the One who will open a fountain for sin and for uncleanness (Zech. 13:1), is coming. To emphasize the peaceful character of his approach and of his reign it is added that he is mounted upon the colt of an ass. He comes as the Prince of Peace, not as a war-lord. Hence, the daughter of Zion should stop being afraid."

However, a meek (cf. Matt. 21:5) and spiritual Messiah was the farthest idea from their minds. As Jesus rode up the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives a multitude of people from within the city had come out to meet this palm-waving, shouting procession. Thus with a multitude following Him and one in front of Him (cf. Matt. 21:9; Mark 11:9), Jesus proceeds toward Jerusalem surrounded by exuberant, festive thousands, hailing Him as their Messiah-Deliverer. The ovations of, "Hosanna! Blessed be He who comes in the name of the Lord! God bless the kingdom of our father David which is about to come to us! Hosanna in the highest!" increase in enthusiasm and volume until the hills of Judea echo them back. The people by the hundreds strip the cloaks from their backs and throw them in the dusty road for the colt upon which Jesus rides to walk. Many also ran and cut branches from nearby trees (olive and palm?) and spread them in the roadway ahead of Jesus.

As always, there were the Pharisees, spying on Jesus and His disciples (cf. Luke 19:37-40). This was more than they could bear and so they commanded Jesus to rebuke this multitude for what they undoubtedly termed blasphemous conduct. They demanded that He silence them. Jesus replied, "I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the very stones would cry out!" There is more here than simply a highly figurative way of saying, "It is impossible to restrain them." It is a stern rebuke by Jesus toward the Pharisees that they



do not realize the significance of what is being shouted. Jesus is saying, "I will not restrain them for they are but speaking that which God decrees must be spoken." In other words, His Messiahship was something the whole Divine creation should have been acclaiming.

As He rounded Olivet and came to the point where the road begins its descent into the Kedron valley, He paused. The splendor of the Holy City with the afternoon sun glistening on the temple and other buildings caused the divine heart to quicken with emotional upheaval. His whole body was wracked with sobbing (cf. Luke 19:41-44) and He wailed, "Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace!" The multitudes were now shouting "Hosanna," but they would soon be shouting "Crucify him." They saw in Him now a worldly ruler but after His arrest, humiliation and shame, they utterly despised Him. Their eyes were blinded by their worldly desires to the fact that God had visited them incarnate in Jesus. God had visited them with salvation and peace, but they knew it not! Soon they would cry, "His blood be upon us and upon our children."

Jesus, by divine prophetic wisdom, could see ahead some thirty-seven years to the day when their shouts of exuberant joy would be turned to cries of agony and wails of despair. Visions of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. passed vividly before His mind's-eye. Josephus records the blood-curdling horrors of this siege when more than a million Jews were cruelly slain. Men were disemboweled; so many Jews were crucified the Romans ran out of wood with which to make crosses; women ate the flesh of their own children, and while other, equally horrible, atrocities were occurring, the city of Jerusalem was utterly leveled until as secular historians record, "not one stone was left upon another." In fact, this prophecy of Christ's and others was literally fulfilled when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. It came upon them because they rejected God's Christ. As the prophet said, "Sow the wind, reap the whirlwind." The Jews have brought all the misery and judgment they have endured through the ages upon themselves because they rejected the "Prophet like unto Moses" (cf. Deut. 18:15-19; Acts 2:22-26). How shall *we* escape if *we* neglect so great a salvation?

The multitudes were so carried away with their own hopes and carnal desires that it seems they were oblivious to the wailing and sobbing of Jesus. It seems strange that only Luke records the lament while two of the apostles who were eyewitnesses did not recall it.

The shouting, rejoicing multitude proceeded on into the city. The whole city was stirred up (cf. Matt. 21:10-11). This caused frenzied consternation among the rulers. The Pharisees began to say to one another, "See? Ye prevail nothing; behold, the whole world has gone after him!" They had laid careful plans which probably called for subtle but quiet watching and waiting to spring a cleverly conceived trap. But now all these plans have been upset by the overwhelming popularity He has gained. It seemed as if the whole world had deserted the leadership of the Pharisees and had gone over to this reactionary. All they could do for the moment was wring their hands in helpless frustration. But they would soon find a solution. They would side with the hated Sadducees in their bold and unscrupulous schemes.

Jesus proceeded directly to the temple. There, with the air of one in authority, He looked around at the things going on in her courts. As the hour was already late (cf. Mark 11:11), He left the city with the twelve and returned to Bethany where, it is probable, He spent most of His nights during the last week.

The Triumphal Entry is extremely significant. It is the climax of His teaching ministry. He approved of the surging enthusiasm of the crowd and their testimony to His Messiahship. In fact, He deliberately mounted the colt of an ass to emphasize what the people were shouting. The time had now come to make clear to the nation His claim to be its King. Jesus knew such a demonstration would cause violent reactions by the rulers. Better, however, to put them on the defensive and show the world just how satanic they were. We are not sure just why Jesus chose this particular day and hour—we do know that it was not by chance, but all things were happening in strict conformity to the divine timetable.

We do know that it took the greatest courage this world has ever known for Him to thus enter the city. The alarm had already been sent all over the countryside for His arrest. The cautious thing to do would have been to enter the city secretly, but Jesus entered the city in such a way that every eye was focused upon Him. Barclay says, "It was an act of the most superlative courage, for it was the defiance of all that man could do; and it was an act of the most superlative love, for it was love's last appeal before the end."

Indeed it was an appeal of love! He wanted the crass, materialistic multitudes to accept Him as Lord, Saviour and King of their souls. He made symbolic gestures (riding on the colt) and prophetic utter-

ances (Luke 19:41-44) to guide the people toward this end, but their ears had been stopped. R. C. Foster suggests the following attributes of the kingdom suggested by the Triumphal Entry: (a) Humility; (b) Love; (c) Power; (d) Righteousness; (e) Peace; (f) Joy.

Hendriksen outlines the significance of the Triumphal Entry thusly: (1) By it Jesus definitely indicates that He will die voluntarily; (2) He forces the Sanhedrin to change its plans to conform to His and the Father's; (3) He sets Himself forth in no uncertain terms as the Messiah; (4) He also shows the multitudes, what kind of a Messiah He is. We submit here a brief sermon outline entitled, "Behold Thy King Cometh Unto Thee."

### *Introduction*

- I. Describe Events of the Preceding Year of Popularity.
  - A. Teaching spiritual aspects of the kingdom.
    1. Many refusing to accept this interpretation of the kingdom.
- II. Describe the Immediate Events Just before Triumphal Entry.
  - A. Raising Lazarus, events at Jericho.
  - B. Anointing by Mary.
- III. The Triumphal Entry will be by divine purpose—no accident.
  - A. Time had come to publicly declare His Messiahship.
  - B. Time had come to challenge openly the public conception of the kingdom.
  - C. Time had come to offer Himself to the people as their promised king.

### *Discussion*

- I. He Came to Claim Lordship Over Men's Hearts.
  - A. He sought to win men by teaching and meek, lowly example.
    1. He is very unlike the type of king men expect.
  - B. He came saying, "Give me your heart . . ."
    1. By preaching and showing the love of God.
    2. By teaching that the kingdom is within.
    3. Prophets taught this over and over.
  - C. But man's heart is most difficult thing to win.
    1. Man will surrender almost anything but his will, heart and soul.
    2. Jewish multitudes would have willingly given Jesus their bodies in a death-struggle, but not their hearts.
    3. When a man gives God his heart it means that he can no longer do as he pleases . . . man will let God be his God as long as he can tell God what he himself will or will not do!

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- II. He Came to Establish a Kingdom of Peace and Joy.
  - A. These multitudes were prepared to do much rejoicing when the Messiah should come.
    - 1. They were waiting for the Messiah to bring prosperity.
    - 2. For centuries they had endured enslavement and poverty eagerly waiting for the prophesied Messiah.
  - B. Jesus came as the King of Joy to bring joy in the Holy Spirit.
    - 1. Christianity is not just for the times of peace and plenty.
      - a. Rom. 14:17.
    - 2. Christianity is not just for times of freedom.
    - 3. There is joy in serving Jesus whatever be the economic or political status, because it is a joy not of this world!
  - C. Real joy is found by abiding in the Lord's word.
    - 1. Fruits of the Spirit bring joy (Gal. 5).
    - 2. Joy in bearing fruit (John 15:1-11).
    - 3. Joy in serving others.
- III. He Came as Saviour-Deliverer From Sin.
  - A. This was abundantly foretold by the prophets.
  - B. He came to accomplish salvation for all men.
    - 1. Not just a select few or a select nation.
  - C. His salvation was to be found in righteousness.
    - 1. Righteousness bestowed by grace and righteousness lived by obedience.
    - 2. Salvation is not from trials or tyrants as the Jews wanted.
    - 3. Salvation from sin, hell, judgment.
      - a. But men cannot see or feel these in this world and therefore they do not desire to be saved from them.
  - D. Indirectly, however, the nation could have been saved by receiving Him by faith (cf. Lk. 19:41-44).
    - 1. So today, godliness exalts a nation but sin brings its downfall.

### *Conclusion*

- I. He Came the First Time, Meek and Lowly.
  - A. Lowly in birth, life and death.
- II. But He is Coming a Second Time as King of Kings, Lord of Lords.
  - A. He comes with all the royal hosts of heaven at His side.
  - B. He descends with a shout and blast of the trumpet.
    - 1. With angels to render vengeance in flaming fire.
    - 2. HE IS NOT MEEK AND LOWLY WHEN HE COMES AGAIN!

C. He comes;

1. As the Householder demanding accounting of each stewardship;
2. As the King to punish those citizens who refused His reign;
3. As the Creator who will rejuvenate His creation by destroying the old and making a new for His newborn creatures.

III. And what is Required of a Man that He Let Jesus Become His King?

A. Be born again into the kingdom.

B. Behold Thy King Cometh Unto Thee—art thou ready to shout Hosanna, Blessed be the One who comes in the name of the Lord!

### *Quiz*

1. Where did the two-part crowd come from?
2. Name a least four factors which tended to build up enthusiasm among this multitude.
3. What does "Hosanna" mean?
4. What was Jesus' reaction to the behavior of the crowd?
5. Why did the Pharisees demand silence?
6. What event did Jesus prophecy in Luke 19:41-44? Was it fulfilled?
7. Name three significant things Jesus sought to accomplish by this demonstration.

### THE GREAT PARADOX — DEATH FOR LIFE

#### *Text 12:20-26*

20 Now there were certain Greeks among those that went up to worship at the feast:

21 these therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: Andrew cometh, and they tell Jesus.

23 And Jesus answereth them, saying, 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.

25 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.

### *Queries*

- a. Where did the Greeks come from?
- b. Why did they wish to see Jesus?
- c. Why did Jesus answer them thus?

### *Paraphrase*

Among those who had come up to worship at the feast of Pass-over were some Greeks, proselytes of the gate. These proselytes approached Philip (who was from one of the Greek-oriented cities of the Decapolis, Bethsaida in Galilee) with the request, Sir, we would like to see Jesus. Philip first consulted with Andrew and together they informed Jesus. It was then that Jesus answered, The hour has now come in which the Son of man is going to be glorified. Now I point out to you a positive principle of God's law—unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains a single, unfruitful grain of wheat; but if it dies, it germinates and yields much fruit. Again, another principle is that the man who loves this earthly life to the exclusion of spiritual life will ultimately lose his life for the earthly life is destined for dissolution. But to the contrary, the one who longs to be rid of this earthly life and loves the life to come will preserve it forever. If any man wants to serve Me, he must follow My way; and then where I am, safe in the bosom of the Father, there will my servant be also. For my Father will honor every man who serves Me.

### *Summary*

A group of Greek proselytes, intrigued with the teachings and spontaneous popularity of Jesus, seek Him with the purpose, probably, of learning His philosophy of life. Jesus answers them with the great paradox that He must die to provide Life and those who follow Him must die to self to appropriate that Life.

### *Comment*

No doubt Jesus returned to the temple courts each day of the last week from His lodging in Bethany. It would be the temple courts that would afford Him the largest, most sympathetic audiences. Furthermore, it would be here in the temple courts that He would be able to challenge the rulers to either surrender to His Messiahship or openly make their move against Him.

There seems to have been three courts in the temple of Jesus' day. The extreme outer court known as the "court of the Gentiles," the next court known as the "court of the women," and the court immediately surrounding the sanctuary known as the "court of Israel." Only Jewish males were allowed in the innermost court. The Gentiles were prohibited from all but the extreme outer court. Gentiles frequently became *proselytes* (converts to the monotheistic religion of the Jews). They are referred to in the Old Testament as "strangers" and in the New Testament usually as those who "fear God" (cf. Kings 8:41-43; Isa. 56:3-8; Mark 11:17; Acts 10:1, 22, 35; 13:16, 26, 43, 50; 17:4).

According to both Lenski and Hendriksen, the present participle in the Greek, *anabianonton* (the ones going up), means "those accustomed to go up" to the feast. This would mean the Greeks were worshippers of Jehovah according to the Hebrew religion. Out of despair and hopelessness brought on by their lifelong association with Greek philosophy and religion they were probably attracted to the Jewish religion because of its reasonableness and high moral standards. The idealism of Plato was cold, unfeeling and hopeless; the materialism of Aristotle was unreasonable and contrary to man's higher nature; the determinism and sensuality of Epicurus led to chaos and despair. The Hebrew religion of One True God, Creator, loving Father, the Personal Unmoved Mover of the universe offered a more reasonable explanation of the cosmos than their mythical, polytheistic religion. So they, like Cornelius (Acts 10), became "proselytes of the Gate."

They had come to the temple to worship during Passover week and had probably heard for themselves or through others of the astounding doctrines being taught by the Man of Galilee. Perhaps Jesus was in a section of the temple where they could not go, so they sent Philip to ask an audience with Him. Just why Philip went first and informed Andrew we are not sure. Perhaps Philip was not certain, as Hendriksen suggests, that Jesus would want to speak with them. To associate with Gentiles, especially in the temple precincts, would only incite the wrath of the Jews. So they both approach Jesus with the request.

No doubt these Greeks had been a part of the glorious entry of Jesus into Jerusalem the day before, either as spectators or participants. There were many questions on their mind. They wanted to know about the salvation this Galilean Rabbi promised — was it merely political and connected with His kingdom? When would His kingdom be established? What was His connection with the

God of the Hebrews—His concept of truth, of life?

They wondered about His doctrines of life and salvation and their seeking reminded Him vividly of the manner in which He was going to provide Life and Salvation for all mankind—the cross. It also reminded Him that the agonizing night was almost upon Him! The hour had come when the sinless Son should be glorified—glorified in humiliation. It was when the Son of man was lifted up on the cross that the glory and wisdom of God was made manifest; when the glory of God and His love would draw men unto Him. The cross and the empty tomb, foolishness to the Greeks and a stumbling-block to the Jews, became the wisdom and glory of God! Perhaps the title Jesus used of Himself here, "Son of man," is significant, perhaps not. It was a favorite title He applied to Himself. It has certain Messianic significance from the prophets (esp. Daniel and Ezekiel), but He may have used it to especially identify Himself as the Saviour of all mankind.

Be that as it may. He proceeds to give an answer to the great questions that were perplexing the Greeks. We do not know whether the Greeks were within hearing distance of Jesus' speech or whether He answered the two disciples and they in turn told the Greeks. However His answer was delivered to them, it was rather enigmatic and paradoxical. It was in the form Jesus used most—a figure of speech from nature! Although this form obscured the message for those who *did not want* to hear (cf. Matt. 13:10-17) it made His doctrines very lucid and easily comprehended by those who did want to hear.

The doctrine plainly taught by Jesus is the *substitutionary* atonement. However, it was not nearly so plain to them as it is to us on this side of the cross. Just as the grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die to bear fruit, so must the Son of God give Himself up in death to make atonement for man and thus bear fruit by calling many to be sons of God through faith and obedience. They sought an answer to the question of salvation—He answered that man would be saved by His death. They sought an answer to the question of His glorious reign as Messiah—He answered that the Messiah would be glorified by death! All of this was prophesied of the Messiah (cf. Isa. 53, esp. verse 10). If He should not die, there would be no atonement and no salvation.

Next, Jesus turns to the question of man's appropriation of this substitutionary atonement which He shall provide. Man must make the things of this world secondary to the pursuit of the other world. As one sage has so aptly put it, "Life is more than a living!" The



man who makes food, drink, shelter and the vanities of worldly fame his ultimate goal is bound to lose, for this flesh and the world and its works are destined for destruction. To the contrary, the man who longs to be rid of this earthly tabernacle (cf. II Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 1:20-24; II Pet. 1:12-15) and by faith looks forward with eager anticipation to the life to come—he will preserve (or “guard” as the Greek text has it) his real Life forever. The man who makes the getting of earthly life his ruling passion forgets God, forgets that the things of earth are temporary, forgets the judgment to come (cf. Luke 12:15-21). Compare other parallel Scriptures with this passage, such as Matthew 10:37-39; 16:24-26; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-26; 17:32-33.

Verse 26 is further amplification of the way man comes into the saving grace provided through the atonement. Those who desire to follow Jesus and become His disciples must, as Barnes puts it, “imitate me; do what I do, bear what I bear, and love what I love.” Men who desire to have the Life eternal which Jesus obtains for them must follow in His steps of self-renunciation and obedience to the will of God. Jesus died to bear fruit. His followers must die to self to bear fruit (cf. Gal. 2:20). When we crucify self we put to death that which must ultimately die and receive that Life which is Life abundantly. Thus the great paradox—to die is to live!

The concluding phrase of verse 26 is one of promise and comfort. Those who choose to follow Jesus, even to death, need not fear, for where He is there will His servant be. Jesus dwelt ever in the constant care of the Father and taught His disciples that they should expect the same care (cf. Matt. 6:19-34). The same promise was made in the great commission (cf. Matt. 28:19-20). Furthermore, the one who will leave all to serve Him will be rewarded by the Father. The word translated “honor” is the Greek word *timao* which is translated in other places, “honor,” “hire,” “value,” “reward” and other similar terms (cf. Matt. 27:6-9; Acts 4:34; Matt. 15:4 [children are to support their parents, not merely honor them with words]; I Tim. 5:17). When a disciple of Jesus leaves all to serve Him, the Father rewards with certain blessings in this life (cf. Luke 18:28-30) and the most precious reward of all—the crown of life (cf. Rev. 2:10; 3:21).

So in this brief discourse we have the gospel in miniature: (a) the glorification and substitutionary atonement of Jesus in His death; (b) the appropriation of that atonement by man through man’s crucifixion of self and following the word of Christ; (c) the safety and reward provided by the Father.

*Quiz*

1. Were the Gentiles ever known to have worshipped the God of the Hebrews? List some Scriptures to prove your answer. Were these Greeks such people?
2. Why did the Greeks seek Jesus?
3. Why did Philip not take them straightway to see Jesus?
4. Why would their request to see Him remind Jesus so vividly of His approaching crucifixion?
5. What is the teaching of Jesus in the metaphor of the grain of wheat?
6. How does the man who loves his life lose it? And the one who hates his life find it?
7. How does man appropriate the salvation provided by Jesus through His atonement?

## THE MAGNETIC CROSS

*Text 12-27-36*

27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour.

28 Father, glorify thy name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

29 The multitude therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it had thundered: others said, An angel hath spoken to him.

30 Jesus answered and said, This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes.

31 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.

33 But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die.

34 The multitude therefore answered him, We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

35 Jesus therefore said unto them, Yet a little while is the light among you. Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not: and he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have the light, believe on the light, that ye may become sons of light. These things spake Jesus, and he departed and hid himself from them.

*Queries*

- a. Why tell the people that the voice of God was for their sake?
- b. How will He draw men to Him by being lifted up?
- c. Why hide from the people?

*Paraphrase*

Now my own soul is deeply distraught at the present reminder of my impending death, and shall I say, Father (if it be possible) save me from this hour? But (not My will but Thine be done) for this very purpose I came unto this hour. Father, I pray only that your name may be glorified. There came a sonorous voice booming from heaven, saying, I have glorified My name in the past and will glorify it again through You. The multitude standing near heard it and some said it had thundered but others said, An angel has spoken to Him. Jesus said, That voice from heaven came for your sake, not for mine, that you might have faith in me by this supernatural manifestation. Now is the critical hour coming in the entire history of the world in which it will be judged for its rejection of the Son of God; but at the same time and through the same means will the prince of this world, the Adversary and Accuser, also be defeated and rendered powerless. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth upon a cross of death, will draw all men who allow themselves to be drawn unto myself. (This He said to show what sort of death He would die.)

The multitude understood his figure of speech and said, We have heard teaching from the Law that the Christ lives forever. Why do you say in contradiction to this that the Son of Man must be lifted up in death? Who is this Son of Man of whom you speak? Jesus answered them by saying, You have the Light with you only a little while longer. You should walk in the illumination of the Light while you have the Light in order that the darkness of unbelief may not overwhelm you and imprison you. The person that walks in the darkness of unbelief is blind to his spiritual destiny. While you have the Light with you, walk and believe in the Light in order that you may become sons of Light and know your eternal destiny. Jesus said all these things, and went away and hid Himself from the multitudes.

*Summary*

The Greeks seeking Jesus remind Him of His impending sacrificial death. His sinless soul shrinks from the coming sentence of sin He must bear, but He is surrendered to the will of the Father.

The Father strengthened Him by a manifestation to the multitude. Jesus warns that His death will be the critical point in all history for the world and that the Accuser's power will be broken. He is the Light of the world and men must believe in Him and walk in His light to know their eternal destiny.

### *Comment*

The Lord now becomes more explicit in showing the agitation of His own soul which has been caused by the seeking of the Greeks. Their request has reminded Him of the fast-approaching hour when the barrier between Jew and Gentile will be taken out of the way. He is reminded of the moment when all men will be provided a way of reconciliation with God—He is reminded that the very purpose for His coming, just a few hours away, is death for all sin!

There are two major interpretations of verse 27. One makes Jesus utter a prayer similar to His agonizing prayer of Gethsemane, i.e., "Father, save me from this hour (let this cup pass from me), but for this cause came I unto this hour (nevertheless, not my will but thine be done)." The other interpretation places a question mark after the phrase, ". . . what shall I say, Father save me from this hour? No, I will not say that because for this very purpose came I unto this hour."

Either interpretation, as far as we can see, is in perfect harmony with other accounts of the Lord's deep feelings concerning the hour of the cross. The matter of punctuation (whether declarative or interrogative) is academic anyway, since the original Greek contained no punctuation marks. Jesus was tempted from the very beginning of His ministry, by the devil himself, to forego the way of the cross (cf. Matt. 4:8-10). Again, when Peter refused to accept the doctrine of the cross for the Messiah (cf. Matt. 16:21-28) it was a temptation that disturbed the depths of the Master's soul. When Mary anointed His head and feet with perfume at Bethany it reminded Him of His imminent death (cf. Jn. 12:7). So His agitated soul again considers the cross and He prays, "Father, save me from this hour (if it be possible), but for this cause came I unto this hour (and so my prayer is not my will be done, but thine), Father, glorify thy name." It was the same prayer He would cry even more strongly in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39; Heb. 5:7-8). The shadow of the cross was upon Jesus from the day of His birth (cf. Luke 2:34-35). It was not the physical torture from which He shrank, but the curse of sin He took (II Cor. 5:21) which caused the Father to turn His face from the Son (Matt. 27:46).

There is one other interpretation of this 27th verse. It is based on the Greek preposition *ek* (out, from). It might be paraphrased thusly: "Father, bring me safely out of this conflict" (a prayer for glorification through resurrection from the death of the cross).

Whatever be the interpretation we cannot fail to see the unwavering determination of the Son to carry out the eternal purpose of the Father! (cf. Jn. 4:34; 5:30; Heb. 10:7, 9). The utmost concern of Jesus was to glorify the name of the Father. Throughout His earthly life He glorified the Father, but the culminating glorification was to be the death and resurrection of the Christ, and the establishment of the church. The death of Jesus was no accident. It came by the deliberate foreknowledge and counsel of God (cf. Acts 2:23; Rev. 13:8).

God's answer from heaven (v. 28) includes more than the approaching suffering. God repeatedly glorified His name through the miraculous ministry of Jesus (cf. Jn. 5:23; 11:40); but especially in the crises of Jesus' ministry: (a) The Baptism (Mt. 3:17; Lk. 3:21-22); (b) The Transfiguration (Mt. 17:5); (c) and here. The promise of future glorification includes the death, resurrection exaltation of Christ and the world-wide proclamation of the gospel of which Jesus was reminded when the Greeks sought Him in the temple.

God's voice speaking from heaven must have been a great booming, thunderous crash (cf. Exodus 19:16-20). Many of the multitude that stood near Jesus heard only the sonorous thunder-like sound and thought that it had thundered (cf. Acts 9:7; 22:9; 26:13). Others thought they heard articulate language, perhaps of an angel, being spoken to Jesus. John the Apostle heard the words and later the Holy Spirit caused John to remember and record them in his gospel.

The voice was not primarily for the benefit of Jesus (v. 30). But how could the voice benefit the people if they could not understand what was spoken? Evidently the sound was of such magnitude and extraordinary character that it showed itself to be a supernatural phenomena. Thus it was manifestly a supernatural response to the heavenly-directed prayer of Jesus. The voice was to engender faith in Jesus. To show that Jesus was in direct communication with heaven.

The word "judgment" in verse 31 is, in the Greek, *krisis* from which the English language gets "crisis" and "critical." The "hour"

of His death about which Jesus has been speaking and praying is to be *the critical hour of all the history of the world!* To quote Barnes, "Now is approaching the decisive scene, the eventful period—the crisis—when it shall be determined who shall rule this world." Satan had very effectually ruled the souls of men in ages past, especially among the Gentile nations. He ruled through ignorance, superstition, fleshly passion and fear (cf. Heb. 2:14-15). It is rather presumptuous for us to think we can understand the infinite relationships between the devil's domain and God's omnipotence. The devil is called here "prince of this world" and in other places "god of this world," etc. (cf. Luke 4:6; II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 6:12). But even in ages past, before Christ defeated him at the cross, the Scriptures indicate the devil's power was subject to the omnipotent restrictions of God (cf. Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6). Of one thing we may be certain—the death of Christ was the moment of "casting out" for the devil. Satan's power was broken when Jesus suffered the penalty and condemnation of sin for man. Satan is the Adversary (cf. Zech. 3:1; I Pet. 5:8)—the Accuser (Rev. 12:10). But the atoning blood of Christ which paid the debt for man's sins nullified the accusations of the Accuser and defeated the Adversary. The glorification of Jesus (His death, resurrection and exaltation) would be the supernatural power that would destroy the rule of fearful bondage the Accuser held over all mankind and would be the drawing power whereby the Son of God would set up His kingdom of love, righteousness, faith and hope.

Hendriksen has connected this "casting out" of the prince of this world (cf. John 12:31-32) with the "binding" of Satan for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3), in his commentary on Revelation entitled, "More Than Conquerors." We believe Hendriksen has the most reasonable, sensible and Scriptural approach to the book of Revelation yet made. Mr. Hendriksen's view is that before the birth of Christ, the nations (all except the Jews) were in bondage to the kingdom of darkness—of Satan (by their own choosing, of course). There was no way for them, of their own merit, to break the shackles of the Adversary. But God spoke through His prophet Isaiah (and others) that those who were enslaved to darkness would one day see a great light (Isa. 9:1-7; 42:1-7—cf. Lk. 1:79; 4:16-32). The Old Testament prophesied that the spiritual bondage of the Gentiles to the prince of this world would be broken—light would come. Jesus is born and demonstrates His power to cast out the demons (emissaries of Satan) (read carefully, Matt. 12:29—note the word

"bind"). The work of binding Satan begins with the ministry of Jesus (cf. Lk. 10:17:18; Col. 2:15 and our passage here in John, 12:20-32). This binding and casting out or falling of Satan is in some way associated with the first coming of Jesus. It is immediately connected with the work of preaching the gospel to all nations throughout the world. The binding of Satan begins with Christ's first coming and extends *nearly* to His second coming (at which time the devil will be loosed for a short season). But the devil is not bound completely and in every sense. A vicious dog securely bound to a tree with a long, heavy chain can still do great harm within the circle of his imprisonment if a person becomes flirtatious or unaware by indifference. Satan is definitely chained, but within the sphere in which he is permitted to exert his influence for evil he rages most furiously and woe to the man who wilfully or indifferently steps inside that circle! In other words, Hendriksen believes that the Scriptures substantiate best the "amillennial" view of Revelation, i.e., we are now living in the millenium (the thousand year reign of Christ). Whether our readers agree with this view or not, we are persuaded they would profit from reading Mr. Hendriksen's book, "More Than Conquerors," published by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Of one thing we are certain, because of the death and resurrection of Christ we are more than conquerors (cf. Rom. 8:31-39). The lifting up of the Redeemer has accomplished the victory over the Accuser—"If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."

It is said of Napoleon that toward the end of his life as he lived it out in exile, he pointed one day to a red dot on a map that marked the place called Waterloo and said to a friend, "Had it not been for that small red dot there on the map I would have conquered the world." Satan and his cohorts are pointing to the one red, blood-stained moment in history called Calvary and saying, "Had it not been for that moment, I would have conquered the world."

Some commentators believe that because the Greek preposition *ek* (out) is used again in verse 32, Jesus means to include not only His death on the cross in the "lifting up" but also His being lifted up out from the earth (i.e., His resurrection also). The drawing power of His resurrection certainly cannot be denied, and neither can it be denied that His resurrection is also a part of His glorification (along with His ascension and exaltation). But perhaps it is wiser to simply take John's clear statement (v. 33) that Jesus was

speaking of the manner of His forthcoming death, and let it go at that.

The multitude understood plainly what Jesus meant by being "lifted up." But they stumbled over the idea that the Son of Man should die. It is the ever recurrent stumbling-block of the Jews—they simply could not comprehend the Messiah dying a humiliating death. Perhaps they even thought the Son of Man was to remain an eternal, temporal ruler (cf. *Psa.* 110:4; *Isa.* 9:6-7; *Ezek.* 37:25; *Dan.* 7:14)—they had heard that the Christ would remain forever. For an excellent discussion of the title "Son of Man" and other Messianic titles, see "The Self-Disclosure of Jesus," by Vos. The title, Son of Man, is a term used by the prophets to speak of the Messiah. Jesus seems to have a special fondness for the term, perhaps because it indicated more clearly His divine-human nature.

The main point of verses 34-36 is the misconception by the multitudes of the nature of the Messiah and the explanation Jesus gives. The significance of the three verses hinges on the "therefore" of verse 35. What follows the "therefore" is Jesus' explanation of the spiritual nature of the Messiah.

The figure of light Jesus applies to Himself as He has done before. The contrast is between His doctrine concerning the Messianic kingdom which is truth and their ideas of the Kingdom which are false. The difference is between belief and unbelief. The person who walks in the darkness of unbelief is blind to his spiritual destiny. He does not know where he is from, why he is here nor where he is going. On the other hand, when men believe in the true Light and become sons of light they know their purpose and eternal destiny (cf. *Jn.* 1:4, 8:12; 9:5). These Jews were warned that they should make use of the privilege of having the Light while He is still with them. Days of darkness were soon to come upon the nation because it rejected its Saviour.

The situation was becoming critical. The events of the latter part of John 12 probably took place on Tuesday of the last week, the great day of questions and challenges—the day when Jesus eluded the traps of the Herodians, Pharisees and Sadducees; the day when He publicly denounced them as hypocrites (cf. *Matt.* 23) (cf. *Map* #7, page 263.). But there was an appointed hour for His death and He would not permit Himself to be put to death until the time and in the manner ordained by the Father. He did not hide because of cowardice; to the contrary, His complete mastery of the situation



shows His omnipotence! He would not use miraculous means to prevent His death when the natural would suffice and so He retired, probably to Bethany (cf. Lk. 21:37), and hid from His enemies.

### *Quiz*

1. What are three interpretations of verse 27?
2. Why did the prospect of the cross trouble the soul of Jesus?
3. How could Jesus say the voice out of heaven was for the benefit of the multitude when they did not hear the words?
4. To what extent was the prince of this world cast out at the death of Jesus?
5. What is the drawing power in the lifting up of Jesus?
6. Why would the people say they had heard the Christ abides forever?
7. What is the light Jesus speaks of in verses 35-36? Why does He answer their question about the Son of Man in this manner?

### A PERPETUAL PROPHECY

#### *Text 12:37-43*

37 But though he had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him:

38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

39 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.

41 These things said Isaiah, because he saw his glory; and he spake of him.

42 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.

### *Queries*

- a. Did the people believe in order that the prophecy of Isaiah might be fulfilled (v. 37)?
- b. Was it impossible for the people to believe (v. 39)?
- c. Did God deliberately blind their eyes (v. 40)?

### *Paraphrase*

Although Jesus had been doing and was continuing to do a great

multitude of miraculous signs in the presence of these Jews, they refused to believe in Him and the word of Isaiah the prophet was fulfilled, which he spoke, saying, Lord who has believed our message? And to whom has the saving power of the Lord been revealed and who has understood and accepted this salvation? And Isaiah, prophesying in another place, gives the reason they were unable to come to belief, saying, God has allowed their eyes to be blinded and their hearts hardened when they refused to see with their eyes and perceive with their hearts and turn in repentance and God was unable to heal their wickedness. These words Isaiah prophesied when he saw the Messianic glory, in the temple, and spoke of Him. Nevertheless many of the rulers believed in Him but they would not publicly confess their belief because they were afraid the Pharisees would have them excommunicated from the synagogue. These rulers desired the approval of men more than they desired the approval of God.

### Summary

Isaiah is quoted as a commentary on the unbelief manifested by the Jews who were beholding the miracles of Jesus. The half-hearted belief of many of the rulers is recorded by John.

### Comment

The writer of the fourth gospel, John, now makes a parenthetical statement and quotes Isaiah (53:1 and 6:9-10) who prophesied God's foreknowledge of the unbelief of the Jews in the Messiah. John is not saying, nor did Isaiah intend to prophesy, that God predestines that men will disbelieve whether they want to or not. That is, God created every man with a free will to exercise in the matter of belief or unbelief and God will not overrule that free will and force a man to believe or disbelieve. Here, in the prophecy of Isaiah, we stand once again in the presence of the omniscient foreknowledge of Almighty God and are made aware again of our infinite limitations.

In verse 37 the Greek participle *pepoiekotos* (had been doing) is in the perfect tense indicating that Jesus had been doing many signs and was continuing to do many signs in the presence of the Jews of Judea and Jerusalem. But the multitudes still refused to believe in Him in spite of the miraculous signs He gave them.

And so in verses 38-41 John quotes Isaiah, to show not only that God foreknew this unbelief, but the cause for an unbelief so stubborn that it resists even divine manifestations of miraculous signs. Isaiah's prophecy states that unbelief, as an effect, may also be the cause of further increase in unbelief.

Verse 38 is a quotation of Isaiah's cry unto the Lord (Isa. 53:1) of the almost total lack of belief in Jehovah's prophetic message of the coming Messianic gospel. Isaiah denounced the sins of the people in his day and prophesied the downfall and captivity of the nation. But by and large his message was a prophetic message of hope, strength and a glorious destiny for the faithful remnant through whom would come the Messiah and His kingdom. But in the midst of his prophetic message concerning the Servant of the Lord (the Messiah), Isaiah cried out, "Who has believed our message—who has been able to see and believe in the prophesied Saviour of the Lord?" In Isaiah's day only a very small remnant believed. Yes, even in spite of many miraculous signs to substantiate that Isaiah's message was from God, many multitudes refused to believe. So, when John beheld the unbelief of the Jews, in spite of the many miracles of Jesus, he claims the prophecy of Isaiah to have reached another stage in its fulfillment. Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled in his own day, in the days when Jesus was manifested in the flesh and when Jesus was being preached by the apostles (cf. Acts 28:26-28).

And now, after a statement of the *fact* of unbelief, John again quotes Isaiah to comment upon the effect of unbelief which in itself becomes in turn cause for increased unbelief.

First let us establish that men disbelieve because they will to do so, not because it is impossible for them to do otherwise. To declare that some are predestined to be irresistably saved and others predestined to be lost when the gospel of Christ commands, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," — and "If any man would come after me . . ." — and "Whosoever will may come . . ." is absurd, to say the least!

Man is a free moral agent. Even in Eden man was given freedom to choose to obey or disobey. God makes known His covenant requirements and then man responds. The holiness of God and His message of salvation is of such a character, coupled with the nature of the will with which God created man, that the more man believes and obeys God, the easier it becomes to believe and obey. And, on the other hand, the more a man rejects and disobeys God, the easier it also becomes to reject and disobey. So it depends upon the way man responds to the message of God as to the effect the message may have upon him (cf. Jn. 3:19-21; 7:17).

The Jews of Isaiah's day responded to his message of repentance, punishment by captivity, and a future kingdom of spiritual salvation by scoffing unbelief. They wilfully and deliberately rejected the demands of God (speaking through Isaiah) because they "took pleasure in unrighteousness." They haughtily resisted the promised spiritual blessings of God for their self-righteousness, military alliances, material possessions, and indulgent pleasures. Their unbelief comes first of all because they harden their own heart against Isaiah's message. Then, the message, because it shows evil for what it really is and demands purity, humility, obedience, etc., causes men to love it more or hate it more as their faith increases or their unbelief increases. Furthermore, man's will, the spiritual force within him for good or evil, is a force that increases in power the more it is exercised in either direction—for good or for evil.

So in the hardening of man's heart all factors (man's will, God's message, the deceitfulness of sin) are involved. It is advisable that Romans, chapter 1 and 2, and II Thessalonians, chapter 2, be read in connection with the truth that men and God both are involved in the hardening of man's heart (cf. also Ex. 7:3, 8:32, 9:12; Rom. 9:17; Heb. 3:8; Heb. 3:13-15; 4:7).

In verses 39-40, then, John is pointing out first the effect of the materialistic, self-righteous, self-indulgent rejection of Jesus upon the hearts of the Jews. They had blinded their own eyes and hardened their own heart against the message of a spiritual kingdom and a spiritual salvation which Jesus preached (just as their fathers did in Isaiah's day). And with the nature of God and His message such as it was, coupled with their continued willful rejection in the face of continued evidence and appeals we see that God gave them up to the lusts of their heart and hardened their hearts. God was unable to save them because they would not allow Him to save them (cf. Isa. 1:10-20; 59:1-2; Jn. 5:40-44).

Who is the "him" of verse 41? John evidently means to say that Isaiah saw Christ. Isaiah said of his own vision, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple" (Isa. 6:1). John, then, is affirming that Jesus is one and the same as the Jehovah God whom Isaiah saw in the temple. This passage is conclusive proof that the apostles did not hold Jesus to be a lesser deity, but proclaimed Him equal with the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

In passing it is also worthy of note concerning verse 38, that the conservative view that Isaiah is the author of Isa. 53 is correct. John, who knew more about the Old Testament than the higher critics, does not even say, "It is written in the book of Isaiah," but John says, "the word of Isaiah the prophet . . . which he spake . . ." For John, a Jew, who lived in the first century and had tremendous advantages over the higher critics of the twentieth century in availability of textual material, there was only one Isaiah and that Isaiah wrote the entire book of Isaiah. The liberal, modernistic critics may divide the book of Isaiah into two or three parts all they want, but for John there is only one book and Isaiah wrote it all.

Verses 42 and 43 (along with John 18:15-16) indicate to us that John was well known and trusted among the rulers and priests. Some may have confided to him that they believed Jesus but would not dare to publicly confess it for fear of excommunication. These verses show again that so much of unbelief is moral and not intellectual. These rulers could see (as did Nicodemus) that Jesus was sent from God Himself for One who did miracles must be a Teacher come from God. But because of cowardice and selfish love for the honor and approval of men, they rejected the approval of God and willfully seared over their own consciences! Westcott says, ". . . the conviction found no expression in life . . . such ineffective intellectual faith (so to speak) is really the climax of unbelief" (cf. Jn. 9).

Thus the prophecy Isaiah made by the Spirit of God concerning the hardening of unbelief became a "perpetual" prophecy. In all generations of mankind when men have hardened their hearts by willful rejection of the spiritual nature and demands of God's revelation they have fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah. It has always been true, further, that when men "refuse to have God in their knowledge," then "God gives them up to the lusts of their hearts . . . unto vile passions . . . unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting" (Rom. 1). And the more a man refuses, the more calloused and hardened his heart and the more vain he becomes in his reasoning and his senseless heart is darkened and, while professing to be wise, he becomes a fool!

In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (cf. Col. 2:3) and when man loves the honor and wisdom of men more than the honor and wisdom of God he turns his back on an everlasting, sumptuous, soul-satisfying feast in order to eat husks with the swine.

*Quiz*

1. Where are the two excerpts from the prophet Isaiah located in his book?
2. Why did Isaiah cry, "Who hath believed our report . . ." etc.?
3. Are men predestined to belief and unbelief? Prove your answer.
4. How does the gospel harden the heart of some men?
5. Name five Scripture references that have to do with "hardening the heart."
6. How many authors are there to the book of Isaiah?
7. Did the rulers mentioned in verse 42 believe in Jesus or disbelieve?

## THE IMPERATIVE WORDS

*Text 12:44-50*

44 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.

46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness.

47 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.

49 For I spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

50 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.

*Queries*

- a. Why is Jesus repeating in verses 44-46 what He has said so many times before?
- b. How shall we reconcile verses 47-48 with John 9:39?
- c. What is the "commandment" which the Father had given to Jesus to speak?

*Paraphrase*

And Jesus cried aloud and said, Every man who believes in me, is in reality believing in Him who sent me; and every man who beholds my words and works and nature is beholding Him who sent me. I have come into the world as the Light and whoever continues

to believe in me will not abide in the darkness of ignorance and sin. Yet, if anyone hear my teachings and does not keep them, I do not judge him now, for I have not come now to judge the world but to save the world. But every man who rejects me and will not accept my teachings certainly will be judged—and the very words that I have spoken will be his judge at the last day when I shall come again. For I have not spoken on my own authority: the Father sent me and He has given me a commandment and told me what I should teach and speak. And I know that His commandment is the only way to eternal life. Therefore, the doctrines which I speak are exactly the commandments which the Father has given me.

### *Summary*

This cry from the heart of Jesus is a last public appeal for men to believe in Him and obey His teachings before the judgment comes. It is almost a summary of His whole public teaching.

### *Comment*

It seems most probable that this cry of Jesus is directly related to the terrible unbelief just manifested by the Jews. It also is a fitting climax to His public ministry. What Jesus says in these last few verses are a concise summary to all that He taught publicly: (a) His equality with the Father; (b) His coming into the world to be the Light of the world; (c) His primary purpose in the first advent was to save the world; (d) rejection of His teaching brings eventual judgment; (e) His message was given to Him by the Father.

For comments on verse 44 see our comments on 7:16. For parallel teaching on these verses see our comments on John 5, 7 and 8. For comments on verse 47, see our comments on John 9:39. There is no contradiction here. Jesus did not come into the world the first time to judge the world, but to save the world. However, the mere fact that He came, inevitably involves judgment. Every man must answer the question, "What think ye of Christ?" Every man shows what he is by his attitude toward Jesus and, therefore, judges himself. Jesus is God's touchstone of judgment. By a man's attitude to Jesus a man himself stands revealed for what he truthfully is—by his reaction to Jesus and His teaching, man passes judgment on himself.

But whoever rejects the person of Christ and will not obey His teachings will be judged by the teachings of Christ on the last day. The word that Christ has preached and that which He inspired the apostles to teach (His atoning death, His oneness with the Father, that He is the only way of salvation), will be that standard by which

the world will be judged in the last day (cf. Rom. 2:16; II Thess. 1:8-9).

That which Jesus taught was exactly the scheme of redemption which God the Father had planned before the foundation of the world. The Son became the Great Apostle (One sent) of the commandment which was eternal life. But what is that commandment? "And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ . . ." (I John 3:23). So in this one great commandment is a summary of the whole public ministry of Jesus.

Thus the self-revelation of Christ to the Jews has now been concluded. The remainder of the gospel of John records Christ's revelation to His disciples in a special way. R. C. Foster summarizes in this manner:

- I. The Self-revelation of Christ to the World, 1:19—12:50
  - a. The Proclamation, 1:19—4:54
  - b. The Conflict, 5:1—12:50
- II. The Self-revelation of Christ to the Disciples, 13:1—21:23
  - a. The Last Ministry of Love, ch. 13-17
  - b. The Victory Through Death and Resurrection, ch. 18-20
  - c. Epilogue, 21

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

### *Quiz*

1. What apparently made Jesus cry out this closing discourse?
2. Make a list of the things which summarize the ministry of Jesus in these verses.
3. How did Jesus' coming judge men?
4. What will the standard of judgment be for the world in the last day?
5. What is the great commandment which the Father gave to the Son?

## EXPOSITORY SERMON NO. TWELVE

### THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

John 12:1-50

#### *Introduction*

- I. DAVID WROTE OF HIS TRUST IN THE GREAT SHEPHERD
  - A. Psalm 23



## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- B. The Great Shepherd would lead to green pastures and still waters.
- C. He would also lead through the valley of the shadow of death.
- D. Read again John 10 "he leads them . . ." "they follow him . . ."

### II. THE GREAT SHEPHERD HIMSELF WALKED THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

- A. This 12th chapter of John is charged with the darkness of those shadows.
- B. Every circumstance, every word deepens the shadow of the cross falling across His path.
- C. Everywhere He turned He was reminded vividly of His approaching suffering for sin.
- D. Even in the darkness of these shadows, however, our Lord shines forth in the brightness of Divine Light by His faith, His love and His teaching of salvation.

### *Discussion*

#### I. ANOINTING FOR BURIAL, 12:1-11

(cf. also Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9)

- A. Mary's act of love and devotion reminded Jesus of His impending death and burial.
  - 1. Cost of the nard was approximately one year's wages.
  - 2. The humiliation involved for Mary shows her devotion.
  - 3. Her act also shows a deep comprehension by faith of Christ's continued teaching concerning the fact that He must die.
    - a. Her faith is greater than even the disciples, for they comprehended it not.
    - b. Her faith caused her to throw social propriety to the wind, it was an unreserved faith.
- B. The carping of Judas and the disciples probably reminded Him more of the cross!
  - 1. The grossness of their insensitiveness and callousness contrasted with Mary's comprehension and love burdened the heart of Jesus.
  - 2. The human side of Jesus cried out for companionship and sympathy in the valley of the shadow, but His closest friends were interested only in money matters.
    - a. Later, when they would again be arguing among themselves about rank and position, He would try to teach them that greatness was in serving others (Luke 22:24-27; Jn. 13).

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- C. Immaturity, gross materialism, apostasy, failure to grow in the faith—all of this in the church today casts us right alongside these insensitive, callous disciples!
1. The shadow of the cross is cast across His path again.
    - a. Read Hebrews 5:11—6:8.
  2. The church and its members have, in many ways, crucified the Son of God afresh and have put Him to open shame.
  3. LET EACH CHRISTIAN, WHO PROFESSES FAITH IN CHRIST, SHOW IT BY SUCH UNRESERVED LOVE AND DEVOTION TO THE LORD AS MARY EXEMPLIFIED . . . LET US LEAVE A MEMORIAL SUCH AS SHE LEFT!
- II. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY, 12:12-19 (cf. also Mt. 21:1-11; Mk. 11:1-11; Lk. 19:29-44).
- A. In this incident, the shadow of the cross fell upon His path through the fulfilling of prophecy.
1. The people were singing Hosannas in jubilation expecting Him, on the basis of Lazarus' resurrection, to become their long-awaited militant Messiah.
  2. But Jesus knew that He was to come as their meek, humiliated, crucified Messiah.
    - a. Even the disciples misunderstood the prophetic word (cf. vs. 14-16).
  3. What prophecies would flash across the mind of Jesus as He beheld the superficial, misguided shouts of the multitudes?
    - a. Surely Isa. 49, 50, 51, 52, 53.
    - b. And Zech. 12:10-11; 13:7.
    - c. And Psalm 22.
    - d. Perhaps even the words of Simeon, Luke 2:33-35.
- B. Another shadow fell upon His heart in connection with the unbelief of the multitudes in the spiritual nature of His coming and His kingdom.
1. The prophetic vision He had concerning the future destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Lk. 22:41-44).
  2. This very multitude of festive, shouting Jews would, in a few years, suffer unheard of tragedy—this *because*
    - a. They knew not the things that make for peace;
    - b. They knew not the day of their visitation; "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not" (Jn. 1:11).

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- (1) This verse portrays in general the whole public ministry of Jesus to the Jews.
  - (2) This chapter (12) closes His public ministry on the same note of rejection.
- C. What is the lesson for us today?
1. Jesus Christ must be Lord of all or He is not Lord at all!
    - a. He must rule our thoughts, emotions, desires, actions, indeed our ALL, or we dare not acclaim Him as Lord at all (cf. Matt. 7:21-23; Lk. 6:46-49).
  2. We must surrender to and follow a Lord and a kingdom which is ridiculed and scoffed at by the world (I Cor. 1; Phil. 2:5-11).

### III. THE SEEKING OF THE GREEKS, 12:20-36

- A. These Greeks, having reached the depths of despair in the philosophies of ancient Greece, had probably become proselytes to the Jewish religion (see our comments on 12:20-21).
1. Anyone acquainted in the least with the philosophies of men recognize them as simply the cries of despair and hopelessness of all men in a more erudite language.
  2. Philosophy does not even offer to the world a way of living here that appeals to man's higher nature—let alone offering any answers to the imperative questions concerning the purpose of life, death, eternity.
  3. Uppermost in the minds of the Greeks here would be to question Jesus about His teachings (which perhaps they had themselves heard at one time) concerning eternal life, heaven, hell, etc.
- B. Their seeking reminded Him of His great task (also prophesied) to accomplish the salvation of the Gentiles as well as the Jews (cf. Rom. 1:16-17).
1. Their seeking reminded Him of the manner in which the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile would be broken down (cf. Eph. 2:11-22; Col. 2:8-15).
  2. They reminded Him of the fact that unless He was put to death, and buried, He could not come forth (in His resurrection) and bring fruit (Jn. 12:24).
    - a. By His death, burial and resurrection (a historical fact) He would demonstrate that in Him was TRUTH, thus giving many thousands of Gentiles in the darkness of philosophical ignorance and uncertainty LIFE.

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

3. Jesus also used this incident to teach that all who will follow Him must be where the Master is (Jn. 12:25-26):
  - a. Give up self, crucify self.
  - b. Rise to walk in a new life.
- C. The application for us today should be apparent.
  1. It is the power of the Gospel which saves men.
    - a. It is preaching the cross and resurrection which draws men to Christ (cf. 12:32).
  2. This is the doctrine we must obey from the heart (cf. Rom. 6:17); we must die to sin and rise in a new life (cf. Rom. 6:1-14; Jn. 12:25-26).

### *Conclusion*

- I. HOW CAN YOU CONTINUE TO REJECT HIM WHO HAS DEMONSTRATED BY HIS MIGHTY WORKS (Birth, Life of Miracles, Death, Resurrection), HIS DEITY?
  - A. Do not harden your heart as the Jews did!
    1. The more you reject, the harder becomes your heart (see our comments on 12:37-43).
    2. Do not seek the honor of men above the honor of God.
    3. Harden not your heart (cf. Heb. 3 and 4).
  - B. Remember, God leaves it entirely up to you—it is your choice.
    1. But if you wish to go on believing a lie . . . having pleasure in disobedience, God will allow you to continue to harden your heart against Him.
    2. His Gospel message either softens or hardens.
- II. HOW CAN YOU THINK THAT BECAUSE THERE IS NO JUDGMENT TODAY THERE WILL BE NONE TOMORROW?
  - A. Jesus came first to save the world.
  - B. But He is coming again to judge the world.
  - C. The whole basis of judgment will not be the opinions or doctrines of men, but the Word of God.
    1. See our comments on 12:47-49.
    2. Obedience to the Gospel of Christ is imperative (II Thess. 1:8-9).
- III. JESUS COMES WITH THE MESSAGE OF THE FATHER . . . THE MESSAGE OF HEAVEN
  - A. The one great commandment sent from the very throne of God is:

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

1. "And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name (authority) of His Son Jesus Christ . . ." (I Jn. 3:23).
  2. BELIEF, TRUE, OBEDIENT, TRUSTING, LOVING WORSHIPPING BELIEF IN JESUS CHRIST IS ETERNAL LIFE (Jn. 12:49-50).
- B. Jesus speaks this on the authority of God the Creator and Father (cf. Jn. 14:1-11).

### EXAMINATION, CHAPTERS 11 and 12

#### *Identify These*

1. Mary, Martha, Lazarus
2. Simon
3. The Greeks
4. Bethany
5. Perea
6. Caiaphas

#### *Who Said This, and Why?*

1. "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick."
2. "Lazarus is dead."
3. "Let us also go, that we may die with him."
4. "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."
5. "I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God,"
6. ". . . it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people,"
7. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings, and given to the poor?"
8. "Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel."
9. "Sir, we would see Jesus."
10. "Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

#### *Fill In The Blanks*

1. "Jesus said unto her, I am the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_: he that believeth on me, though he \_\_\_\_\_, yet shall he \_\_\_\_\_";
2. "And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, \_\_\_\_\_."
3. "Suffer her to keep it against the \_\_\_\_\_ of my \_\_\_\_\_."

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

4. "Except a \_\_\_\_\_ of wheat \_\_\_\_\_ into the earth and \_\_\_\_\_, it \_\_\_\_\_ by itself alone; but if it die, it \_\_\_\_\_ much \_\_\_\_\_."
5. "And I, \_\_\_\_\_ from the earth, will \_\_\_\_\_ all men unto myself."

### *Interpret These Enigmatic Sayings*

1. "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live."
2. "He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."
3. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour."
4. "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."
5. "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. 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."

### *Questions For Thought*

1. How did the delay of Jesus to come to Bethany, which allowed Lazarus to die, work to the glory of God?
2. Why did Jesus weep at the tomb of Lazarus?
3. Was there any God-given inspiration in the declaration made by Caiaphas? (11:47-53)
4. What did Jesus mean by, ". . . the poor ye have always with you; but me ye have not always."?
5. How would the death of Christ bring about the "judgment of this world," and the "casting out of the prince of this world."?

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### CHAPTER THIRTEEN

We come now, in John's Gospel, to the beginning of the Lord's private ministry to the chosen Twelve. Chapter twelve ends the disclosure of the Son of God by Himself to the Jewish people and the record of their rejection of Him. Large portions of the Synoptic gospels are taken up with discourses of Jesus during the last week of His ministry which are not recorded in John's gospel. Some of the great teachings of Jesus that take place chronologically between chapters twelve (Triumphal Entry) and thirteen (The Last Supper) of the Fourth gospel *not* recorded in therein are: (cf. Map #7, p 263 ).

- a. Great questions answered by Jesus, Matt. 21 and 22; Mk. 11 and 12; Luke 20.
- b. Denunciation of Scribes and Pharisees, Matt. 23; Mk. 12; Lk. 20.
- c. Predictions of destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, Matt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21.
- d. Discourse on the Judgment, Matt. 25.
- e. Judas' plot to betray Jesus, Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22.
- f. Preparation for the Passover, Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22.

Now, beginning with chapter thirteen we have recorded for us the Word manifested, with a few exceptions, to the disciples privately and their eventual acceptance of Him (cf. our outline, page 19, Vol. I). Especially does John record (chap. 13 through 17) the more intimate, personal and private self-disclosure of Jesus to His disciples. Chapter thirteen is unique in this for no other gospel writer records these parting instructions of Jesus. Thus John 13 is vital in its complementary and explicatory connection to the synoptic accounts of the Last Supper.

John 13:35 is a condensation of the theme of the entire thirteenth chapter. Chapter thirteen is a very pertinent lesson on humility and service growing out of a bickering argument concerning places of honor and station in the anticipated kingdom of the Messiah (cf. Luke 22:24-30). It is also the beginning of a period of poignant instruction by the Master who must soon leave His disciples. Chapters 13 through 17 are the parting words of comfort and strength of the Incarnate Father to His soon-to-be bereaved children.

It is Jesus' desire to reveal unto them privately and graphically the character of the Son of God and His kingdom by example and precept.

We now take up a new division in our outline of the Fourth Gospel where the record naturally divides itself:

### III The Word Manifested to The Disciples and Their Acceptance of Him, 13:1—20:31

#### A. Private Instructions and Encouragements, 13:1—17:26

1. Lesson on Humility and Service, 13:1-38
  - a. The Act of Loving Service, 13:1-11
  - b. The Lesson on Loving Service, 13:12-20
  - c. The Selfish Servant of Sin, 13:21-30
  - d. The Sacrificing Servant of Christ, 13:31-38

### THE ACT OF LOVING SERVICE

#### *Text 13:1-11*

1 Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,

3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God, 4 riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself.

5 Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 So he cometh to Simon Peter. He saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew him that should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

#### *Queries*

- a. Does verse 1 indicate that this foot-washing incident was at another supper, separate from the Passover?
- b. Why Peter's change of attitude as in verses 8 and 9?
- c. What does the figure of speech in verse 10 mean?



*Paraphrase*

Even before the Passover Jesus was omnisciently aware that He must depart this world and His disciples and return unto the Father. And now at the Passover, more vividly aware than ever of the appointed time for His departure, and having loved His disciples fervently throughout His earthly ministry, He knew that the proper time had come to reveal to them His love to the uttermost. And during the paschal supper Jesus, fully aware that Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, had previously succumbed to the devil's temptations and had decided to betray Him—and in full consciousness of His deity and His divine prerogatives—arose from His couch at the supper table and, taking off His outer garments, He picked up a towel and put it around His waist. Then He poured water into the wash basin and began to perform the customary task of a servant by washing the disciples' feet and drying them with the towel around His waist.

Around the table from couch to couch Jesus performed this service until He came to Simon Peter. In shocked astonishment Simon Peter said, Lord, are you going to wash my feet? Jesus answered, Simon, you do not understand the significance of what I am doing now but later on you will understand plainly. But Peter objected strenuously saying, Lord, you must never lower yourself to wash my feet! Jesus answered, If you cannot surrender to my way of humility, which I am here exemplifying, you can have no share in my kingdom. Then Simon Peter said to him, Lord, if to share in your kingdom I must be washed by you, then wash not only my feet but my hands and head also. Jesus said to him, Once a person has been cleansed and has become my follower he is cleansed completely and need not repeat the initial cleansing but must sanctify himself and grow in grace by daily repentance and humble acts of love. And you have all become initially true followers of mine but need to grow in grace and humble acts of love and service to one another—all of you except one are true disciples. Jesus knew from the first that Judas would betray Him and to show His omniscience to His disciples who would later remember this prediction, He said therefore, You are not all clean.

*Summary*

Jesus teaches the proud and ambitious disciples a lesson on love, humility and true discipleship by performing a humble deed of love.

*Comment*

How expressive the words of this first verse of the thirteenth chapter. Long before this Passover Jesus was fully aware of the terrible suffering He must endure (Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23; Jn. 5:18, etc.)

and yet His main concern was not for self but for His beloved disciples. All during the three years as the shadow of the cross grew more and more ominous His first care was teaching, encouraging, providing for and serving His disciples. They understood Him not and comforted Him not in His trials, yet He loved always. And now, having come to the crucial hour, more vividly aware than ever of His "exodus" He is not found selfishly engrossed with His own sorrows, but we find Him revealing His love to them to the uttermost. A. B. Bruce says, in *The Training of The Twelve*, "Jesus loved His disciples to the end, though they did not all so love Him. One of them at this very moment entertained the diabolic purpose of betraying his Lord. Yet that Lord loved even him, condescending to wash even his feet; so endeavoring, if possible, to overcome his evil with good."

Ever since the second century it has been disputed as to whether the Passover and Last Supper as recorded in the Synoptics (Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22) and the Supper in John 13 are the same or not. That they are one and the same should be plain when a comparison of the two accounts is made. Both John and the Synoptics record incidents which are identical. Compare them! Compare John 13:16-17 with Luke 22:14-15, 24-27. Compare John 13:18, 21-30 with Mark 14:17-21; Matt. 26:20-25. Compare John 13:38 with Matt. 26:34; Mark 14:30; Luke 22:34. As Hendriksen says, "Must we, indeed, assume that these three identical incidents occurred in connection with two different meals on two different evenings?" McGarvey, in his *Fourfold Gospel*, says significantly, "It accords with the supplementary nature of John's Gospel to thus mention it as a meal thoroughly familiar to his readers."

This being the same Passover supper as that of the Synoptics we may determine the precise evening of the week in which Jesus washed the disciples' feet. The disciples had been instructed by Jesus to prepare for the Passover at the regulated time and in the usual manner (cf. Matt. 26:17-21ff; Mark 14:12-16). The regulated time for eating the Passover that year very evidently fell on Thursday evening for Mark, Luke and John all three state unequivocally that Jesus was crucified on *Preparation Day*, Friday, "the day before the sabbath," (cf. Matt. 26:17-21; Mark 14:12-16). We quote here from an essay by Seth Wilson on John 13, entitled, "*An Example in Humility*": "The Sabbath mentioned (Mk. 15:42) must have been the regular Saturday sabbath, too; for the special day of holy convocation in Passover week (if it ever was called a sabbath) was the *first* day of unleavened bread (Ex. 12:16; Lev. 23:6,7) and would have

been the day on which Jesus was crucified or even the day before, according to Mark 14:12, since Jesus was alive and free on the day on which the passover lamb was killed and the leaven was put out of the houses of Israel. The next day He was killed. The next day was 'the sabbath.' 'And when the sabbath was past' was the first day of the week. The accounts do not say that two sabbaths passed before the first day of the week (read Lk. 23:54 through 24:1; Mk. 15:42 through 16:2)." For further discussion of this problem see the essay entitled, "*Was Jesus Crucified on Friday?*" by Seth Wilson, Special Study in the last pages of this volume.

Judas had probably made final arrangements with the authorities to betray Jesus on Wednesday. Now on Thursday night this same Judas is back with the other disciples hypocritically going through the rituals of the greatest feast of them all. Does he think Jesus is unaware of his evil plot and his hypocrisy? Never! He knew it all along (cf. Jn. 6:71; 12:4-6).

Where do we place the incident of feet-washing within the chronology of the events at the Last Supper? Most commentators and authors of harmonies place John 13:1-30 just after the dispute of the disciples (Luke 22:24-30) and just before the disclosure of Jesus concerning the betrayer among the Twelve (Matt. 26:21-25), assuming that Luke's account of this disclosure is chronologically out of sequence. Thus the chronology of events transpiring at the Last Supper seem to be as follows:

- a. Preparations for the Passover and coming into the Upper Room. (Matt. 26:17-19; Mk. 14:12-16; Lk. 22:7-13)
- b. Opening of the Passover supper by Jesus (Lk. 22:15-18)
- c. Dispute among the disciples (Lk. 22:24-30)
- d. Feet Washing and lessons in greatness (Jn. 13:1-30)
- e. The Betrayer revealed and he goes out (Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22; Jn. 13)
- f. Institution of the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22)
- g. The New Commandment Given (Jn. 13:33-38)
- h. Peter's denial and denial of all disciples foretold (Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22)

The opening remarks of Jesus concerning the fulfillment in the "kingdom of God" (Lk. 22:14-15) no doubt set the imaginations of the disciples to dreaming grandiose dreams again of thrones and positions. As they began to envision the kingdom and the positions available they began to strive with one another for the places of honor and position at this supper table. We quote again from Seth Wilson's essay "An Example of Humility": "It must have grieved Him and

made Him feel lonely in this selfish world to know that they were quarreling with one another about their relative ranks and places of honor, in the very night when He was descending to the very depths of self-abnegation, claiming nothing of His own in order to bear the cross of shame to a criminal's death for the sake of those who so wrongly thought they had rights and rank. He was fully conscious of His own divine power and majestic rights by which He could have abased and humbled them into abject and cringing fear; but He loved them. He sought to teach them, not coerce them. He wanted to draw them to Him, not drive them from Him.

"So He arose from the supper, prepared Himself as a servant, and washed their feet. But why did He do that? Not only for a lesson. It was a genuine act of loving service, an act of humble willingness to do the most lowly service for His friends, an act of practical courtesy which they had forgotten or avoided in their preoccupation with selfish pride.

"In the land of Palestine the rough and dusty roads, the absence of stockings, the use of sandals, the habit of walking barefoot, the much greater amount of walking than we do, all make it necessary to give the feet frequent washings. (Read Gen. 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; 43:24; Judg. 19:21; I Sam. 25:41; II Sam. 11:8.) These passages show that washing the feet was the first act on entering a tent or a house after a journey. This is regularly done when entering a house, especially the better upper rooms which are usually carpeted. The shoes were never worn in the house. It was the common dictate of good manners to provide either water for the guests to wash their own feet, or a slave to do it. It became almost synonymous with hospitality (I Tim. 5:10). Jesus rebuked a Pharisee, in whose house He was entertained, for not providing water for His feet (Lk. 7:44). From an early date, however, it was considered one of the lowest tasks of servants (I Sam. 25:41), probably because it was done by the youngest and least-trained servants, or because of the idea of defilement connected with the foot. Therefore, if rendered voluntarily, it was a symbol of complete devotion. The undoing of the latchet, or thongs, of the sandals (Mk. 1:7; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:27) seems to refer to the same menial duty."

Whether Jesus began His loving act of service with Simon Peter or, having begun with one of the other disciples, came to him later we cannot tell for certain. The picture John paints seems to indicate to us that Jesus had already washed the feet of some who were so busy discussing rank and preoccupied with selfish dreams of glory they were oblivious to their Master's self-humiliation. But when Jesus

came to Peter, He found one disciple with at least enough respect and reverence to object. The Lord's first answer to Peter (v. 7) is mild, but firm, assuring the respectful Peter that what He was doing was fitting and although Peter did not understand now, he was to submit to the act and later he would understand.

But Peter (v. 8) objected more strenuously with even the note of dictating in his voice as to what the Master could or could not do. We can almost see Peter hastily drawing his feet back from the Master's touch.

Simon Peter's intentions were no doubt motivated by a sense of respect and reverence which is good, except when it leads one to object to the Lord's will and to refuse to obey Him. This was the dangerous frame of mind possessing Peter here. Let us quote here from *The Training of the Twelve*, by A. B. Bruce, page 346: "Observe, then, what was involved in the attitude assumed by Peter. He virtually took his stand on these two positions: that he would admit of nothing which seemed inconsistent with the personal dignity of his Lord, and that he would adopt as his rule of conduct his own judgment in preference to Christ's will . . . In other words, the ground taken up by this disciple compromised the whole sum and substance of Christianity, the former principle sweeping away Christ's whole state and experience of humiliation, and the latter not less certainly sapping the foundation of Christ's lordship." That is, Peter was objecting to the very basic tenet of Christ's ministry—humiliation—voluntary participation in the experiences of the flesh that He might conquer and redeem. In so refusing the Lord, Peter was in the dangerous position of disobeying Him and distrusting His demands because he did not understand and therefore letting his own fallible reason be his guide when Jesus had expressed His will in the matter. And, are not all of His disciples of all ages guilty at one time or another of the same misguided respect and reverence?

The Lord's answer (v. 8) was more explicit and stern. For if Peter would not surrender to the way of humility which the Master came to exemplify and teach—if Peter could not in whole-hearted faith obey his Master, even when he could not understand—Peter could have no part with the Master in His kingdom of which Peter and the others so fondly dreamed.

As A. B. Bruce points out in *Training of the Twelve*, if God, in Christ, may not humble Himself, He can have no part with us. He is relegated to the "Wholly Other" as our contemporary existential neo-orthodox theologians would confine Him. A great impassable gulf

separates the Divine Being from His creatures. His creatures may reach Him, perhaps, through the existential "leap" after they have reached the "crises." But as for God, He may peer wistfully from His prison-house of the realm of the Absolute and contemplate the sorrowful estate of man, but He cannot come near them, and reach forth a helping hand.

"But if the Son of God may have no part with us, then, in the second place, we can have no part with Him. We cannot share His fellowship with the Father, if He come not forth to declare Him. . . A God whose majesty, like an iron gate, kept Him aloof from sinners, could not even effectively forgive them. Still less could He sanctify them. Love alone has sanctifying virtue, and what room is there for lore in a Being who cannot humble Himself to be a servant?" (A. B. Bruce, *ibid*).

The epistle to the Hebrews is the most extensive of all the books of Holy Scripture dealing with the necessity of Christ's participation in humanity in order that He might save, sanctify and intercede for man. If by grace God does not become incarnate in flesh so as to win the victory, how will man ever be restored to fellowship with a perfectly righteous and just Judge? By grace are we saved, and that through faith in a humiliated, yet triumphant Lord!

And if our carnal minds cause us to judge honor and dignity as the world judges and we reject the way of humility and service which our God chose and bids us follow—**WE SHALL HAVE NO PART WITH HIM!**

The stern warning of Jesus shook the impulsive Peter to the very innermost feelings of his heart. There is much to commend in Peter. Who can doubt his willingness to follow the Lord (Jn. 6:68-69)? Who can doubt his courage (Matt. 26:35; Jn. 18:10-11)? Peter believed in Jesus and he wanted earnestly to follow Him, to death if necessary, to establish the Messianic kingdom. But Peter's concept of Messianic kingdom was carnal—earthly. We believe that it was disappointment with Jesus in not fulfilling his earthly concept of the Messianic kingdom that caused Peter and the others to "be offended" in Jesus at the hour of crucifixion—not their cowardice. They would have fought at a mere suggestion to do so by Jesus (Jn. 18:36).

So when Jesus suggested that unless Peter allow himself to be washed he could not participate with Him in His kingdom, the thought of being excluded caused him to jump to the opposite extreme of overdone compliance. Lord, wash me all over, if that be one of the requirements for having part in your kingdom, was Peter's reply (v. 9).

The reply of Jesus in verse 10 must be interpreted in harmony with all that has preceded in this incident and, especially, in harmony with verse 11. We have attempted such an interpretation in our paraphrase of this text. What Jesus is trying to get the impetuous Peter to see is that once a man has become a devoted and faithful follower of His by an initial cleansing and sanctifying call (whatever that initial cleansing process may be) the new disciple must then grow in his spiritual comprehension of Christ's will and work. The disciples (all except one who was a hypocrite) had in all sincerity and honest desire answered His call to discipleship. They had all, no doubt, been baptized with John's baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. Being therefore of honest hearts and having by obedience to the command of God through John the Baptist been initially cleansed, they needed not to go back to first principles, but they definitely needed to be purified of their carnal conception of the way in which the Messiah was to accomplish His purpose and their earthly idea of the Messianic kingdom. They needed to grow in humility and love for one another even to the extent that they would willingly perform the lowliest services for one another. Every disciple of Christ must see the need for daily "washing of the feet" (purifying, sanctification). It is a daily task, this cleansing, by renewing the mind (Rom. 12:1-2; II Cor. 4:16; Col. 3:1-17).

But they were not all honest and sincere. One was a thief and a hypocrite—Judas. Jesus knew all along who the betrayer was (cf. Jn. 6:70-71). In order to indicate to the disciples who would later recall His omniscience in this matter and in order that they might record for all time that He was not taken unawares by Judas, but is in complete control of the situation and in order to give the traitor an opportunity to repent, Jesus said, "You are not all clean." But Judas had allowed the devil to take possession of his heart and was greedily plotting to betray the One who had in love and humility even washed the betrayer's feet and tried to bring him to repentance.

### *Quiz*

1. What great division within the ministry of Jesus appears at Chapter 13?
2. Why are the actions of Jesus at this supper so full of pathos?
3. Prove that the supper of John 13 is the same as the Last Supper of the Synoptics. Upon which day of the week was the supper held?
4. Name, in order, the events transpiring at the Last Supper.
5. What two things are indicated concerning Peter in his refusal to let Jesus wash his feet?

6. What is the meaning of Jesus' statement in verse 10?
7. Why inform them that there was one among them who was not clean?

## THE LESSON ON LOVING SERVICE

*Text 13:12-20*

12 So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and sat down again, he said unto 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 to 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.

18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth my bread lifted up his heel against me.

19 From henceforth I tell you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

*Queries*

- a. Did Jesus establish "foot washing" as a commandment to be literally obeyed?
- b. How is the "blessedness" promised in v. 17 to be experienced?
- c. What connection does v. 20 have with this context?

*Paraphrase*

And when Jesus had finished washing their feet, He put on His outer cloak and reclined again at His place at the supper table, He began to teach them, saying, Do you know the meaning of what I have just done to you? You recognize and call Me, The Teacher, and, The Lord. This is what you should recognize and call Me, for this is Who I am! Here then is the lesson for you—If I, The Lord and The Teacher, perform the lowly but loving task of washing the feet of disciples and servants, you should lovingly condescend in like manner by humbly serving one another rather than disputing with one another over rank and position. I have washed your feet to give you



an example to follow in performing loving acts of lowly service to one another. I say to you very plainly, If a lord is willing to serve in the most menial of tasks, so should a servant be willing thus serve for no servant is greater than his lord, neither is a person sent greater than the one who sends him. And, although you vocally acknowledge the truth of these lessons you will discover that real happiness and blessedness is enjoyed only when you are actually practicing them. I do not mean to infer of you all that you are hypocritical and assent to what is right but do not do it; or that you all are capable of deliberate and habitual neglect of known duty. I have chosen you twelve, and I know the character of every one of you, but there is one among you capable of such conduct. Now this was foretold in the Psalms, He that eateth my bread lifted up his heel against me, and the character and conduct of this evil one among you is in fulfillment of this prophecy. Now I am telling you that I know of his evil character and plan against me before his schemes are actually carried out so that when it is carried out you will recognize my divine omniscience and your faith in Me as the Son of God will be the more strengthened. So, I say to you most emphatically, when you see Me betrayed and apparently defeated do not be misled for in my extreme humiliation I am truly become Lord and Christ, and he who receives the one whom I send with the message of Christ crucified receives Me and he who will receive Christ crucified will receive the Father who sent the Christ to be crucified.

### *Summary*

After the beautiful deed of loving service comes the divine instruction as to its meaning for those who will learn. With the instruction comes the promise of blessedness to those who will humbly serve one another in deeds of love.

### *Comment*

Jesus finished washing their feet and resumed His place at the table. How many of the disciples had their feet washed we do not know. The verb translated "sat down" is the aorist of *anapipto* which means literally to "fall back" but is better translated "reclined" since that was the customary position for dining in that age. Reclining again on His couch at the supper table, Jesus takes immediate advantage of the foregoing preparation in the minds of His disciples and presents the lesson contained in His deed. This socially unorthodox action of a Teacher washing the feet of his disciples would attract the attention of even the most insensitive of the disciples as they argued about places of position and rank (cf. Luke 22:24).

Momentarily taken aback as their Lord stooped to wash their feet they began to wonder what had prompted such an unheard of action. Jesus asks the rhetorical question, "Do you know the meaning of what I have just done to you?" Then He answers His own question with a very precise and logical argument. He reminds His disciples of the respectful titles they have sincerely accorded Him, and in a marked, emphatic manner He accepts these titles as His rightful due. He tells them distinctly that He is indeed their Teacher, whose doctrine it is their business to learn, and their Lord, whose will it is their duty to obey. His humble act of washing their feet does not mean that He is ignorant of His Lordship or even that He has lowered or degraded His kingly dignity. To the contrary, He has really enhanced the dignity and greatness of His Lordship by this expression of loving service (cf. Matt. 20:25-28; Mk. 10:42-45; Lk. 9:48; Lk. 22:26-27).

Now in verse 14 comes the central point of His argument. If the Lord of glory, the Holy One of God (cf. Jn. 6:69), can condescend to take the form of a servant and perform the most menial of tasks upon those so very far below Him, surely those who are actually the servants can render loving service to one another. This lesson is for us all! And how we need it—even within the kingdom of God, the church! So often trouble in the church comes because of jealousy over place and position. But those of the kingdom of God are not to be like the pagan world which spends all its energy seeking fame and fortune (cf. Matt. 20:20-28, etc.). When we are tempted to think of our dignity, our prestige, our place, our rights, let us see again the picture of the Son of God, girt with a towel, wash basin in hand, kneeling at His disciples' feet. Let us have in us the mind of Christ (cf. Phil. 2:5-11).

The question inevitably comes up concerning verses 14 and 15 whether or not these verses uphold the ritual of literal foot washing as observed in the history of the church past and present. Hendriksen points out that "foot-washing was practiced on Maundy Thursday by the Church of Augustine's day. It was recommended by Bernard of Clairvaux in one of his sermons. The practice was continued by the pope at Rome and by emperors of Austria and Russia and by kings of Spain, Portugal, and Bavaria. For a while it was practiced by the Church of England and by the Moravians. It has been continued to this very day by certain Baptist and Adventist bodies . . ." There are only two other places in the New Testament where washing of the feet is referred to—Luke 7:38, 44 (the sinner woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears) and I Tim. 5:10 where it is used figura-

tively to describe the lowly service to christian brethren in the past by widows needing the support of the church (cf. Paul's Letters to Timothy and Titus, by DeWalt, pub. College Press, page 99).

We believe Bro. Seth Wilson's essay, quoted previously, contains the most lucid comments on the subject of foot-washing we have read and we quote these comments herewith: "Whenever washing one another's feet is an act of practical courtesy and helpfulness, that we can perform in a true spirit of simple love and humble service, we ought to wash one another's feet. But when it is of no practical helpfulness, when it is performed as a public religious ritual to *display* our "humility," at special seasons, toward select persons, it does not seem to fit the pattern Jesus gave. 'Ritualizing such an act of love absolutely destroys its meaning.'

"The Great Commission assigned to the apostles the task of teaching the believers to observe all things that Jesus commanded; but we have no teaching from them concerning foot washing as a ceremony in the church. They do teach, however, lowliness, subjection, and loving service (Rom. 12:3, 10, 16; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2; 5:21; Phil. 2:3-8; Col. 3:12; I Pet. 5:5, etc.). There is no indication in the way that Jesus did the act at the Last Supper that He was instituting a form of worship or making it part of His death. It is not an act of worship to God, but of service to man out of the right kind of a godly heart of humility and love. Even those who urge it as a perpetual ordinance in the church teach that it 'symbolizes humility and service.' Exactly so: Jesus gave a very striking example and symbol of that manner of conduct and attitude of heart that He wants us to have. *He does not want us to repeat the symbol, but to practice the reality.* His example was clear, and no command of His is more direct or authoritative."

Verse 16 adds more emphasis to the main point of the lesson. No servant is greater than his lord . . . etc. If the Christian's Lord is willing to perform the duties of a servant, the Christian (who is really the servant) should be willing to serve and not make position and prestige his aim.

Verse 17 contains both a warning and a promise. The warning implied is against knowing the right and failing to do it. The promise is definite that knowing the divine will which has been revealed both by precept and example we will find blessedness when we *do* what Jesus is teaching here. The true road to happiness and joy and blessedness is service motivated by love. Man was not created to be just a taker and never a giver. Man was created to give joy and honor to the heart of God. This is man's ultimate purpose and only when he

is fulfilling that purpose by loving acts of service to God and man does he find joy and satisfaction of soul. Jesus said, "It is more blessed (happiness) to give than to receive." There is a noticeable dissatisfaction, almost unhappiness, in some of the disciples before the resurrection of Christ when they were always seeking and waiting for the Lord to appoint them to places of earthly honor and prestige. They bickered with one another and were jealous of one another. But, notice the change in these men as evidenced in the book of Acts and their Epistles when they put into practice the teaching of Jesus here in John 13:17! They found "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Jesus said it another way later when He said that "bearing fruit" would result in true godly joy (cf. John 15:1-11).

The blessedness of lowly service out of love is both objective and subjective. The objective blessedness must come before the subjective. That is, we must *know* that we have God's approval before we can feel joy and blessedness emotionally. That knowledge comes when we, as Jesus exhorts, "*do*" these acts of service because we then know we are living in accord with the Divine Will as objectively expressed in His written revelation. John expressed it later in his First Epistle when he wrote, "All who keep his commandments abide in him, and he in them" (I John 3:24). The fourth chapter of I John is also an excellent commentary on the words of Jesus in verse 17.

Thus when we do serve one another in love we *know* the blessedness of seeing godly fruit in the lives of those served; we *know* the blessedness of living in accord with the revealed will of God; then we can *feel* in our hearts the peace which passes understanding.

Jesus goes on (v. 18) to inform those gathered there that night that there is one in their midst who is capable of knowing right and deliberately neglecting to do it, (see our Paraphrase on this section). There was one there who was sly and scheming. Pretending to be desirous of serving the poor (Jn. 12:1-8) he was even then scheming to steal the money. While pretending to be a close friend of Jesus and accept His doctrine (eat His bread), he was scheming to betray (lift up his heel against) Him.

A. B. Bruce, in his *Training of the Twelve*, paraphrases this section in this manner: "In hinting at the possibility of a knowledge of right, unaccompanied by corresponding action, I have not been indulging in gratuitous insinuation. I do not indeed think so badly of you all as to imagine you capable of deliberate and habitual neglect of known duty. But there is one among you who is capable of such conduct. I have chosen you twelve, and I know the character of every one of you . . . there is one among you who knows, but will not do; one

who, having eaten bread with me as a familiar friend, will repay me for all my kindness, not by loving obedience, but by lifting up his heel against me."

There is more than one reason Jesus made this general prophecy of one very close who would betray Him. Primarily, as verse 19 points out, the prophecy was made so that when it came to pass the disciples would have their belief in Jesus the more strengthened. Secondly, it was another attempt by Jesus to penetrate the hardened heart of Judas and bring him to repentance. Again, the recording of the omniscient foreknowledge of Jesus was for man's benefit for all time. For those who will accept the testimony it shows that that which was happening was all within the eternal purpose of God. It was as Scripture said it would be ages before. Jesus and the Father both knew what was happening at all times. God was in control. Jesus was not the unfortunate victim of the schemes of men. He was not killed; He willingly chose to die and did lay down His life. He was not the victim but the master of circumstances.

Barnes has a note on verse 18: "These things have occurred in order that the prophecies may receive their completion. It does not mean that Judas was *compelled* to this course in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, but that this was foretold, and that *by this* the prophecy *did* receive a completion." The prophecy is from Psalms 41:9 (cf. also II Sam. 9:7-13; Psa. 55:12-14).

In verse 20 the Lord continues to look forward to the time when what He is prophesying concerning Judas' betrayal will have come to pass and He anticipates the reaction of despondency and defeat by the disciples. Hendriksen points out the connection of verse 20 with the context very well: ". . . when the disciples see their Lord delivered into the hands of his enemies, let them not despair. Let them not think, 'Now it is all over, not only with him but also with us, his followers.' On the contrary, everything continues just as it was. Nay rather, the very facts of the humiliation confirm *his* authority and the validity of *their* commission. An ambassador of 'Christ Betrayed, Condemned, and Crucified,' is still a true ambassador; in fact, he is *the only* true ambassador."

When the eternal plan of God is carried out—when Christ is betrayed, crucified and risen, and when the disciples go out to preach Christ crucified and raised (cf. I Cor. 1), whoever receives them and their message receives Christ and the Father. But whoever rejects them and their message of Christ crucified and raised, rejects the Father and His omnipotent plan of redemption. The point is, that a betrayed and crucified Christ is within the plan of God. Jesus was

completely aware of this. He now forewarns his disciples against the dark hours of the coming days. Verse 20 is not a disconnected afterthought of Jesus but is well within the context of the teaching He is now giving His disciples. They should not only *serve* with all lowliness and humility, but they will have a message of a crucified Saviour which the world will look upon as lowly, weak and humiliating. They will need their faith in the omnipotence of Christ increased!

### *Quiz*

1. How would Jesus have "sat down" at the supper table?
2. What is the main line of argument presented by Jesus to teach the disciples about humility?
3. Give three reasons why "foot-washing" seems not to be commanded by the Lord as an ordinance for the church's observance.
4. Give two ways we may know the "blessedness" provided in v. 17.
5. Why did Jesus foretell the betrayal of Judas (3 reasons)?

### THE SELFISH SERVANT OF SIN

#### *Text 13:21-30*

21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in the spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 The disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

23 There was at the table reclining in Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

24 Simon Peter therefore beckoneth to him, and saith unto him, Tell us who it is of whom he speaketh.

25 He leaning back, as he was, on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

26 Jesus therefore answereth, He it is, for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him. So when he had dipped the sop, he taketh and giveth it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

27 And after the sop, then entered Satan into him, Jesus therefore saith unto him, What thou doest, do quickly.

28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

29 For some thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus said unto him, Buy what things we have need of for the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

30 He then having received the sop went out straightway; and it was night.

*Queries*

- a. Why was Jesus "troubled in the spirit"?
- b. Why did none of the disciples know for "what intent" Jesus spoke to Judas?
- c. Why did Jesus instruct Judas to do quickly what he was doing?

*Paraphrase*

Having prophesied these things concerning his betrayal and the disciples' future need for faith, Jesus was deeply disturbed of spirit and said to his disciples, I tell you solemnly, One of you will hand me over to the authorities. The disciples began looking at one another in startled perplexity, and kept looking at one another in silent suspicion, puzzled concerning whom he spake. One of his disciples, the one with whom Jesus was especially delighted and loved, was reclining at the table next to him on the same couch. So Simon Peter, on the next couch, signaled with a nod to this disciple and said, Tell us who it is of whom he is speaking. That disciple, leaning his head back upon the bosom of Jesus, whispered to him, Lord who is it? Jesus answered softly, It is that one to whom I shall give this morsel of bread after I have dipped it into the sop. Taking the piece of bread he dipped it into the sop and gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. After Judas had taken this piece of bread he made up his mind completely and allowed Satan to enter his heart and totally possess him. Jesus said to him in a voice loud enough for all to hear, What you are going to do, do quickly! None of those reclining at the table, not even those who were told about the traitor, understood the meaning of what Jesus said to Judas. Some of them thought since Judas had the money purse, that Jesus was instructing Judas to hurry and purchase provisions for the seven-day festival of Passover, or that he was instructing Judas to make haste on a mission of alms-giving to the poor. So Judas took the piece of bread and then went out quickly; and it was night!

*Summary*

In spite of the lesson on humble love and in spite of the Master exposing his shameful, deadly scheme, the selfish servant of sin, Judas, surrenders completely to the Devil.

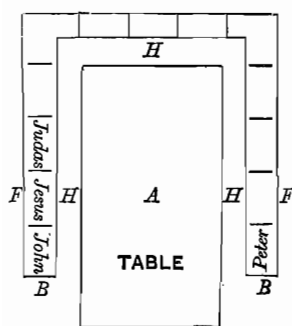
*Comment*

After Jesus had prophesied concerning the betrayer (v. 18), He became deeply disturbed in His spirit. The inward turmoil of spirit was apparent to John who later recorded it. His heart is troubled by the one who is planning to betray Him and He repeats His warning.

His heart was sick and groaned within Him over the imminent spiritual suicide of Judas. Jesus loved Judas! He tried until the very end to bring Judas to repentance. The tender Shepherd of souls is not willing that any should perish. Jesus was also much concerned about the spiritual weakness of the other disciples which they had exhibited here at this last supper. When He thought of the betrayer He also looked forward prophetically when they would all flee from Him like scattered sheep (cf. Matt. 26:31). The anguish of spirit here was also a prelude to the anguish of spirit in Gethsemane and Golgotha where He suffered the burden of all man's sins.

Judas was a master at deception. Outwardly no one could tell the difference between him and the other eleven disciples of Jesus. He was an excellent play-actor (hypocrite). He had even faked a concern for the poor (12:45) with such finesse that he prompted the others to criticize Jesus at one time. He had fooled the other eleven completely. When Jesus uttered His solemn warning (v. 21) it fell like a bombshell in the midst of that festive evening. The disciples were startled, incredulous, perplexed and began looking round about at one another in silent suspicion. Judas joined in, skillfully portraying one who was innocently dumbfounded.

Now the Jews did not sit upright when they ate at a festive table such as this. The Greek word *anakeimenos* means "reclining at table." The table was usually a low solid block. The couches were arranged around the table in U shape. The couches were placed with their heads toward the table and their feet away from the table in an oblique fashion (see diagram below). The chief place is near the center of the right side of the table. The next place of honor is that at the left side of the host (occupied by Judas) and the next place of honor at the right side of the host (occupied by John). The diners reclined by resting upon their left elbow, thus leaving the right hand free to deal with the food. Reclining in such a way a man's head was literally upon the bosom of the person reclining on his left.



PLAN OF SUPPER TABLE.

THE SUPPER SCENE. Around a low, Eastern table, oval or rather elongated, two parts covered with a cloth, the single divans or pillows are ranged in the form of an elongated horseshoe, leaving free one end of the table, somewhat as in the accompanying cut. Here, *A* represents the table; *B B* respectively the ends of the two rows of single divans on which each guest reclines, lying on his left side, and leaning on the left hand, with his head (*H*) nearest the table, and his feet (*F*) stretching back towards the ground. Thus we see how Jesus could wash their feet. As to the arrangements of the guests, the chief personage would sit near one end of the table. If there were three persons, he would sit between the two. We know from the Gospel narrative that John occupied the place on Jesus' right, at that end of the divans, as we may call it, at the head of the table. But the chief place next to the Master would be that to his left, or above him.



After a few moments of stunned silence and suspicious glances, the disciples began to ask one by one, "Is it I, Lord?" (Matt. 26:22; Mark 14:19) and they began to question one another, which of them it was that would do this (Lk. 22:23). The first answer of the Lord was a general one simply indicating that the betrayer was sitting and partaking with Him at the same table (cf. Matt. 26:23; Mk. 14:20). It is plain that the other disciples did not yet know who was meant. It seems that Jesus was conducting an almost private conversation with Judas. Judas even asked, "Is it I, Lord?" Jesus replied, "Thou hast said!" And apparently, no one heard this reply—not even John.

Simon Peter, the impetuous, signaled with a nod to the disciple "whom Jesus loved," the one reclining upon His bosom, to tell the rest of them who the traitor was. Peter assumed that John, favored with a place so close to the Master, would know if anyone did. John, however, did not know and so he leaned his head back upon the bosom of Jesus and whispered, "Lord, who is it?" John's question was probably unheard by the others. Evidently the reply of Jesus, "He it is, for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him," was also inaudible to all except John and Judas (and perhaps, Peter).

There must be some significance that Judas was sitting so close to the Saviour, on His left in the place of honor, that night. Even the offering by the host of a special morsel dipped in the sop to a particular guest was a sign of special concern. When the Jews wanted to show their concern for a guest, they invited the guest to dip food with them (cf. Ruth 2:14). The very fact that Jesus kept reminding Judas that his scheme was known was an attempt to rescue Judas from his headlong rush into spiritual suicide. All of these acts of love and concern were appeals from the very heart of Jesus toward Judas' reclamation.

After Judas had taken this piece of bread he made up his mind completely and surrendered his whole heart to Satan. Then Satan entered into Judas. The point to remember is that Satan accomplished total victory over Judas only because Judas allowed him to do so. We are warned ". . . neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:27). We are encouraged "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). We are warned that Satan can take advantage of us if we are ignorant of his devices (II Cor. 2:11). Satan is a spiritual being and he operates in the spiritual realm. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood . . ." but against ideas, philosophies and thoughts. Unless we fill our minds with the thoughts and revelations of the Holy Spirit, we are leaving it open for Satan to enter. And when we willingly concentrate on worldliness and evil,

Satan has a completely unrestricted highway into our heart. This is what Judas did! He so loved money that he was trapped and drowned in destruction and perdition (cf. I Tim. 6:7-10).

When men deliberately and rebelliously "exchange the truth of God for a lie," (Rom. 1:25), God gives up! When men do not wish to retain God in their knowledge (Rom. 1:28), when they have no love for the truth (II Thess. 2:10-12), God gives up and allows them to be deluded into believing a lie!

Jesus knew that Judas had allowed the devil to take complete possession of him. Judas had exchanged the truth of God for a lie. The Incarnate God could do no more for Judas and so He said, "What thou doest, do quickly!" Why would Jesus make this command? Perhaps to drive the betrayer from the midst of the others immediately so that the few remaining hours may be directed toward those who will profit from the instructions. Judas had bargained to hand Jesus over to the authorities but the exact time for His arrest and death had not yet been set. The authorities had definitely decided Jesus should not be killed during the feast (Matt. 26:5). Judas thought that Jesus was in his hand; Jesus tells him that the reverse is true. Jesus orders Judas to do this business quickly, to carry it out when Jesus wants it done (Matt. 26:2) during the feast!

John knew who the betrayer was. Perhaps even Peter knew his identity, but none seemed to know the meaning of Jesus' last command to Judas. It appears that they thought Judas was sent quickly to buy something needed for the remainder of the passover feast, or, perhaps to act quickly in giving something to the poor. Judas was the treasurer of the group and these two suppositions seemed the only reason for the command.

Some commentators use verse 29 to prove that the supper here recorded in John 13 is not the passover supper because the disciples would have known that Judas could *not* purchase anything that night for a feast which was already over. However, the Passover lasted seven days. It is, therefore, entirely reasonable to record that the disciples supposed Judas to have been sent for more supplies for the remaining days of the feast. Especially would he be sent with haste if the next day was a holy day of the feast when nothing could be purchased.

Judas acted the deception out to the end. He brazenly took the morsel offered to him by Jesus. And then, probably to be away from the penetrating and meaningful looks of Jesus as quickly as possible, he went out "straightway."

The phrase "and it was night," has great impact. It was night for the sun had gone behind the horizon, but it "was night" for another

reason also. The outer darkness had overtaken Judas for he had allowed the god of this world to blind him to the Son of Righteousness. It is always night when a man turns his back on Jesus Christ the True Light. He who walks in darkness does not know where he is going and he stumbles and falls because the darkness blinds his eyes (cf. Jn. 1:4-5; 3:19-21).

### *Quiz*

1. Give 3 reasons why Jesus would be troubled in the spirit.
2. How would the principle characters of this section probably be located around the supper table?
3. How did Satan enter into Judas?
4. Why did Jesus command Judas to act quickly?
5. How many do we suppose knew who the traitor was?

### THE SACRIFICING SERVANT OF CHRIST

#### *Text 13-31-38*

31 When therefore he was gone out, Jesus saith, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him;

32 and God shall glorify him in himself, and straightway shall he glorify him.

33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you.

34 A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

36 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow afterwards.

37 Peter saith unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee even now? I will lay down my life for thee.

38 Jesus answereth, Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

### *Queries*

- a. Why did Jesus say, "Now" is the Son of man glorified?
- b. How is "love one another" a new commandment?
- c. Was Jesus questioning the courage of Peter in v. 38?

### *Paraphrase*

When Judas had been sent out to consummate his evil scheme, Jesus said, Now I have willingly sent the traitor to seal my death—

now by this act is the Son of man glorified and God is also glorified. And God shall glorify the Son in intimate union with himself and in just a few hours shall he glorify him in the ultimate victory!

Oh, my little children, I will be with you only a few hours longer. And the time is coming very soon when you will long for my presence but I must tell you, as I told the Jews, Where I am going you cannot follow. Since I am about to leave you I am giving you a new precept to follow. This new precept is built upon a new concept—it is that you love one another with the same self-sacrificing love with which I have loved you. If you shall do this, all men shall know that you are my disciples even though I be not with you in bodily presence.

Simon Peter said to him, Lord, where could you possibly be going that we cannot follow you? Jesus replied, I am going where you cannot follow me now, though you will follow me later. Peter asked quickly, Lord, what can possibly keep me from following you right now? Why, I am ready even to lay down my life for you! Jesus replied, Will you indeed lay down your life for me? I most solemnly assure you the rooster will not crow at coming daybreak until you have disowned me three times.

### *Summary*

Jesus shows the marks of a true and loyal disciple both by example and precept . . . one who will sacrifice self-will. Peter, trusting too much in self, shows he has the wrong concept.

### *Comment*

At the moment of the Lord's betrayal and arrest it would seem to the disciples that their Master had become the victim of unfortunate circumstances. But later when the Holy Spirit should call to their minds His complete mastery of the situation even before the betrayal they would glorify His name. Judas did not escape detection. Judas did not even steal away secretly to do something which was against the plan of Jesus. Here, this night, the Lord of the universe willingly and purposefully sends his betrayer off to do his deed. The sacrificing servant of God is glorified in a majestic surrender of self.

God the Father, in intimate union with the Son, is also glorified by His majestic giving up of His only-unique Son. At the Father's command is an unnumbered host of angelic warriors. At the instant word of the Father they would have slain every human enemy of His Son. But the glorious love and mercy of the Father for a world in sin kept this command from being issued.

And soon, very soon now, would the ultimate victory be accomplished—the victory over sin upon Golgotha and the victory over death in Joseph's tomb. Then shall the Son of man be glorified in-

deed. Then shall all His claims to deity be vindicated for all time.

The subject of his glorification in death, resurrection and ascension leads Him to make preparation for His physical departure from among them. Just as He told the Jews at the feast of Tabernacles, some six months earlier, now He tells His disciples He must leave them. They will long for His presence but where He is going they cannot follow immediately. He must ascend to the Father, but they must remain behind in the world until they are called up higher at death. And until their decease (exodus) and reunion with Him they will know His living presence by keeping the new commandment which He leaves with them.

Is this a *new* commandment? Has He never before given them the precept of love to keep? The newness of the commandment is contained in that His disciples are to love one another *even as* their Master has loved them. No such love could have been commanded before because no such love had ever been exhibited before! This love of Jesus for men goes even deeper than the command for a man to love another as he loves himself, for Jesus loves us more than we love ourselves. It is only by allowing Christ to dwell in us through faith that we can even come near to comprehending what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge (cf. Eph. 3:17-19)! The dimensions of His love are as boundless and limitless as faith! If His disciples have this love for one another, His presence will be living and abiding in them and working through them. And by such love will the whole world know the presence of Christ and know that such men are His disciples. Doctrinal correctness is not all there is to Christian discipleship, as important as that is (I Jn. 2:3-4), but a Christ-like love for one another is equally essential (cf. I Jn. 2:8-11). This is the type of love that would cause a Paul to write, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:2). By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples.

What a contrast between the selfless love of Christ and the love of self of Judas. The love that moved Jesus to willingly sacrifice Himself is the self-sacrificing love which is to be the distinguishing mark of a disciple of Christ.

The manner in which John records this section gives us the impression that Peter, in all his impetuosity and eagerness to demonstrate his loyalty to Jesus, brushed aside the teaching on love and directed the conversation abruptly back to the ominous note of impending conflict. If his Master is about to engage in battle he sees no reason why he cannot follow Him into the thick of the conflict. He is ready now!

If there is a fight to be fought for the right he is prepared now. Even if he must die he would go with his Master. He is ready and willing to lay down his life in battle for the Christ. Peter was no coward. He armed himself with a sword and would have challenged those who came to arrest Jesus in the garden (Jn. 18:10-11). He had the bold courage to follow the authorities as they led Jesus to the very house of the high priest and stood without until allowed to enter.

We do not believe that cowardice prompted Peter to deny the Lord and take an oath that he never knew Him. We believe Peter would have quickly admitted being a disciple of Jesus if the Master had just given the signal to fight. Perhaps he emphatically denied being the disciple of Jesus hoping to remain incognito until Jesus would give the signal to resist. When Peter finally realized that his Master was not going to resist he gave up his ambitions for the Messianic kingdom. That seemed to be Peter's trouble—ambition for the Messianic kingdom in his earthly concept of it. He had not denied self! We believe that basically Peter denied the Lord in that he refused to deny his own self-ambitions. When Jesus offered not the least bit of resistance, Peter, with the other disciples scattered—not because they were cowards, but because their aspirations and ideals were dying (they supposed) with Him. When Jesus had prophesied His death at Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:13-28), Peter rebuked Him for thinking such a thing should happen to the Messiah. It was here that the Lord told Peter he was minding the things of men. It was in connection with that very rebuke that Jesus warned the disciples they must lose their lives for His sake in a sense different from physical death. Before Pilate, Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews" (Jn. 18:36). Jesus forbade the disciples to fight to rescue Him—the very thing that the disciples would have done!

We believe that in essence Jesus is saying, "Peter, I know you are willing to fight and die physically for your concept of Me as the Messiah. But Peter, are you willing to put self to death and accept My concept of the Messianic kingdom. I assure you, Peter, you will deny Me before morning comes. Peter was not yet ready to crucify himself (cf. Gal. 2:20).

### *Quiz*

1. How was Jesus glorified by His actions there in the upper room?
2. Why does Jesus give His "new" commandment?
3. What is "new" about this commandment?

4. What will be the results of keeping this "new commandment"?
5. Was Peter afraid to die physically for Jesus?
6. In what way was Peter unwilling to lose his life for Jesus?

## EXPOSITORY SERMON THIRTEEN

### DIVINE LESSON ON HUMILITY AND SERVICE

John 13:1-38

#### *Introduction*

#### I. THE SCENE

- A. The age-old ritual of the Passover is begun by Jesus.
- B. The disciples were arguing among themselves as to rank and position in the Messianic kingdom (which they believed to be coming to earth).
- C. The disciples had forgotten to perform the most customary act of hospitality toward their Master, washing of His feet.

#### II. THE LORD'S ATTITUDE

- A. Having loved His disciples with fervent, demonstrated love, He now comes to the crucial hour, more vividly aware than ever of His suffering and their misunderstanding and worldliness, and He demonstrates this wonderful act of humility, love and service for them.
- B. Even the betrayer was there but the Lord's concern is not for Himself. He is extending His love even in effort to reclaim this one.

#### *Discussion*

#### I. THE ACT OF LOVING SERVICE 13:1-11

##### A. Reason for the act.

1. The disciples needed a lesson in common courtesy and humility.
2. Jesus sought once more to turn Judas from his evil scheme.
3. Jesus desired to teach the disciples the nature of His mission (He came to minister, not to be ministered unto).
4. The Master demonstrates again His love for them personally.

##### B. Reaction to the Act

1. Some probably were so engrossed in politicking that they were unaware of it for a few moments.
2. It did not reach into the heart of Judas Iscariot at all.
3. Impetuous Peter finally came to his senses and objected that the Lord would so degrade Himself.
  - a. Peter was objecting to the very basic tenet of Christ's

ministry—humiliation—voluntary participation in the experiences of humanity. Peter was letting his own reason be the guide in his concept of the Christ rather than allowing Christ to reveal His true nature.

- b. All followers of Christ of every age are guilty of the same rationalizations at one time or another.

- 4. Later, Peter swings to the opposite extreme (v. 9).

### C. Reply of Jesus

- 1. Peter must obey the Master even when he cannot understand.
  - a. This obedience is, of course, based upon the evidence Jesus has given him before of His own deity.
- 2. Peter (and all the disciples) must surrender to the humiliated Son of man as their Messiah and Saviour and divest themselves of the richly-regal concept of a worldly Messianic kingdom (see our comments on this portion).
- 3. In reply to Peter's leap to the other extreme Jesus said:
  - a. Once a person has been cleansed and become a follower of Jesus, he need not repeat the initial cleansing but must sanctify himself and grow in grace by daily repentance and humble acts of love.
- 4. All were cleansed and would repent except one.
  - a. This warning to strengthen their faith in Him and His mission later.

## II. LESSON ON LOVING SERVICE 13:12-20

### A. Preachment

- 1. His method—
  - a. motivated learning by asking questions to direct thinking;
  - b. on a positive note—started by complimenting disciples on what they did know;
  - c. followed logical progression—used example to illustrate
- 2. His message—
  - a. the example not intended to establish an ordinance in the church;
  - b. the principle—if your Master is willing to serve in the most menial of tasks, so should you, the servant, be concerned with service and not with arguing over position;
  - c. **HOW THIS PRINCIPLE NEEDS TO BE APPLIED BY EVERY SERVANT OF THE LORD: PREACHERS, BIBLE COLLEGE TEACHERS, ELDERS, DEACONS . . . EVERY CHRISTIAN MUST REALIZE HE IS CALLED BY THE MASTER TO *SERVE*.**