

Was Jesus Christ-Centered?

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Recorded on August 11, 2018

What prompted the sermon today goes back two or three months as I was focusing on this subject and I've made the comment to numerous people that I started taking this scripture seriously back in 1963. I was nineteen years old and my Methodist upbringing didn't seem to hold water, really; a lot of things I believed and thought were in scripture turned out not to be. In recent years, the last three or four years, I've been studying scripture in a way I've never studied before and that seemed strange after half a century—how can that be? A lot of times we have these long-held beliefs and if we believe something simply because we've believed it for a long time, that could be dangerous and has proved to be dangerous, quite frankly. We want to be careful about going there and doing those kinds of things.

The one scripture I was pondering at the time was John 8:58—you're familiar with it—Jesus says, before Abraham was, I am. It's a popular proof text for individuals to claim that what Jesus was saying is He was the I AM of the Old Testament, of Abraham's day—that He was the "God of the Old Testament." I thought, well, suppose we back off a little bit and we take a look at the context leading up to what Jesus said in John 8:58, and consider the summary, the witness, of the first of the entire eight chapters leading up to that verse. I thought that would be interesting. I began to look at it, primarily the witness of Christ Himself—you take a red-letter Bible and all of Jesus' words are in red—easy to pick out. It wasn't long and I began to realize it was a repeated reference in Jesus' witness and His testimony to the fact that He had been *sent*. He wasn't here on His own initiative—He was here because He had been sent by the Father.

I get out my trusty Stong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, and I look up the word "sent" (in the book of John) and to my surprise, by my account at least, there are forty-two references in the book of John, most of them from the mouth of Christ in which He refers to the fact that He had been sent by the Father. Forty-two times; I said, that's interesting, so I looked up all forty-two of them. Now, I won't punish you by going through all forty-two today but I would encourage you to take the exercise and look them all up for yourself—we'll cover some of them today. Let's go back and let's see what Jesus had to say about it. So the title of the sermon is:

Was Jesus Christ-Centered?

Simple enough. The subject then will be the witness of Jesus concerning His relationship to the Father. We'll see what the book of John had to say about it. To make sure we're in the right spot we'll go back to John 1:1—very familiar verse, we can all quote it.

John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* (NKJV)

Very simple, the Word was God—no question about it. It's interesting, I hadn't always known this and I don't know exactly the day when I learned that the English translation is not exactly true to the Greek. So I've always had an interlinear Greek-English New Testament; I brought along Jay Green's third edition—nice volume. You don't have to be a Greek scholar to use this to advantage. What this does, if you get the Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, is it gives you the Greek text. If you can read Greek, there it all is, right there—you can read the whole New Testament in the Greek, as inspired. Underneath the Greek is the English equivalent to the Greek word—here's the Greek word, here's the English word. Above [each] Greek word is a reference number and the number refers to Strong's Concordance and you can look up the meaning of the word in Strong's Concordance, and then you can go to other sources from there if you wish.

In the Greek, the statement is, “the Word was with the God”. The definitive article—“the”—is left out of the English translation. I thought, that's curious, why would they do that, so again I look at it, and it says, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with the God” is the way it says it's in the Greek. So I look up the Strong's reference, #3588, and what do we find? The definition of the word that could be translated “the” is the definite article—that's what Strong's tells us—it's the definite article, the word “the”. You know, when you talk about *the* book, if I say *bring me the book*, you're going to want to know *which* book—well, the one on the coffee table. If I just say *bring any book*, *bring a book*, maybe I'm going to use it for a paperweight or something and it really doesn't matter which book you bring me. But if I say *the* book, then you'll want to know specifically which book so that you can bring the correct book.

Going on a little further in Strong's, there's a note. It says, *it's the definite article, the, sometimes to be supplied, at others omitted, in English idiom*. So sometimes the translators included it in the English and sometimes they omitted it. I ask myself why, in this case, do they omit it? Why did they choose to leave it out?

I've read John forever, going back fifty years or more and suddenly this was significant. I had never paid too much attention to this. I can't tell you the exact moment when this came to my attention but it seemed significant. I'm thinking, why would they leave it out? I think it has something to do with the fact that the translators, those who translated the Bible into English, were trinitarians—they believed in the trinity.

Basic element of the trinity says there's one God but three persons and they're all equal and they're all pretty much united and all one—there's various ways you can depict how they were together—interlocking triangles and various things that various artists have used. If you believe in the trinity and you believe the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all equal, you can understand why they might leave out the word “the”. In the beginning

was the word and the word was with “the” God. If you single-out one individual and say this is “the” God, this is *the* definitive—you’ve singled out one, and the others then are a God, not *the* God. This casts a big shadow over your understanding of the subject of the trinity because now you’ve got one that stands out above the others. However many you wish to be in there—two, three, four, five—matters not. So what’s the solution? Just don’t translate it. Seems like the common solution—I think that’s probably what I would have done—and nobody pays any attention, and what difference does it make anyway—it’s all about God, right? So who are we talking about here? Verse 14 [of John 1], we’re familiar again:

14) *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, [notice] the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* (NKJV)

This is the testimony of the Apostle John. Then in verse 29 what do we see?

29) *The next day John saw Jesus [okay, the Word who became flesh is Jesus] coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* (NKJV)

This is who we’re dealing with; we’re dealing with the Word who is God, who is the Lamb of God, His name is Jesus, He takes away the sin of the world. Then in verse 34:

34) *And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”* (NKJV)

We know from John’s account who we’re dealing with here. That’s important. Now just a brief reference to John the Baptist’s testimony in chapter 3—we’ll get to that in a minute, but perhaps the most often quoted scripture in the Bible is John 3:16, you’re familiar with it but we’ll read it anyway.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son ...* (NKJV)

Notice it’s God that loved the world—it doesn’t say Jesus loved the world, He did, but the emphasis is on God the Father—God the Father loved the world and He was willing to offer His only begotten Son to pay for the sins of mankind. Of course Jesus was willing to be the sacrifice and it was His shed blood that made the difference. The term *Savior* is one that applies clearly to both the Father and the Son. Go to 1 Timothy 1:1 and in the introduction to his letter to Timothy, Paul makes reference to “God our Savior”. God is the Savior in that He was willing to provide a sacrifice. Jesus is Savior because He was willing to be sacrificed.

16 continued) *... that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

17) *For God did not send [here we go, here's the reference to "send"] His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (NKJV)*

So the Father sends the Son to carry out the work of God. Now verse 31, we have the testimony of John the Baptist—this is noteworthy.

31) *He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.*

32) *And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. (NKJV)*

Notice verse 32 again—what He has seen and heard He testifies, but no one receives His testimony. So once again, what Jesus came to do was to bring what He had seen and what He had heard. Verse 33.

33) *He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true.*

34) *For He whom God has sent [here's the reference to being sent once again] speaks the words of God, [doesn't speak His own words, He speaks the words of God] for God does not give the Spirit by measure.*

35) *The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. (NKJV)*

Once again, the Father has given all things into the hand of the Son to carry out the Father's will, as we will see. There you have brief testimony of John the Baptist. Let's go to chapter 4 now—chapter 4 begins with a conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well and out of that conversation comes the following testimony, verse 19, notice:

John 4:19 *The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.*

20) *Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."*

21) *Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.*

22) *You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. (NKJV)*

Here Jesus is giving testimony—the Jews understood who the Father was, that He existed. They didn't know Him in the sense that they substituted the traditions of men for His commandments.

23) *But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. (NKJV)*

Words of Jesus—the Father is seeking individuals to worship the Father. Jesus is worthy of worship also, but the focus here, the emphasis, is on worshipping the Father.

24) *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*” (NKJV)

Here again, the testimony of Jesus Christ—God is seeking worshippers, individuals to come to Him, to worship Him in spirit and in truth—that’s the testimony of Jesus Christ. Jesus wasn’t calling people to Himself, He was there to do the will of the Father, as we will see. Now let’s drop down to verse 31.

31) *In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”*
32) *But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.”*
33) *Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?”* (NKJV)

The disciples had a purely physical approach to knowledge and understanding at this point in time. I guess that’s pretty much characteristic of all of us until our eyes are opened and we’re illuminated.

34) *Jesus said to them, “My food [notice] is to do the will of Him who sent Me,* (NKJV)

Who sent Him? His Father in heaven sent Him. Why did He come? He came “to do the will of Him who sent Me” ...

34 continued) ... *and to finish His work.* (NKJV)

Not my work, Jesus said, but to do the will and the work of My Father. Is that not clear? It seems pretty clear, doesn’t it? Now we move ahead to chapter 5; chapter 5 is particularly rich. There are six references in chapter 5 to the fact that Jesus was sent. We’ll pick up the story in verse 16. In chapter 5 we have the story of the individual who was healed. They would hang out by the pool, at the sheep gate and wait for the angel to ruffle the water; first one in got healed. He had a difficult time obviously—he’s crippled and he has trouble. Jesus just healed him outright; he didn’t have to wait for the angel to stir up the water.

John 5:15 *The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.*

16) *For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him,* (NKJV)

That’s most unfortunate, isn’t it?—that the truth of God, brought by the very Son of God, sent from heaven, would stir people to hostility to the point of committing murder. Why is it that the truth of God would stir up such feelings? The default position of the human heart is what?—desperately wicked, evil, apart from influence by God’s Spirit, so you can expect, if you got the truth, a little hostility on the way; don’t be frightened or surprised by it. They were especially upset with Him because He had done these things on the Sabbath.

17) *But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." (NKJV)*

Again, a basic reference—the Father and the Son have been working together from the very beginning and they continue to do so.

18) *Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. (NKJV)*

So you have Father and Son, and, in that sense, of course they are equal. They both existed from eternity and in that way they are equal, and of course that upset the Jews. So Jesus answered and said to them in verse 19:

19) ... *"Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself,*

That's telling, isn't it? Jesus isn't claiming to do anything of Himself.

19 continued) ... *but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. (NKJV)*

So what's the conclusion? What is Jesus focusing on? What is He instructing us as to where the center of worship is? Who is the originator? Who is the one that initiates this plan of God? It's the Father and Jesus is the Servant. You read and you can probably all quote Acts 3:13 where Peter said, the God of our Fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did what?—glorified His Servant Jesus. You can look at the Bible from beginning to end, Genesis to Revelation, and you won't see a single phrase, a single sentence, where Jesus complains about being His Father's Son or being the servant of His Father. It just doesn't exist.

21) *For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.*

22) *For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,*

You see it's within the Father's authority to commit judgment to the Son and He's done that.

23) *that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. (NKJV)*

You can see the two work hand in hand; you can't honor the one and dishonor the other, it just doesn't work that way. It's not the way God intends it, we're to honor both the Father and the Son. Of course, again, the reference to the fact that the Father sent Him. Jesus is making the point repeatedly, and like I said, by my count, forty-two times

in the book of John He will make reference to the fact that He has been sent by the Father to do the Father's will.

24) *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me ... (NKJV)*

Here it is again—My word is to what?—to direct you to Him who sent Me so you believe in Him. Isn't that clear? Seems pretty clear.

24 continued) *... has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. (NKJV)*

In chapter 17 (we won't get there today but you're familiar with it), in verse 3, Jesus gives us the definition of eternal life: This is eternal life, that they would know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. So what does He [Jesus] say here in verse 24?

24) *... I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life ... (NKJV)*

You believe in Him who sent Me. The words that you hear from Me are the words the Father gave to Me to bring to you. So we're getting the idea that Jesus is serious about this business.

25) *Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. (NKJV)*

Now we're going to see in verse 28 there's a reference to the fact that they will hear the *Father's* voice. Maybe they're *both* going to speak! Maybe they're *both* going to be there to call the dead in Christ out of the graves! I would think that would be expected. We'll note that in verse 28 when we get there.

26) *For as the Father has life in Himself, so He [the Father] has granted the Son to have life in Himself, (NKJV)*

Again, the focus being on the Father who has granted to the Son to have life in Himself.

27) *and has given Him [has given the Son] authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.*

28) *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice [Jesus said]*

29) *and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. (NKJV)*

In verse 25, it is the voice of the Son of God. In verse 28, Jesus says, all who hear His

voice—the Father’s voice—will come up out of the grave. Sounds to me like they’re *both* going to be calling people up out of the grave. Does that sound like a strange concept? One of the principles of Bible study that is so important is that you believe what you read—actually believe it. If it says it and you don’t believe it, read it again. If you still don’t believe it, read it again until you do believe it. If it doesn’t mean anything, then why bother? You have the words of life. It’s very important that we understand.

30) *I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.* (NKJV)

Let’s just pause for a moment. What’s the impression you are getting concerning the witness of Jesus Christ and His relationship with the Father? Where’s the focus—where is He directing our attention? He’s directing our attention to the Father. To the Father’s will, to the fact that the Father sent Him, to the fact that it’s God’s words that are being spoken. Does that stretch the point at all? It seems pretty straightforward if you just read what the words say—how did He witness?

We could ask ourselves, was Jesus a credible witness? I’ve asked individuals who claim that Jesus was the God of the Old Testament and wouldn’t answer the question, when I asked, is Jesus a credible witness? Why wouldn’t you answer the question? Quite pure and simple: If you say yes, He’s a credible witness, then you have to pay close attention to what His witness was, and it might not be what you thought. Indeed, we’ve all had to learn a few things, haven’t we?

31) *“If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.*

32) *There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true.* (NKJV)

Who’s He speaking of? The Father bears witness to the Son.

33) *You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.*

34) *Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.* (NKJV)

Pretty powerful witness, wouldn’t you say?

36) *But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish [notice, the Father has given works to Jesus to finish]—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.* (NKJV)

Does it seem it’s almost getting to the place where, okay, you can go on to the next point now—it’s just repeated time and time and time again.

37) *And the Father Himself, who sent Me, [once again a reference to being sent*

by the Father] *has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.* (NKJV)

There are those who will use that verse to claim that no one has ever heard the voice of God the Father. Ask yourself who is He talking to here? He's talking to a group of hostile individuals who are seeking to *kill* Him. If they had acknowledged—and you can see they acknowledged that the Father exists, but they clearly don't know Him. The response to the truth in such a negative, hostile fashion clearly indicates they don't know Him. Later in John's first epistle he'll point out the distinction between believing that the Father exists and actually knowing Him. What does he say—"he that says 'I know Him' and keeps not the commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him." That's the difference between acknowledging that the Father exists and actually knowing Him. To know Him is to comprehend His word and to practice it and here this hostile bunch of people obviously were not; Jesus points this out.

37) And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. (NKJV)

He's addressing a bunch of hostile Jews in this case and He's pointing out, how could you possibly hear the voice of God, as hostile as you are? Notice verse 43, Jesus makes another point.

43) I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. (NKJV)

Jesus points out here, I haven't come in my own name, I've come in the Father's name to do the Father's will, speak the Father's words, do the Father's works. Seems rather straightforward, does it not? Well, it hasn't always seemed straightforward, there are individuals who still have a difficult time comprehending it. It is exciting, quite frankly, when you get the road map correct; all kinds of things come off the pages of the scripture to enlighten you.

Let's go to chapter 6. Six different times in chapter 6 there's the reference Jesus makes to having been sent with the Father. We'll start in verse 27. In chapter 6 He feeds the 5,000 and he calms the storm and walks on water. In verse 27 we pick up the story.

John 6:27 *Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.*" (NKJV)

The bread of life is available through Jesus Christ because the Father has set His seal on Him. You've heard of the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, to give you the assurance that consumer products are indeed credible and high quality. You can get no higher seal of approval, if you will, than that which comes from God the Father. That seal has been placed on His firstborn Son, here called the Son of Man.

28) *Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”*

29) *Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.” (NKJV)*

Here again, another reference to the fact that God the Father has sent Jesus Christ and it's important that we believe.

30) *Therefore they said to Him, [He's talking to a less hostile crowd, obviously, at this point] “What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?”*

31) *Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” (NKJV)*

They don't quite have it right yet. Are you going to do one better than Moses? Moses gave us manna, can you do one better than that? *What!?* What is this—seems like it is very difficult to convince them. So Jesus said to them in verse 32:

32) *... “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.*

33) *For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” (NKJV)*

Of course, Jesus is the bread of life, by His own statement.

34) *Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.”*

35) *And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*

36) *But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.*

37) *All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*

38) *For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. (NKJV)*

We see the Father and the Son working together. On the one hand it is God the Father who draws people; we see in verse 44, “No one can come to Me [to Jesus] unless the Father who sent me draws him.” We won't be in chapter 14 today but in chapter 14:6, it says, “No one can come to the Father except through Me.” The two work together; God draws a person initially but then salvation doesn't come through a relationship only with the Father, we also have to be in a relationship with the firstborn Son—with the one whose life was offered for our benefit. Let's go down to verse 53 and the evidence piles up. Let's say for example we're the jury and I'm presenting the evidence, and you're going to have to give testimony as to what the statement in John 8:58 means. What does it mean?—before Abraham was, I am. We're presenting the testimony to you from the transcript, if you will, and you're going to have to pass judgment, and you will.

Everyone will, as to just what it is that God is saying to us. Let's notice verse 53 [of John, chapter 6]:

53) *Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. (NKJV)*

Whoa! Now that's a hard saying! What is He saying?—you have to be a cannibal to be a true christian, to be a true child of God? In this case you'll have to hang around until Passover to understand the full meaning of what He's talking about. If you're going to abandon Him before the whole story is told, well ... you'll come to understand.

54) *Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*

55) *For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. (NKJV)*

You can understand why the Jews might have a little difficulty with such a testimony.

56) *He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.*

57) *As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, (NKJV)*

That's an interesting statement. How is it that Jesus, who has lived from eternity, says, I live because of the Father. Perhaps this is a reference to the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among them, and it was Mary, His earthly mother, pregnant by the Father through the Holy Spirit, and that could be the reference.

57 continued) *... so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.*

58) *This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." (NKJV)*

This is a hard saying and some people were having difficulty with this kind of talk.

60) *Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"*

61) [Jesus said to them] *... "Does this offend you?"*

62) *What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?*

63) *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. (NKJV)*

There's a hint as to what He meant by eating His flesh and drinking His blood—didn't mean it in the physical sense, we're talking about words of life which are spirit. We'll come to a full understanding as we commit ourselves. Have you ever noticed that in your history with God and learning the truth—I learned this early on—when God reveals a certain truth to you, something you hadn't understood before (I remember very well coming to understand that Sunday really wasn't the Sabbath, that it was the seventh day, and that put certain obstacles in my path right away), but you come to learn after a

while, when God reveals certain things to you, you're obligated to put it into practice or forget it—no further understanding. As a minister visiting new people we ran into that repeatedly. You know to do certain things so God is not obligated to reveal any more to you until you practice what you already know. Okay, so we have to pursue it. So the flesh profits nothing—see, we have to transcend the flesh.

You do realize, don't you, that the gulf between as we sit here today in the flesh and what we will be when we are resurrected is a vast gulf not achievable by our own efforts—you understand that? Of course! I hope you do. It's a critical understanding. The flesh profits nothing but we work so hard to profit in the flesh, don't we? We have to continually re-evaluate what our efforts are. As you get older you realize how little you can accomplish with the flesh. You wake up and you have aches and pains and I look at my aches and pains now with a certain measure of assurance—I'm still alive! I didn't used to worry about that, just hopped out of bed, grabbed the tool box, let's go to work. I don't do that so quickly anymore. We'll probably have to take tomorrow off to recover from the Sabbath. That's the way it works.

Now, once again, not to beat a dead horse, but how much emphasis does He have to place on the fact that He's been sent to do the will of Father? There's a clear distinction between the role of the Father who clearly has the authority to carry out His plan and purpose, and He's doing that through His firstborn Son. Very clear if you'll just allow yourself to accept it. Dropping down to verse 66.

66) From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

67) Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"

68) But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

69) [Notice this is the testimony of Simon Peter] Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (NKJV)

Not just any old God, you are the Son of the Living God. So we carry on, chapter 7—it's not over. Another interesting point that He brings out relative to His relationship to the Father and what His work on this earth was. Beginning in verse 14—it's the Feast of Tabernacles now, and in the middle of the Feast, it says ...

John 7:14 *Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught.*

15) And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?" (NKJV)

He hadn't studied by the standard means—they didn't see him in seminary or in the Bible college or at the synagogue studying under the Rabbis. We'll learn later that He was taught by God—chapter 8 will point that out.

16) *Jesus answered them and said, [notice now] “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. (NKJV)*

Jesus didn't bring anything original. The one thing that was original, was that He was indeed the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world and He was there to be slain, to be offered.

17) *If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.*

18) *He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him. (NKJV)*

Jesus didn't seek His own glory, He sought the glory of the One who sent Him. How many times do we have to emphasize it before we make it a part of us? As I've gone through this material, and I've been studying this particular subject and these particular verses that I'm sharing with you, for months, and as I go over it and over it and over it, it becomes a part of the information that directs my life—it becomes more clear to me. You begin to state things from memory and it just opens your eyes to a whole new vista of understanding in terms of the relationship of God to Jesus Christ, and it is quite marvelous. It's really exciting. Goes back to the days when I had a Plain Truth magazine rolled up in my lunchbox everywhere I went and a re-print article in my back pocket, studying all the time. It's just exciting. Even an old codger like me can learn new things and be excited about it! Continuing then, in [John] chapter 7:

19) *Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?” (NKJV)*

Now there again is the difference between acknowledging God exists and knowing Him. You don't keep His law, you don't follow His doctrine and His practice, you just have some vague notion, and it's of very little consequence, because, what does it lead to? If you're not going to practice what God gives you then you're subject to hostile attitudes and all manner of unsavoriness.

28) *Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying [this is during the Feast], “You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, [notice again] whom you do not know.*

29) *But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.” (NKJV)*

It seems to be pretty straightforward what He's saying here.

32) *The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him.*

33) *Then Jesus said to them, “I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me.*

34) *You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come.” (NKJV)*

Jesus was sent and He's going to return to the One who sent Him. The day is coming when the Kingdom of God will be established, not just in the hearts and minds of those God calls out as a part of his Church now, but that Kingdom will be established over the face of the entire earth.

We're closing in on the final chapter, chapter 8. Let's notice this new information—the relationship between the Father and the Son by the very words of the Son Himself. Chapter 8:12.

John 8:12 *Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying ... (NKJV)*

Now chapter 8 begins with the story of the woman caught in adultery—I always puzzle at that story. If it had been me I wouldn't have said a word until they brought the man also caught in adultery, but it doesn't matter what I would have done—Jesus didn't do it that way. Clearly if someone's caught in adultery, my understanding is it takes two to commit adultery—nevertheless ...

12 continued) ... *"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*

13) *The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true."* [Again, that hostile attitude.]

14) *Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going."* [They didn't get it.]

15) *You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.*

16) *And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me.*

Yet again, emphasizing that fact.

17) *It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true.*

18) *I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."* [I guess the Father ought to know.]

25) *Then they said to Him, "Who are You?"*

It's interesting, here we are, He's been declaring to them who He is all along, they just don't get it—they didn't like His answer, evidently.

25 continued) ... *And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. [Who am I? I've been telling you from the beginning.]"*

26) *I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."* (NKJV)

How many times do I have to tell you? I have come from the Father who sent Me, the

words that I bring are His words and you don't seem to be getting it at all. At some point in time you just have to give up and believe, I reckon.

27) *They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.*

They're not getting it, you see. There are those that just don't get it.

28) *Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; [again, emphasizing that it's not Me, initiating all this] but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.*

All they were concerned about was how does He teach us these things if He's never been to the learned schools of whatever was current at the time. He learned because the Father taught Him.

29) *And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him."* (NKJV)

He didn't come to please Himself—He came to do those things which please the Father. You're thinking, whoa, it just goes on and on and on. We're closing in on the final verdict, you got to [decide] guilty or not. What does He mean? We're getting there, we're closing in on it. Verse 37, another interesting point.

37) *"I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.*

38) *I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."*

39) *They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.*

40) *But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God.* (NKJV)

Where did He get the truth that He speaks? He got it from God, not of His own initiation.

40 continued) *... Abraham did not do this.*

41) *You do the deeds of your father."*

Here's the response, if you don't like what's being said, what do you do?—you do everything you can to somehow denigrate the messenger:

41 continued) *Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God."* (NKJV)

They acknowledged God the Father existed and claimed He was their God.

42) *Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.*

This happens to be the twenty-fifth reference by my count of Jesus pointing out that He was sent from the Father—twenty-five times and we're still in chapter 8. Seems like He wants to get this point across. Finally then, verse 48, and we'll close it out right here as we come down to the climax—to the point we want to make.

48) *Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"* (NKJV)

There again, do anything you can—never mind the message, whether it's true or not; we're not going to believe it, so the easy way out is to discredit the messenger.

49) *Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.*

50) *And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges.*

51) *Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."* (NKJV)

He said over and over again, the words that I speak are the words the Father gave me.

52) *Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.'*

53) *Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?"* (NKJV)

How many times does He have to tell them? Is it this hard to get through—to crack the nut that is human nature—the rock that is human nature? Oh yes it is, evidently. Even Jesus Christ is having difficulty getting through the veil of vanity and human nature and hostility that comes when people are confronted with the truth. See, the truth kills. You come to grips with the truth about our relationship to God and you realize, I better get with the program here.

54) *Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God.*

55) *Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word.*

56) *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."*

57) *Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"* (NKJV)

Now we've come there, verse 58. What do you suppose Jesus is trying to get across to these hostile individuals when He says:

58) ... *“Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”* (NKJV)

Remember, Jesus has said, I can do nothing of Myself; it is the Father that taught Me; I’ve come to do the will of the Father; I do the works that the Father gave Me; the words that I speak are the words that the Father gave Me. Now when Jesus makes the statement, verse 58, *Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM*, is He claiming to be the I AM of the Old Testament, or the God of the Old Testament, or is He simply stating to them, you know, fellows, I precede Abraham by a long, long way. As [stated in] verse 1, chapter 1, In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. Jesus, the Word, has been with God from the very beginning: Yes, I preceded Abraham by far. So, once again, what do they say?

59) *Then they took up stones to throw at Him;* (NKJV)

It can be dangerous to have the truth—to go around proclaiming the truth.

Let’s go to the last reference to Jesus being sent, chapter 20:21. Again, what is the witness of Jesus—is His witness true, is it reliable, can we take it and trust it? What is His relationship to the Father? Is His own testimony worthwhile? I stopped short of chapter 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, etc.—I would encourage you to go ahead, take the whole thought here of Jesus being sent by the Father and follow it all the way through. It doesn’t change, it’s just that we’ve got time constraints here today and I know how it is, enough is enough—we save something for next time. Notice chapter 20:21, this is the last reference to Jesus having been sent from the Father, at least in the book of John.

John 20:21 *So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”* (NKJV)

What have we seen today concerning how the Father sent Jesus and what He sent Him to do and what He sent Him to say? In Jesus’ words, here, as the gospel closes out: *Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.* And what would that be—we, too, are sent to do as Jesus did—to bring glory to the Father; to speak the words that the Father has given us; to do the works that the Father has given us to do. So brethren, it’s really a privilege to know the truth—the truth will indeed set us free. We are privileged to know the truth, we’re privileged to receive the truth. I used to marvel at the statement about the Holy Spirit would lead you into all truth. Sure, we have all truth—this is the Worldwide Church of God! ((laughs)) Well, oh dear—plenty of room to have additional truth revealed. I personally rejoice in it, so with what human vigor we have left, my wife and I are determined to help support the project to make sure that the truth of God is known to whomever is willing to listen. So let’s rejoice in that and praise God our Father, and Jesus Christ, His firstborn Son, for we one day will be Children of God, just as He is. We’ve been sent to do the will of God. Let’s be about it then.