

Knowing Jesus Part 2

Terry Swagerty

Recorded on February 8, 2020

I titled this sermon:

Knowing Jesus Part 2

We usually send our titles to Vivian in New Mexico and when she receives them, she puts them where they are supposed to go. She said she searched the archives and could not find Part 1. I then had to tell her, Part 1 was entitled, Was Jesus, Christ Centered? It was delivered back in August of 2018. So, it has been about eighteen months or so now, since I gave that one. That was my inaugural sermon in The Pacific Church of God. I said at the time that I could only cover so much of the material, and now I have to come back and do another one. I would now like to go back and review some of what I said, briefly, in the first one.

The focus was around Chapter 8:58 of John's Gospel, in which Jesus makes the statement: Before Abraham was, I Am.

Coincidentally, you recall just two weeks ago, Mark Sappington gave a sermon on the subject of Who Was the I Am—that was the title—so the same subject and same material. He came at it from quite a different perspective, because he was considering the grammar that is involved, along with some of the technical aspects of the statement. It is rather straight forward, when you understand what is being said. My focus at the time, was on what Jesus meant by saying that. This verse is used as a proof text by many people, who want to contend that Jesus was the God of the Old Testament. They will quote this one and say it is proof. He actually said—in the English at least— “before Abraham was, I Am”.

The point of the first sermon was to go back through the book of John, through the chapters leading up to chapter 8:58 to see from the context, whether there was some hint about what Jesus had meant. What did He mean? Was He saying, I am the God of the Old Testament or was He simply saying, that I was there before Abraham?

By way of review I will now share a little of the material of that first sermon. Then we will pick it up and go on further because there is a considerable amount of information. As I got to studying the material, I found the idea of Him being sent by His Father was a focus throughout the book of John. Forty-two times the term “sent,” in relation to Jesus Christ being sent by His Father, is in there—forty-two times. That struck me as being quite interesting, so I thought I'll just go back and look up all forty-two of them. As I said the first time, I won't go through all of them with you, because that would turn out to be punishment, if you had to sit through all forty-two. But we did cover the ones up to chapter 8 and it was illuminating. Just a brief summary then, as to Jesus' own testimony. What was He saying? What did He say about Himself and about His

relationship to His Father? It will be enlightening to review some more of what Jesus had to say about Himself before we go on into the book of John.

I noted John the Baptist's testimony in chapter 3:31-35, where John the Baptist said that the words are God's and the One sent speaks the words of God. I thought that was interesting—He was speaking the words of God, not His own. Then we go to chapter 4 and Jesus' own testimony. He indicates the Father is seeking worshippers, that is some people to worship Him, in spirit and in truth. This is a common verse—it's a memory verse—and we understand that. Jesus did not indicate that He was looking for worshippers for Himself. He said that the Father is looking for those to worship Him, in spirit and in truth. Truth is important brethren, when we come to the worship of the Father. I think this business of the whole record of God and Christ in scripture is very important to get right and to have it be true.

In chapter 4, He also points out that He came to do the will and the work of Him Who sent Him. Again, there was no focus on Himself, He didn't come with some personal initiative, He came with the instructions and the words, and the will and the works of God. We got to chapter 5 and I noted that it was particularly rich with regard to this material. He says in verse 19 for example, the Son does nothing of Himself. What does that tell you? He did not come for His own personal initiative is what He saying. He does not do anything of Himself. What I came to do is what the Father sent Me to do. Verse 20, the Father shows the Son all things. So, what the Son knows has been shown by the Father. Then in verse 25 and 26, the Father grants to the Son, life and judgement. Again, all is focused on the fact that the Father is guiding and directing Jesus Christ and He recognizes that. Then He says, in verse 30, I do nothing of Myself. In verses 36 and 37, He does the works of His Father and it is His Father Who sent Him. I have come in My Father's name.

I spent considerably more time on this the first time around than now. This is just a brief review. We did stop to reflect a little bit about what your impression was of what Jesus is doing here. Is He drawing attention to Himself? Or is He rather focusing on His relationship to the Father and what He sent Him to do? I do nothing of Myself, the words that I speak are the words the Father gave Me to speak. How difficult is it? Is the testimony of Jesus reliable? You would think so, wouldn't you? I would think it would be. Then we went on to chapter 6 and it is pretty rich too.

It says, I have come to do the will of My Father. Not My own will, the Father's will. We are all familiar with verse 44 in chapter 6 where He says that no one can come to Me except the spirit of the Father draws him. He said there, and again in verse 57, that the Living Father had sent Him. Later He called Himself the Son of the Living God. I am not the God of the Old Testament; I am the Son of the Living God. It is interesting that in Chapter 7 and verse 16 He points out the same focus, my doctrine is His who sent Me. I do not come with an original doctrine or New Testament "stuff". What I bring is that which the Father has given Me to bring. He is saying that He is seeking the glory of the One Who sent Him. He wasn't seeking His own glory. He was completely focused on His Father and His relationship there.

In Chapter 8, He states: I am with the Father who sent Me and I speak what I have heard from Him. I do nothing of Myself, My Father taught Me. I speak what I have seen of My Father, the truth which I heard from God. I do not seek My own. All of those statements are right out of chapter 8 of John. Then we come to John 8:58 and we paused. Based on the evidence, based on the testimony of Jesus Christ, what do you think Jesus was saying when He said, Before Abraham was, I Am? My conclusion was, clearly that His focus was on giving glory to His Father and He was simply pointing out to the Pharisees and His critics, I was before Abraham—yes—a long time before Abraham. He has been around forever and He will continue to be around forever.

We will now pick up the story. What follows is almost as startling as what we have seen already. Almost, you be the judge.

John 8:5 *Then the Jews said to Him, You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"*

58) Jesus said to them, Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." (NKJV)

I've seen Abraham and was there a long time before Abraham. Of course, they didn't like that, because now He's making claims that put Him in the same category as His Father in heaven and they didn't like that idea. So, what did they do—what was the response to the truth, to the revelation of Jesus Christ?

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

Oh, terrific, is that what you can expect? Tell me brethren, is it any different, should it be any different, would you expect it to be any different? If someone comes up with the truth, you would expect people to say, that is wonderful, let's embrace it. Instead you are likely to be stoned. Jesus bringing the truth of God, brought the threat of death to Him.

59 continued) ... but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by. (NKJV)

His testimony was not very well received. In chapter 9 is the story of the man born blind, the impact of Jesus interfacing with him and the effect it had on the world around Him.

John 9:1 *Now as Jesus passed by [so He escaped the attempted stoning], He saw a man who was blind from birth.*

2) And His disciples asked Him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (NKJV)

Here is a typical misconception. If somebody is blind or crippled or has something not quite right, then somebody must have sinned. Not necessarily so, as Jesus said.

3) *Jesus answered, Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. (NKJV)*

Once again, the works of God are going to be revealed in this individual who was born blind. Not My works, the works of God.

4) *I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; (NKJV)*

Why is Jesus on the earth? Jesus is here because His Father sent Him. There is this day and night thing. Today we have electric lights and shift work goes on around the clock. You can go to the factory, or be put on the swing shift or the graveyard shift. They could not do that in Jesus' day. When the sun set, the day was over.

4 continued) ... *the night is coming when no one can work. (NKJV)*

I suspect He is not just talking about how much work you could do at the factory; He is probably referring to a spiritual work and the day and conditions arrive when you can't do it anymore.

5) *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (NKJV)*

He wasn't always going to be around, but this was the beginning. He was doing the works of Him who sent Him. We are talking about spiritual sight, spiritual understanding. What did He do? He made clay, verses 10 and 11.

11) *He answered and said, A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash. So, I went and washed, and I received sight." (NKJV)*

Restored—it wasn't granted to him in the first place, it wasn't a matter of restoring it, he had never seen. So, he went and washed, verse 10.

10) *Therefore, they said to him, How were your eyes opened?" (NKJV)*

So those who knew him and had seen him, asked him how he could see now.

11) *He answered and said, A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight." (NKJV)*

It is interesting to watch the enlarging of this man's understanding of what had happened to him. He went from a purely physical point of view – a man named Jesus made clay – to one of a totally spiritual orientation. At this point, the Pharisees were after him and they wanted to know as well.

17) *They said to the blind man again, What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" (NKJV)*

What do you say about him? What's your opinion of this guy who opened your eyes?

17) *... He said, He is a prophet." (NKJV)*

He has gone from just a man named Jesus, to now, He's a prophet. Later, notice verse 35, Jesus heard that they had cast Him out. We will take a little closer look at the experience that this man had in the aftermath of being healed.

35) *Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, Do you believe in the Son of God?" (NKJV)*

He didn't say, do you believe in the God of the Old Testament? The question was, do you believe in the Son of God?

36) *He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"*

37) *And Jesus said to him, You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you."*

38) *Then he said, Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him. (NKJV)*

He goes from----a man named Jesus, made clay for my eyes, I washed and I was healed. The Pharisees quizzed him about the incident and he came to see that He must be a prophet. He comes to understand that Jesus is the Son of God.

39) *And Jesus said, For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind." (NKJV)*

We have a situation where people have seen and are not responding. We have people who did not see and are now beginning to see, and are making the proper response. This is critical—it's absolutely critical that we comprehend when God is opening an opportunity for us to understand new things, to correct some errors, and to have a deeper comprehension of His overall plan and purpose. Take a look at how the man who was born blind and was healed was received. It was a rather dramatic incident that took place. Somebody was blind from birth and now he sees. Evidently, he is an adult.

24) *So, they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." (NKJV)*

Give God the glory. Who is God? Do they not know who this is? They are aware of who God is—who do they know as God? This is Jehovah, they understand that.

25) *He answered and said, Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."*

26) *Then they said to him again, What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"* (NKJV)

It is interesting because He is going to point out some things that they aren't going to like. Notice what He says. What did He see, what did He do?

27) *He answered them, I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"* (NKJV)

You want to choose your words carefully in certain circumstances. I am assuming in this situation, but I don't think it is much of an assumption, that this individual was stirred to point out a deeper understanding of what was happening here. I told you and you will not listen. This is what is wrong with humanity generally speaking. God tells, nobody listens and we don't respond. It's important that we listen, that we respond. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples? You didn't believe it the first time. If I tell you again are you going to believe it the second time? Why are you interested? You must be wanting to become His disciples. Of course, that did not set well.

28) *Then they reviled him and said, You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples.*

29) *We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from."* (NKJV)

Jesus had, of course, spent time, after time, after time, up to this moment pointing to the fact that He had been sent from God Himself.

30) *The man answered and said to them, Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes!* (NKJV)

The one born blind is beginning to see. Not just physically, but he is beginning to comprehend a deeper truth, and see that there is a heavenly presence and that he has come face to face with Jesus Christ, the One sent by God. He has opened my eyes and you do not know where He is from?

31) *Now we know that God does not hear sinners; [the blind man now sees, He goes on to say] but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him.*

32) *Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind.*

33) *If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."* (NKJV)

A little sermonette from the man born blind, to the Pharisees and the religious leaders of the day.

34) *They answered and said to him, You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out. (NKJV)*

They didn't want the truth. They didn't want to know that this Jesus was from heaven, and that God had dispatched Him here to do God's own will. They didn't want to hear that, so what did they do with him? They cast him out. Then of course, as we saw, Jesus confronted him and introduces the man to the fact that He is the Son of God. Do you believe in the Son of God? It is interesting, because the truth begins to come out and we understand and then we have opportunities.

What we are now encountering in the church of God community is a profound new understanding coming forth in various ways. The record of God and Christ in scripture is certainly critical, certainly foundational. This isn't new. We have to be aware and receptive to the word of God, and to where He is leading us. We are going to see later, that the Holy Spirit is to lead us into all truth. If we are not willing to follow, we are not going to get the truth, are we?

In Chapter 2 of Romans, Paul is writing a letter to the church of God at Rome. I want you to notice what he says in the beginning of verse 17.

Romans 2:17 *Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God ... (NKJV)*

Oh yes, those Jews don't know anything about what's going on, they had it all wrong, etc., etc. He is not talking to the Jews here—yes, there is Jewish background— but this is a congregation of the church of God. This is not just a bunch of Jews.

18) *and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law ... (NKJV)*

We are living in a post Worldwide Church of God era. God has deemed it necessary that there are certain things from that era that have to be changed. They have to be corrected and abuses that took place have to be atoned for. There are errors that have to be corrected and there is just not other way around it. We are beginning to see that. This is the way it was in Rome. They thought they had special insight. When you go back to our Worldwide days, the gospel had not been preached for eighteen and a half centuries. We thought we had all the truth and the whole truth and nothing but the truth—you couldn't argue with us, we knew it all. Going on in verse 19.

19) *and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,*

20) *an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.*

21) *You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? (NKJV)*

It doesn't need to be taught, we have it all. I have shared this with you in the past, but I think it bears repeating by way of example. The error that Jesus Christ is the God of the Old Testament crept into the church of God in the 1950's. That's the record, it is in the record. Finally, God says that is enough, I want it sorted out. But after sixty or seventy years, it has become a part of your "doctrinal integrity". We have believed this for so long, it must be true. Why? Because it has been a long time, not because it is in scripture. Really? As I said and shared with you before, when I began to note that certain things were missing, I thought we better address some of these issues. So I did. I wrote my little memo of concern and one of the responses I received was this statement, word for word. "I intend to fight for the doctrinal integrity of (I'll just say church of God)." Think about that statement for a moment. That is not unlike the response that the Jews made in the case of the man born blind and healed. They didn't want to hear it. They didn't want to hear that there was a Son of God—someone who had been sent from heaven. Think about it. If you make the statement, I intend to fight for the doctrinal integrity of your branch of the church of God, what does that mean? I don't need to be taught. I'm going to dig my heels in and defend what we have. I don't need to be taught. What did Paul say to the Romans? Verse 17 again.

- 17) *Indeed, you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God,*
- 18) *and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law,*
- 19) *and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,*
- 20) *an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.*
- 21) *You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? (NKJV)*

Those who put their faith in God and stand up for the truth—and this is current experience, have been censored and even punished. We are talking about leaders in the church of God—deacons, deaconesses, elders, saying you can't teach that. So, you find yourself, if you they are not careful, tolerating error and putting up with it. Others stand by silently, fearful that somehow, demanding an explanation might get them put out, as happened to the poor soul in John 9. Are we fearful? What are we afraid of? We have to be afraid of God. There are ministers held hostage. They are afraid to preach the truth because they might lose their livelihoods. I feel sorry for all of them—every one of them. We will go back to John to understand something. Again, we are in a transition. This is a post Worldwide Church of God era. There are significant situations from that past experience that have to be, purely and simply, adjusted. We are about doing just that. Chapter 10 - this is where Jesus talks about being the Shepherd and the sheep hear His voice, but I want to focus on verse 24.

John 10:24 *Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." (NKJV)*

Jesus is being badgered to tell the whole story. Notice what they ask, are you the Christ? They did not ask Him, are you the God of the Old Testament? They said, tell us plainly, are you the Christ, are you the Messiah, are you the One sent from God? He had been saying it in every chapter of John's record. Jesus answered them.

25) *Jesus answered them, I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. (NKJV)*

Notice again, it is in My Father's name—the works that I do. They are in My Father's name.

26) *But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.*

27) *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*

28) *And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.*

29) *My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; (NKJV)*

Including Me—again, He is not trying to focus attention on Himself, He's focusing attention on His Father.

29 continued) *... and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.*

30) *I and the Father are one. (NKJV)*

They are one in purpose, in character, as far as eternal life is concerned. They are one. But they are not one in number, nor are they one in authority. It's very clear what has been stated all along and He continues to it point out. The Father is the Most-High God. Jesus Christ is the Son of the Most-High God. The Father is the living God, Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the Father. Jesus Christ is the servant, glorified by the Father, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. If you want to dig in your heels and try to maintain the status quo, then you will find yourself on the losing end. It's not a very pleasant place to be, I wouldn't think—I am sure it's not. Going on, verse 31.

31) *Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. (NKJV)*

See what happens when you put yourself in a position where you just come out with the truth and there it is—I'm from My Father—they just did not want to accept it. Are we willing to accept the plain testimony of scripture, the very words of Jesus Christ? Jesus answered them.

32) *Jesus answered them, Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" (NKJV)*

The Jews answered him in verse 33.

33) *The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.” (NKJV)*

Ok, that was a problem for the Jews because He had made Himself to be the Son of God. Clearly, He is divine, no doubt about it—He is eternal. He has always been around and about doing the will of His Father. Jesus responds in verse 34.

34) *Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, You are gods ?*
35) *If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),*

36) *do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, You are blaspheming, because I said, I am the Son of God ? (NKJV)*

The Father sanctified Him, the Father sent Him into the world to do His will and so He is the Son of God—now what? Are you calling me a blasphemer because I simply state the fact?

37) *If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;*
38) *but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.” (NKJV)*

There it is, and it goes back to the healing of the man born blind—can’t you just take a look at the one who was given his sight, he could see it. What’s the concern? He must be something special or this would not have happened. He could see it.

39) *Therefore, they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand. (NKJV)*

So, it seems like He is always on the move, trying to stay out of trouble. Once again, the emphasis—Jesus is not focusing on Himself. He is focusing on His Father and the fact that He has not the preeminence of His Father but that He is there to do the will of His Father. The works that He does, He does in the name of His Father.

Chapter 11 is the story of Lazarus. Jesus was a friend of the family and Lazarus as you know, died. This is the story of his resurrection.

John 11:1 *Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.*

2) *It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.*

3) *Therefore, the sisters sent to Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.”*

4) *When Jesus heard that, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” (NKJV)*

His death was for the glory of God and through this it is going to be made obvious that this Jesus is the Son of God. He is going to be glorified as well. We'll move forward to verse 21 and pick up the story there.

21) *Now Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.*

22) *-But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."*
(NKJV)

Martha was giving God credit for any miracle that would be done through Jesus. That was her understanding.

23) *Jesus said to her, Your brother will rise again."*

24) *Martha said to Him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."* (NKJV)

Martha was not anticipating that Lazarus would be resurrected now. He had been in the grave for four days—he's dead—but he would be resurrected later.

25) *Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.*

26) *And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*
(NKJV)

This is looking forward to the long view here. People do die, but that's not the end result. The end result of believing in Jesus Christ is the resurrection and that you will have eternal life.

27) *She said to Him, Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."* (NKJV)

Now notice, she did not say, I believe that you are the God of the Old Testament, Who has come into the world. You are the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed one, the Son of God who has come into the world. It was clear to her. This was not a question for Martha, nor was it a question for the man whose sight was given to him. Christ is now coming to the tomb and He is going to resurrect him.

38) *Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.*

39) *Jesus said, Take away the stone."* *Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."* (NKJV)

Are you sure you want to do that? She didn't get the fact that he was going to be resurrected, that he was going to come out of that grave alive.

40) *Jesus said to her, Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" (NKJV)*

Again, He is focusing His attention on His Father—the glory of God.

41) *Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, [He offers a prayer audibly] Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.*

42) *And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." (NKJV)*

The focus is on the fact that He had been sent. He wasn't trying to make the attention on Himself. Clearly not, He was focusing the attention on His Father and the works that His Father was accomplishing. And of course, Lazarus was resurrected—amazing! This was troublesome to the authorities, because now people were beginning to focus on Jesus and what He was doing. They were beginning to think there was something special about this man. And indeed, He was special because He was focusing on His Father and bringing glory to His Father.

Now in chapter 12, we come up to the time of the Passover. Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany. That's the background—they are getting ready for the Passover. I won't go through it all but I do want to focus from verse 42.

John 12:42 *Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; (NKJV)*

Yes, it's a current problem today. There are those who can see a new understanding, a deeper understanding, but they don't want to say anything because they don't want to disrupt the status quo. They don't want to be put out, they don't want to abandon the arrangements they have, so I guess they just keep it quietly to themselves. What can you say? It is not an uncommon problem.

43) *for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. (NKJV)*

What we have here is nice and let's just keep it that way—don't want to disrupt things.

44) *Then Jesus cried out and said, He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. (NKJV)*

Back to the reference of, He is here because He was sent to do the Father's will.

45) *-And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.*

46) *I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. (NKJV)*

We have to come out of this darkness thing and embrace the light. Sometimes you go from dark into light—brilliant light. I can remember as a child coming out of the Saturday afternoon matinee and into the bright sunlight of central California. Possibly at some time, you would have been in a dark theater too, and experienced how almost overwhelming it is, going from dark to light. I suppose you have to agree when you come face to face with the truth of God, it's just that bold and it shakes us up. What now?

46) I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.

47) And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

48) He who rejects Me [that is, doesn't believe it], and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

49) For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. (NKJV)

Once again, when Jesus made the statement, “before Abraham was, I am”, what is He saying? The testimony is clear. He is making no attempt to put Himself in place of the Father or aggrandizing Himself in any way. He wishes to give full credit to His Father.

50) And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.” (NKJV)

Just as the Father has told me. Here we are, chapter by chapter, the testimony is the same. Chapter 13 is significant.

John 13:1 *Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father ... (NKJV)*

Jesus knew that He was the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world. At what point did all that come to pass? I don't know, but I don't suppose it bothered Him a great deal for however long it was. Take your pick—millions of years, billions of years, measured in geologic time—I suppose it didn't bother Him too much up until this point. Now the hour had come. What hour are we talking about? He is going to be arrested. The fact is that He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and He is now going to be slain. The hour has come. Of course, He is with His disciples, they keep the Passover together and chapter 13 is about the foot washing. Now we get into material that we cover at the Passover every year. This is significant.

We all are going to face our hour, if you will. Yes, the hour will come and every individual that is going to become a part of the church of God, the family of God, and who is eventually going to achieve eternal life, is going to come to their own personal hour. You are going to have to face it one way or another—life and death. Except it is a spiritual life we are concerned about, not physical life. We are talking about sight—light

versus blindness and darkness. Every one of us will face the moment when we recognize that if I make a choice to pursue the will of God, to pursue the truth of God, it is going to totally disrupt what I have known to be life in this world. Think back to the time you were called and that is basically what happens.

What do you think it meant when Paul said, I am crucified with Christ? Do you think God is going to let us off the hook? You know, be kind to me. Do I have to do that too? Yes, we all do. What little trials and tests we have compared to what God has in store for us. We need to recognize that we have to put God first. There is no way around it. Verse 12.

12) *So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, [He did the foot washing] Do you know what I have done to you?*

13) *You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.*

14) *If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.*

15) *For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. (NKJV)*

What we are reading in the testimony of Jesus Christ, is how He relates to His Father and how He relates to other people. It speaks loudly to us and how we are going to have to conduct our lives. Our lesson is, we have to conduct ourselves the same way Jesus conducted Himself, which was by bringing glory to His Father, glory to Jesus Christ and not to ourselves.

16) *Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; (NKJV)*

What does that say to you? How does that speak to the relationship between Jesus Christ and His Father? Forty-two times Jesus will say, I have been sent by My Father. He who sent Me is greater than I. Back to the trinitarian theology thing—trinitarians are not too worried about whether it says God or whether it says the Son of God or the Holy Spirit—for them it is all one—doesn't matter. It does matter because the testimony is not that. The testimony is clear. There is the One who sent Him and there is He who was sent. The servant is not greater than his master. What did Peter say in Acts 3? He said the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, did what? Glorified His servant Jesus. I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master. Jesus is the servant of His Father, we are the servants of our God and of His Christ and obviously, we are not greater than They are.,

16 continued) *... nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. (NKJV)*

Once again, it points back to the same question. When Jesus said, before Abraham was, I am, what did He mean? He didn't mean that somehow, He was the God of the Old Testament.

- 17) *If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.*
- 18) *I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.*
- 19) *Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He. (NKJV)*

That is, I am the Christ, I am the Messiah, I am the One who had to have My life laid down.

- 20) *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.” (NKJV)*

The servant is not greater than his master, nor is the one sent greater than the one who sent him. I am not greater than My Father He said in verse 16. I am He, the one who was sent by My Father. He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Notice verse 34 and 35 because again, He gave us an example.

- 34) *A new commandment I give to you [you're familiar with this, we even have a hymn to this affect], that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*
- 35) *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (NKJV)*

The way Jesus acted, the way Jesus lived His life, has a direct impact on what we do, what we say and what we think. The whole idea is one of a humble approach, a humble attitude—that was always His approach. He does not have to puff Himself up. He does not need that. It is of little consequence for human beings to think of themselves highly. He continues in chapter 14—same concept, same focus. Focus on His Father. Notice verse 8.

John 14:8 *-Philip said to Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”*

- 9) *Jesus said to him, Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, Show us the Father ?*
- 10) *Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.*
- 11) *Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. (NKJV)*

The focus is clear once again, we focus on the will of the Father all the way down. It is not My authority, He says. He did not come with some personal agenda. He was not, nor has He ever been— He was always the same, yesterday, today and forever. It is the Father's power and authority that does the works. Verse 22 now.

22) *Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?"*

23) *Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*

24) *He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father s who sent Me. (NKJV)*

Again, it is not My words. My position is under authority to My Father, I do His will.

25) *These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.*

26) *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. (NKJV)*

We are going to be taught all things. But if at some point you draw the line. You say, I don't need to learn anymore, I am going to maintain my current doctrinal integrity. What I believe is what I believe, it's the truth and I'm not going to change it, then how are you going to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit? The truth is, you aren't going to. It is the end of growth. Anybody that says, I am going to defend the doctrinal integrity of my particular branch of the Church of God has pretty well drawn the line. That's it, I'm digging in my heels and now I'm just going to defend what I know. I don't care to be led anywhere else. I don't think you want to be in that kind of a situation. Don't we have to be willing to be led?

Continuing then, verse 27.

27) *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

28) *You have heard Me say to you, I am going away and coming back to you. If you loved Me, you would rejoice because said, I am going to the Father, for My Father is greater than I. (NKJV)*

You might say, time out—I get the point—enough is enough. But it doesn't end there. Chapter 15 is where we talk about the vine and the vinedresser and the branches and the fruit.

John 15:1 *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. (NKJV)*

Who controls what goes on in the vineyard? The vines, or the vinedresser? Is that clear?

2) *Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. (NKJV)*

It is interesting that the fruit is not born on Jesus. Jesus is the vine, which is the stump, the main framework of the grapevine. The fruit is born on the branches, the canes. That is important. Later He will say in verse 16, “You did not choose me, I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain.” You bear fruit—the canes bear fruit, because they are attached to the vine and the vine is what provides the canes and the fruit with the necessary nutrients—the water, the moisture, etc. that is necessary. But God is the vinedresser, He is the one that is in control of this process and Jesus is not trying to usurp the Father’s position.

4) Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5) I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (NKJV)

The canes can’t produce fruit if they are cut off the vine. As we’ve seen, it’s Jesus’ desire to do the will of the Father.

6) If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

7) If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. (NKJV)

We bear fruit because we are connected to the vine and that is the overall will of the vinedresser—God Himself. Continuing in John 16:1.

John 16:1 *These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble.*

2) They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.

3) And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. (NKJV)

That won’t happen now—that was way back then. You think so? I think there are those who, if they had the authority and we didn’t live in America or Canada or Australia or some such place like those countries, you would be on the rack for teaching the truth.

4) But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

5) But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, Where are You going?

6) But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

7) Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. (NKJV)

Verse 28 in this same chapter.

28) *I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.*” (NKJV)

Emphasized over and over again. Now briefly chapter 17—we’re familiar with this—this is the prayer of Jesus. He says clearly, verse 3.

John 17:3 *And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God ...* (NKJV)

Who is the only true God? The only true God is the Father of Jesus Christ. It is also necessary that we know His Son, Jesus Christ.

3 continued) *... and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.* (NKJV)

This is not to say that Jesus isn’t divine, of course He is. He has been around as long as His Father, which is forever.

4) *I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.*

5) *And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.* (NKJV)

They share that same glory and Jesus, in His current position, has been glorified. As Peter would later say, The God of our Fathers glorified His Servant, Jesus, whom you crucified.

6) *I have manifested Your name to the men [and women] whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.* (NKJV)

He is going back to the Father who sent Him. Verse 11 and 12.

11) *Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.*

12) *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.* (NKJV),

As I did in Part 1, we will now go to chapter 20. This is the last reference in the book of John at least, to Him being sent. Is the evidence abundant or not? What did Jesus mean when He said, “Before Abraham was, I am”? Was He making some lofty statement about His great position? That somehow, He was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? It doesn’t say that—it doesn’t say that at all. His own testimony, over and

over—chapter after chapter after chapter, it is the same thing. It's not My words, it's not My will, it's not My works, it's not My doctrine—it's the Father's, it's in His name. You would think we would get the picture, wouldn't you? I would think so. I think we'll live to see that we are living through some interesting times.

John 20:14 *Now when she had said this [this is Mary, who met the resurrected Jesus in the garden and had thought He was the gardener], she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus.*

15) *Jesus said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.* (NKJV)

She didn't believe He was going to be resurrected and that the sepulcher in the garden was a temporary thing to get past the Sabbath.

16) *Jesus said to her, Mary!" She turned and said to Him, Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).*

17) *Jesus said to her, Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.* (NKJV)

Jesus has a God? This kind of upsets the whole trinity thing. Jesus says the Father is My God. A God is one who is greater than you. How many times has Jesus said this in His testimony throughout the book, that God is greater than I? "I am ascending to My Father and your Father and to My God and your God." It is so interesting.

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

Why did the Father send Jesus Christ? He sent Him to do a work. He sent Him with particular instructions. He sent Him to set the example and to show what the Father is like and that He and the Father are one in their purpose and their character. He did not come to exalt Himself, to make some claim that somehow, He was the God of the Old Testament or any other such thing.

As we move forward, let us embrace the truth. We all know that we have to live by faith. The day comes, and as we used to say, put your money where your mouth is. My grandfather would say, talk is cheap, good whiskey costs money. So it is, talk is cheap. If we want to do the will of God, we have to be willing to give it all up. We have to put our entire trust in God and God's instruction. In so doing, we will share our place with Jesus Christ in the coming Kingdom.