

**JOHN**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to John chapter 1 as we continue our study through the Word of God. And I realize we only finished the first 28 verses of John chapter 1 last time, but this is foundational information. Remember John's point for writing this Gospel, "**And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but *these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.***" John 20:30-31.

John wants you to have eternal life and that eternal life is only found in Jesus and thus, he wants you to believe in Him. That is why he wrote this Gospel. In fact, the word "**believe**" is used some sixty times in fifty-three verses in this Gospel!

And John wants you to believe in such a way that your life is changed by Him. The Devil and his demons believe that Jesus is God, but they are not saved. The reason? They do not obey the Lord and thus, a life surrendered to God will be a life that follows after God!

And thus, John opened up his Gospel by making the point that Jesus is eternal, He has always existed with the Father. In fact, He is an exact representation of the Father, they are equal, and thus, Jesus is God and not "***a god***" as some like to say. Jesus is Almighty God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity! Also, Jesus created all things and by Him all things consist.

And listen carefully to why this is so important. In John 8:24 we are told, **“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am [He], you will die in your sins.”** What Jesus is saying is that if we don’t believe that He is Almighty God, the great *I AM*, then we will die in our sins. It is that important and that is what John is showing us through this Gospel!

And this gift of grace, eternal life is extended to all who will receive it as John tells us, **“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”** John 1:12-13.

This evening we are going to pick up our study in verse 29 of John chapter 1, after the religious leaders question the authority of John the Baptist, wanting to know who he was and who gave him the authority to do what he was doing.

You see, the religious leaders traveled from Jerusalem to find out about John and then they were to report back. And John tells them that he is not the Messiah, he is not Elijah, he is not the prophet, but just a messenger to prepare the hearts of the people to receive their Messiah.

So, with that said, let’s pick up our study in John chapter 1, starting in verse 29 and let’s see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

**JOHN 1****VERSE 29**

Now I need to bring this out because some are confused with when this happened. They think it was immediately after Jesus' baptism, but that is not the case. When it says, "**The next day John saw Jesus coming . . .**" it was after John baptized Jesus, and after the 40 days of temptation in the wilderness.

I believe John is speaking of the day after the events of John's interview with the religious leaders from Jerusalem that we read of in John 1:19-28.

Not only that, but this idea of the "**next day**" really introduces to us a sequence of days that continue in verses 35, 43 and John 2:1.

Bruce tells us, "Some weeks probably had elapsed since Jesus received baptism at John's hands; he had been away since then, but now he is back, and John draws the crowd's attention to him."

And Alford makes this same point, "Since then verse 29 must be understood as happening after the baptism, it must have happened after the Temptation also. And in this supposition, there is not the slightest difficulty."

So just keep that in mind, that this event here in John 1:29 was after His baptism by John, after He was in the wilderness for those 40 days, and after the meeting John had with the Jewish religious leaders about who John was.

Now we may read this verse and not think much of it, but it is a powerful statement regarding who Jesus is, the work He came to fulfill, His destiny you might say. You see, John's statement is speaking of Jesus being the sacrificial lamb, the one who not only will pay the penalty for our sins, but completely take them away.

In fact, the verb AIRO, (ah'-ee-ro) in the Greek, "**takes away**" has the idea of taking something up and carrying it away to destroy it. It is as Peter tells us in I Peter 2:24, "**who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness - by whose stripes you were healed.**"

We also see this in Psalm 103:2 says, "**As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.**"

And then in Isaiah 43:25 we are told, "**I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.**"

And what I want you to see here is that the word "**sin**" is singular, not plural or "**sins.**" Because it was the sin of the world, all of them that were placed upon Jesus, not just for a select few.

And today, we have people putting down the work that Jesus did. That Jesus did not come to save us from our sins but to save us from ourselves, whatever that means. But that is not at all what John the Baptist is saying here.

Listen to what Peter says in I Peter 1:18-21, **“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”**

You see, our salvation is not built upon good works or riches but upon the work of Jesus on the cross of Calvary and His resurrection from the dead! Jesus did not come to free me from this problem or that problem but to set me free from the bondage that sin had me in and He restored my fellowship, your fellowship with God the Father through the shedding of His blood that cleanses us from all sin!

And think about this for a minute. For Jesus to be that perfect sacrifice He had to be without inherited sin, a blemish; and without acquired sin, a spot; and He was. That is what Peter is saying to us and it is what Paul is telling us in Hebrews 4:15, which says **“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”**

Thus, Jesus was our perfect sacrifice, able to pay in full the penalty for our sins as the sins of the world were placed upon Him, He made atonement for us, as Isaiah 53:6 tells us, **“All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”** And maybe that is what John the Baptist was thinking about when he saw Jesus, what Isaiah spoke of. And thus, John’s words are a powerful statement pointing to the destiny of Jesus, the shadow of the cross is seen as His ministry begins!

It is as one writer put it, “He will give Himself as the expiatory Sacrifice [propitiation or to make atonement] not only of the sins of His people, but of the germ of all sin in Adam’s descendants, the sin of the world, the apostasy in Eden: thus wide and deep is the Baptist’s vision.” (Trench)

#### VERSES 30-34

Now this is interesting because John was about six months older than Jesus and yet John speaks of Jesus being before him. How can that be? Again, when John speaks of Jesus being before him, he is not speaking of Jesus’ physical birth. He is speaking of the eternal existence of Jesus, that Jesus existed before He became flesh and blood and dwelt among us, and thus, He is God!

Now how could John be sure that Jesus is the Messiah, the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world? Because God gave John the Baptist a sign that the one you see the Holy Spirit descend upon like a dove is the Messiah. Does Jesus fit the picture?

You bet He does, for in Matthew 3:16-17 we are told as John was baptizing Jesus, **“When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”**

Now this makes John a reliable witness of who Jesus is because he had that confirming evidence from God and John now takes all that He knows and has seen and is giving us his testimony, his witness of Jesus.

Notice again what he said, “**And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.**” John 1:34. Now some see that phrase, “**Son of God**” and they feel that Jesus is not almighty God, that He is a lesser God. That is so wrong. Listen to this and you will see what I mean. We are told regarding this Messianic title of Jesus, the “**Son of God**”,

While it was a messianic title, it meant more than that. The Hebraism “son of” meant “of the same nature and character.” To call someone “the Son of God” was to recognize the nature and character of God in that person.

- Elmer Towns, The Gospel of John, p. 12

Remember, that is why John wrote this Gospel, that you may believe that Jesus is Almighty God who has paid our debt of sin on the cross of Calvary so that we could enter into eternal life with Him! And Jesus was an exact representation of the Father as Jesus said, “**. . . If you have seen Me you have seen the Father. . .**” John 14:9.

#### VERSES 35-39

John the Baptist had his following of disciples, but instead of pointing them to himself, he is now pointing them to Jesus saying, “**Behold the Lamb of God.**”

Now, for many today, they like to say, “Behold, look at me! Look at what I have done! Look at what I can do! Come and follow me!”

And obviously that is wrong and it can be very dangerous as many cults start out like this. We have seen this with Jim Jones as he led his followers to drink cyanide grape juice and they all died!

We saw this with David Koresh who had his followers locked in a compound and they were burned to death. We are not to draw people to ourselves but to Jesus!

I think John gives us a great example of how we are to live, pointing people to Jesus instead of building ourselves up. But it seems many times it is the other way around, we like to draw people to ourselves because it makes us feel good, important.

Maybe you have heard of the story that was in Eternity Magazine. In this one article it spoke of how this sidewalk flower vender was doing very little business. Then he got this brilliant idea, he would put up a sign that said: "Buy a Gardenia; it will make you feel important all day long!" Guess what? His business flourished as he sold more and more gardenias.

Why? Because people love to feel important, for their inner most nature thrives on any attention that caters to their pride!

Now the Scriptures tells us the exact opposite. They tell us that the way up is down or as James puts it, "**Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.**" James 4:10.

You see, if you want to see your ministry grow, if you want to see it blossom, if you want to be fulfilled in your life, then point people to Jesus and not yourself and you will thrive as you fulfill the work that God has called you to do!

And I find this interesting with Jesus because He does not force anyone to follow Him but He invites them to follow Him! All through the Scriptures we see this and what a beautiful picture it is of God inviting us to come and see!

Now we are going to find out in verse 40 that one of these two disciples of John the Baptist was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. Who was the other disciple? We don't know for sure but I believe it was John, the author of this Gospel.



Why do I say that? Because this was such an important moment for John, it was such a memorable occasion for John, coming to Jesus, that he tells us the exact hour that it took place, the tenth hour that he met Jesus!

#### VERSES 40-42

Andrew, as I have said, is one of the two disciples of John the Baptist who is now following Jesus. Now what is the first thing that Andrew does after he comes to Jesus? He goes and gets his brother Simon and tells him that they have found the Messiah! What a powerful testimony!

That should be the nature of all Christians who have come to Jesus, that they have that desire to share that experience with others. It is as David said in Psalm 34:8, **“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!”**

Think about your favorite food, how great it is and how you tell others about it. Well, if you have tasted Jesus, come to that saving faith and see the wonderful things He has done in your life, you too will want to share that with others, you will tell them to taste and see that the ***LORD*** is good!

Now Andrew is often called **“Simon Peter’s brother”** and that can get old real fast! If any of you have older brother’s or sister’s you are probably aware of this, “Oh, you are the brother or sister of so-and so!”

And what happens is you could lose your identity. And because of that you can easily get frustrated but Andrew didn’t. Why? Because his focus was not upon his popularity but on bringing people to Jesus, the one who really does count!

May we not lose that perspective. Can you imagine if Andrew refused to tell his brother Peter because of jealousy or whatever? I wonder if that has caused any of us to hold onto what we have and not share it.

Also, in verse 42, notice that Jesus changes Simon's name, which means "*shifting sand*" to Peter or "*Rock,*" PETROS in the Greek.

Now old Rocky was going to find out that if he was going to do things in the power of his flesh, he will be on shaky ground. But, if he does things through the power of God, does them upon Christ, he will be stable because Rocky will be standing upon the Rock, Jesus Christ!

And we truly see that in Peter as he denies knowing the Lord three times as he tries to stand for Jesus in the power of his flesh. After he failed, after he is broken of self, Jesus raises him up and on the day of Pentecost he boldly proclaims the Word of God and 3,000 people get saved!

That is also true in our own lives, the strength of the flesh is built upon shaky ground but the power of God is built upon the Rock, Jesus!

One last point before we move on. Many people think that Christ is the last name of Jesus, it is not! Christ is His title and it means "*Anointed One*" or the "*Messiah.*" His name, Jesus is His Greek name while in the Hebrew it is Joshua, which means Yahweh is our salvation, and how true of a statement that is. It is as Matthew 18:11 tells us of Jesus, "**For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.**"

VERSES 43-44

Bethsaida was located on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee and this was where Philip was from, also Andrew and Peter were from Bethsaida.

Notice there was no thundering or lightning, no smoke rising up, Jesus said to Philip, **“Follow Me”** and he did!

For some who get saved it is a very emotional experience, and that is not wrong, but neither is just a simple prayer and a commitment to step forward by faith. That is how it was for me.

VERSES 45-51

Notice that Philip also brings people to Jesus and here it is Nathanael and the testimony of Philip is that of Jesus being the Messiah and it is based on what the prophets spoke of the Messiah; He is the fulfillment of what they said. God’s Word is living and it is powerful and it can change and does change lives!

Now, as Trench points out, “Nathanael is today generally understood to be the same person as Bartholomew, one of the Twelve; Nathanael being the personal name, Bartholomew (son of Tolmai) the patronymic.”

And I like how honest Nathanael is. You see, once Nathanael hears that Jesus is from Nazareth, the walls go up, his prejudices against this city and its people were too much for him to believe that anything good could come from this town.

“If Jesus is from Nazareth then He can’t be the one, He can’t be the Messiah.” Now Nazareth was a poor city of Galilee, it was looked down upon. The name “Nazareth” means “Sprout town” not too impressive.

You see, Nazareth, from an economic position, from a military position, from a political position, was totally insignificant and for the Messiah to come from Beansville was just too much for Nathanael.

And make no mistake about it, Nathanael knew the Scriptures and what they said of the Messiah, **“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The one to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.”** Micah 5:2.

Bethlehem was the place to be, the Messiah coming there from eternity, land stretching out so far and wide, keep Nazareth just give me that Bethlehem countryside! Sorry for all those of you who are Green Acres fans!

Now, at this point Philip could have been very discouraged and walked away. He could have told Nathanael that he is going to burn in Hell if he doesn't change his tune! Now both of those responses have been and are being used by Christians, but not with Philip, look at what he does.

Instead of arguing or mocking Nathanael he invites Nathanael to come and see! What a great lesson for us. Do you invite people to church, to come and see what Jesus is really all about, what His people are really like? You should! Instead of arguing, mocking, condemning them, do as Philip did, tell them to ***“Come and see!”***

And Jesus, when He meets Nathanael basically tells him that he is a good person and that He saw Nathanael under the fig tree. And please understand that this phrase **“under the fig tree”** was a phrase that was used by the Rabbis to describe someone meditating on the Scriptures.

So, as Nathanael is sitting under the fig tree, meditating on the Word of God, Jesus saw him there, saw what he was doing, and then Philip called Nathanael to come and see the Messiah, to come and see Jesus!

And then we see that Nathanael's eyes are opened and he gives testimony of who Jesus is, the Messiah, the King of Israel, the Son of God! Now I tend to think there was more to it than that. I think there was no way for Jesus to see Nathanael and that is why he is blown away by what Jesus said.

Also, I wonder what would have happened in Nathanael's life if Philip did not say to him "*Come and see*" for yourself about Jesus? What a great lesson for us to not only learn but apply to our lives!

Now in verse 50 Jesus speaks of seeing greater things than this and then in verse 51 He speaks of heaven opening and the "**angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.**" What is that all about?

Jesus is probably connecting the dream that Jacob had in Genesis chapter 28 with Himself. You may remember the story, Jacob, which his name means heel-catcher or conniver, took the birthright from Esau his brother. Actually, Esau gave it to Jacob for a bowl of bean soup because he was hungry, and the birthright was not important to him at this time. Jacob also tricked his dad Isaac into giving him the blessing of the firstborn, and thus he took this from Esau also.

Now, as you can imagine, Esau was not a happy camper and he wanted to kill his brother Jacob. When Jacob finds this out, he is exiting stage left, he is getting out of town before sundown, and he begins to flee to his uncle Laban's house in Padan Aram.

As the sun begins to set, Jacob spends the night in a place called Luz, which he will re-name Bethel, or house of bread. As he gets ready to sleep he lays his head down upon a rock for a pillow and drifts off to sleep.

And in Genesis 28:12 we read, **“Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.”**

That is what Jesus is speaking of here in John 1:51 only now He shows us what that dream was pointing to. You see, that ladder that Jacob saw reaching from earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending upon it is none other than Jesus Christ. He is the Mediator, the bridge-builder between God and man.

You see, sin separated us from God but now Jesus came and bridged that gap by paying the penalty for our sins. It is as Paul said in I Timothy 2:5-6, **“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”**

Jesus is our ladder to God; He tore that veil in the Temple that separated man from God, opening that curtain up so we could boldly come before God through Jesus Christ.

Peter also picks up on this in I Peter 3:18 where he says, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”**

Here is something for you to think about. What portion of Scripture do you think Nathanael was meditating upon while he sat under the fig tree? I believe it was that portion of Scripture in Genesis chapter 28 that dealt with Jacob and his dream of this ladder reaching up into heaven. The reason I say that is what Jesus had to say to him impacted Nathanael tremendously!

## **JOHN 2**

### **VERSES 1-5**

Keep in mind that this is the third day after the encounter that John the Baptist had with the Jewish religious leaders. And here we see Jesus and His disciples invited to this wedding feast.

And as they enjoyed themselves a major problem occurred, they ran out of wine. Now to run out of wine was a major social blunder! One writer explained it like this, "To fail in providing adequately for the guests would involve social disgrace. In the closely-knit communities of Jesus' day such an error would never be forgotten, and would haunt the newly married couple all their lives." (Tenney)

And it would not only be a disgrace to this new couple but also for whoever was overseeing this feast.

We don't know the role that Mary had at this feast, maybe somehow involved in putting this together, and now this! So, Mary turns to her Son so she may be vindicated of not only being out of wine but possibly that if Jesus shows who He really is, her reputation will be restored!

And notice what Jesus says to His mom, “**Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.**” That seems harsh, not in the character of Jesus to say the least.

First of all, this word “**woman**” is not a derogatory word as some like to say, for in John 19:26 we see the same word used as Jesus gives His mother to John to care for as He is about to die on the cross of Calvary.

But there is a gentle rebuke here, for His time had not come yet. In fact, in John 17:1 we are told of this time as we read, “**Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.’**” You see, at this point it was not time yet!

And notice what Mary does here, she says to the servants, “**Whatever He says to you, do it.**” Mary submitted to her Son. She did not say, “*Whatever I say to you, do it!*”

And that is just as true today as it was back then, for the Scriptures teach us that Jesus is the Mediator between God and man, no one else! Not even Mary! And yet, there are some today who think that Mary is the Mediator between God and man. The reasoning goes like this, “Jesus will listen to His mother!” Foolishness!

And think about this, to deliberately go through Mary to get to Jesus is to regard Jesus as hardhearted, and Mary as tenderhearted. This concept “is totally alien from the Bible. It comes from mother-son ideas prevalent in pagan religions.” (Barnhouse)



VERSES 6-12

Here are these six waterpots that could hold thirty gallons of water apiece, and Jesus calls for the servants to go and fill them with water! Interestingly enough, these water pots were used for purification.

You see, you had to have running water to be ceremonially clean; still water was no good. Thus, these six water pots used in ceremonially purification were connected to the law and look at what Jesus does with these waterpots!

Now before I deal with that and something that is very controversial in some churches, look at the obedience of these servants. They didn't know all that was going to take place, but Jesus said, "***Do this!***" and they did!

In fact, they not only did it, but they filled these water pots to the brim. What an example for us. You see, they could have been lazy and only filled the pots half-way up, but they filled them to the top, they could do no more.

I wonder how often we only give to the Lord in service half-way and when we are only blessed half-way, we wonder why, or we complain. If God calls you to do something, do it to the fullest!

So, as they return filling these waterpots, some 180 gallons worth of water, Jesus tells them to let the master have a taste! Can you imagine bringing your master a cup of water to drink instead of wine? But these servants believed and they obeyed the Lord. Can you do the same, can you do as these men did and take those steps of faith even when the task seems impossible?

These men did!

Now here's the thing. Usually at the feasts they would put out the good wine first because your taste buds are fresh. But as the feast goes on and you eat and drink, you can't tell the difference as much, your taste buds are not as sensitive.

I don't believe that drunkenness is the issue here for the Jews looked down upon that kind of activity, nor do I think it was grape juice that they drank, as some like to tell us. It was wine, maybe not as high in alcohol content as we have today, but it still was wine. Now the master is amazed that the bridegroom did it this way.

Let me say this. Drinking alcohol is not a sin, but drunkenness is! I don't drink, I don't think as a pastor I should and I don't. But if you have a glass of wine or a beer, that is not wrong. We do have a problem with alcoholism in this country, it is out of control.

But to say that Jesus turned the water into grape juice is foolishness. It was not only wine, but it was good wine! It wasn't Mogen David or Boone's Farm!

Now think about this. The first miracle that Jesus did was turn this water into wine. Why did He do that? Think about it. If God is so against drinking or drunkenness, why did He do this, why didn't He turn the wine into water or the water to grape juice? Great question!

Remember the six water pots that were used to do this miracle were also used for ceremonial cleansing or purification, it related to the Law that became a heavy weight upon the Jewish people.

Let me just give you one example of this in regard to the Sabbath day. God said **“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”** Exodus 20:8-11.

It was to be a day of rest, to spend with the Lord; they worked hard six days a week and they were to take one day off to rest, to fellowship with God.

The problem with that is this day of rest became a day of heavy burdens. God’s simple statement was altered into 24 chapters in the Talmud that dealt with the Sabbath Law.

That was only dealing with the Sabbath day, they had volumes of laws, things you could and couldn’t do. In regard to this Jesus rebuked the religious leaders in Matthew 23:4 as He said, **“For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.”** In other words, the things they wanted the people to do they could not even do themselves!

That was the law, no joy, just heavy burdens. Thus, in this first miracle Jesus takes this water and turns it into wine, a symbol of joy. You see, out of Judaism, out of the Law, out of the old covenant would come the new covenant that is not based upon our faithfulness to keep the Law, but upon the faithfulness of God who would pay in full the penalty for our sins, and what joy we find in that!

So this first miracle is related to the New Covenant and thus, it makes sense that it is wine for wine is symbol of joy and there is tremendous joy in the New Covenant that is based in the faithfulness of God and out of it we receive eternal life, the forgiveness of our sins through His shed blood!

Remember that Jesus said to this broken, burdened people in Matthew 11:28-30, **“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”** How refreshing it is to come to Jesus, what joy is found in Him!

So, as Jesus moves on He goes to Capernaum and Capernaum is located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee and it will become the home base for Jesus and His men. At this point they are going to be on the move and we will see in a minute where they will be heading.

Also note that Jesus did have brothers, Mary and Joseph had normal sexual relations after Jesus was born and they had children. We are told of four of His brothers; James, Joses, Simon and Judas plus He also had sisters! (Matthew 13:55-56).

Also, an inscription in the Aramaic language dated from 63 A. D. and found on an empty ossuary or limestone burial box for bones states, “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus” not only telling us that Jesus did exist, it was not a story, but that He had a brother also!

Now at this point they did not believe that Jesus, their brother, was the Messiah. In fact, at times they thought He was nuts, He lost His mind and they try to rescue Him before He gets hurt. (John 7:5)

But after the death and resurrection of Jesus they did believe. In fact, James became the head of the church in Jerusalem and wrote the epistle of James; and Jude wrote the epistle of Jude.

#### VERSES 13-17

We are told in Deuteronomy 16:16-17 that, **“three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.”** Thus, Jesus is fulfilling the law, He was going up to Jerusalem for the Passover feast.

Keep in mind that the Court of the Gentiles was the closest a Gentile could get to worship God in the Temple. And, this was also the place where the money changers and those who sold the animal sacrifices set-up shop.

The problem was that they charged high exchange rates for the Temple coinage and they would not accept the people's sacrifices they brought many times and thus they sold them their sacrifices at high prices. They were making a profit off of God and the High Priest was right in the middle of this wickedness, getting kickbacks from them!

And keep in mind that the people were well aware of what was going on. Think about this for a minute. “Rabbinical literature tells us that inspectors spent eighteen months on a farm to learn to distinguish between clean and unclean animals. They even learned to identify an animal that would one day become unclean, even if it was clean at the time! The inspectors had a good thing going. If they did not approve an animal, it would not be approved. Extortion was common behind the whole thing! Sarcastic commentators in those days dubbed the temple the ‘Bazaars of Annas.’ They knew the high priest actually sold franchises for money-changing booths and animals sales.” (R. Kent Hughes, John, p. 67)

And as bad as that was, keep in mind that it was Passover and Jerusalem and the Temple area was filled with people. And as Jesus sees what is going on He makes a whip and drives these people who were making a profit off of God out, turning over tables!

Not the Sunday School picture we have here of Jesus, a kind of Casper milk toast guy! He had righteous indignation over what was taken place and He must have been a big guy to turn over those tables!

Now, can you imagine coming to church to worship God and there is Joe Samz and the ushers saying, “That will be twenty dollars to get in please! And if you want the good seats, the blue chairs, that is extra!”

We would be outraged at that but, that in a sense is what was going on in the Temple and Jesus didn’t like it back then and He doesn’t like it today! Don’t get me wrong, I believe that a worker is worthy of his wages, but I think we have taken that to the extreme today.

You go into some churches and they are selling all kinds of merchandise! You try to get some musicians to share at an outreach and they want thousands of dollars. It must have been some 15 to 20 years ago one musician was asking for about \$20,000 to come and play at our church. Don't remember that? I guess not, he was not invited!

And to me, this is an important lesson. Because as Jesus ended His earthly ministry, the last week before He was crucified, we see Him do the same thing, cleanse the Temple, which Matthew, Mark and Luke speak of.

Why these two bookends on His ministry? Because He wants the house of God to be a place where people can freely come and worship God, be touched by God, be healed by God and not have their pockets emptied of their money!

I hope you feel that you can freely come here and worship God. That you never feel pressured to give. And if you want to give to God, you can, but it is your choice. No one is forcing you.

Now, how does what we have read so far relate to us? First of all, we saw the miracle of conversion, the water into wine, which leads us to the work of cleansing, the cleaning of the Temple.

This is how Jesus works in people, first their salvation, their conversion and then their cleansing; we call it the sanctification process where the Holy Spirit is purging out the garbage from our lives to make us more like Jesus!

Now, in verse 17 we are told, **“Then His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.’”** You see, they remembered what Psalm 69:9 said which tells me they knew the Scriptures.

Today we see many coming down upon churches that are teaching the Word of God, but I believe God is for those who are teaching His Word. You see, the church exists to worship God, to edify believers and to evangelize the lost. If you are down on a church that is doing these things then your heart is not in synch with the Lord's!

#### VERSES 18-22

Some see this as an honest question, but the reality is, they wanted to know if Jesus had the authority to turn over those tables, to drive out the money changers. Maybe they wanted to know, but as you read of how they felt about Jesus, I think they were not interested in what Jesus was saying. So, they seek a sign to prove that He had the authority to do these things.

And Jesus tells them that He is going to destroy this Temple and in three days He will raise it up again! Now keep in mind that this Temple project of Herod continued on until its completion in 63 A. D., only 7 years before it was destroyed by Titus and the Romans.

It was a massive structure, almost 10 stories tall, made with huge stones, gold, and it truly was a sight to see. They had 18,000 workers employed on this project.

Thus, in their minds, how could it be destroyed and rebuilt in only three days. Obviously, Jesus is speaking of something else, His body, which will be in the grave for three days before He rises from the dead! No one has ever made a claim like that and succeeded but Jesus has!

#### VERSES 23-25

Now this is interesting. Why didn't Jesus commit Himself to those who believed in Him? Because their faith was only superficial, based upon the miracles He did and not the person He was!



It is as Morgan said, “If belief is nothing more than admiration for the spectacular, it will create in multitudes applause, but the Son of God can’t commit Himself to that kind of faith.”

That may be hard for some of you to accept but think of it like this. On Palm Sunday as Jesus rode through Jerusalem as Messiah the King the people shouted, “**... ‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ The King of Israel!’**” John 12:13.

The word “**Hosanna**” means “*save now*” and they were saying “Save us from Roman bondage, save us from Roman persecution!”

But that is not why Jesus came the first time, He came to save that which was lost. Thus, when things didn’t go the way they wanted, they then cried out a few days later “**Crucify Him! Crucify Him!**” Man’s heart can be very fickle if it is not based on something solid, Jesus Christ!

And here’s the thing. God knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows what is in our hearts. And it is not that He didn’t love the multitudes, He did. It was just that He was not going to commit Himself to that kind of superficial faith. He wants a person’s heart if you will only open it up to Him!

It is as Jesus said in the book of Revelation, “**Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.**” Revelation 3:20.

As I close this evening, let me leave you with these words from A. W. Tozer who wrote in his book, "The Knowledge of the Holy." This is what he said,

With our loss of the sense of majesty has come the further loss of religious awe and consciousness of the divine presence. We have lost our spirit of worship and our ability to withdraw inwardly to meet God in adoring silence. Modern Christianity is simply not producing the kind of Christian who can appreciate or experience the life in the Spirit. The words, "Be still, and know that I am God," mean next to nothing to the self-confident, bustling worshiper in this middle period of the twentieth century.

- R. Kent Hughes, John, p. 69

And here we are in the twenty-first century and look at how far we have come, and not in a good way! Our worship is not to be self-centered, it is to be God-centered. May we not forget that.

Now I will give you a hint of what we will be looking at next time. In our study next time we are going to meet Nick at Night!