

Helping Our Children Present Jesus as the Son of God Part 1

**Growing Godly Family Series
Manual 26**

By

Duane L. Anderson

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**American Indian Bible Institute
Box 511
Norwalk, CA 90651-0511
www.aibi.org**

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Growing Godly Families Series

The “Growing Godly Families Series” is the result of weekly topics were prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. This series is especially designed for those who are already Christian leaders; to give them Biblical principles for the development of additional godly spiritual leaders. Because they give Biblical principles for growth in spiritual leadership, they are also helpful for Christians that want to grow and become godly spiritual leaders.

Mark 10:43-45 says, “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” In these verses, Christ taught that godly spiritual leaders do not have the attitudes of leaders in the world. Worldly leadership is based on power and authority and is designed to benefit the leader and place him above others. In contrast, godly spiritual leadership is designed to help every Christian reach their full potential in Christ. The following three statements give a summary of three styles of leadership.

If we drive people, we will drive them until they can get out of our way.

If we lead people, we will be able to lead them as far as we have gone ourselves.

If we serve people, we will help each person develop their full God-given potential and equip each person for the ministry that Christ has prepared for every Christian.

In the world, people often measure success by the amount of things that they accumulate before they die. However, they are unable to take any of those things with them when they die. Mark 8:36-37 says, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” Success produces rewards until we die, but it produces nothing for eternity.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by our faithfulness and obedience. Matthew 6:19-21 says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Effectiveness produces eternal rewards. Mark 10:29-30 says, “So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life.” 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” The Growing Godly Families Series is designed to make your life count for eternity by bringing glory to God.

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1.

Jesus was the Creator of all Creation

Today, we are beginning a new series of topics that will help us to teach our physical and spiritual children about the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. These topics will be taken from the book of John. One of the things that we want to help our children learn to explain to others is how they can know that Jesus is the Son of God and the Creator of the entire creation. That will be the focus of this topic.

The beginning verses of the book of John are very similar to the beginning verses of the book of Genesis. John 1:1-5 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." In these verses, we see that Jesus was in the beginning with the Father. Jesus said in John 8:58, "Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." In this verse, John made it clear that Jesus has always existed. Jesus was with God and Jesus is God and was in the beginning with the Father.

We also see that Jesus is called the Word. In verse three we see that Jesus is the One who created all things. In Genesis 1:1-3 we read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light." This explains why Jesus is called the Word. He is the member of the Trinity that spoke the words that brought the creation into existence. In fact everything that was created was the result of the fact that Jesus spoke all of the creation into existence. The Father willed the creation in Genesis 1:1. The Holy Spirit was hovering over the waters in Genesis 1:2. The Son spoke the creation into existence in Genesis 1:3. The entire Trinity was involved in the creation.

We also see the Father exercising the will when He said in Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." However, John 1:3 says that Jesus created all things so that would include the fact that Jesus created man just by speaking the Word. However, Jesus did more than just speak the word to create woman. Genesis 2:22 says, "Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man." In the case of the woman Jesus created the woman from the rib of Adam. In addition, Jesus also performed the first marriage by bring her to the man.

Jesus is also the source of both life and light. In John 11:25 we read, "Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." In this verse, Jesus makes it clear that He is the source of both physical and spiritual life. Then in John 8:12 Jesus said, "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." Here we see that Jesus is the source of spiritual light as well as physical light. If we are Christians, we do not need to worry about spiritual darkness over overtaking us again because 1 Thessalonians 5:4 says, "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief." In 1 Thessalonians 5:2 we see that the Day of the Lord will overtake those who are not Christians. That verse says, "For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night." Christ removes all Christians from spiritual darkness into the spiritual light.

We go on to read that John the Baptist was sent from God to introduce Jesus to the Jews and to the world. John 1:6-9 says, “There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.” We see that the reason why John was sent ahead of Jesus was to bear witness to the fact that Jesus is the Light. The word translated “witness” speaks of one who gives official testimony such as someone who gives witness in a court. The word was also used of the Old Testament prophets because they gave official witness from God about future events. This meant that the ministry of John the Baptist was to give official testimony about Jesus.

Jesus is the One who is the True Light. We see that Jesus is the One who gives light to every person coming into the world. Romans 1:18-19 says, “Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” Then Romans 2:14-15 adds, “For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them.” We see in these verses that Jesus gives light both through the creation and also through the conscience.

John 1:10-14 says, “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 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. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” In these verses, we see that Jesus was in the world. In fact, Jesus was the Creator of the world.

As the Creator of the world, Jesus has a very close relationship to the world. We see that Jesus appeared many times throughout the Old Testament as the angel of the Lord or the Lord of hosts. However, the world did not know and recognize Jesus. The word translated “know” means to perceive, to understand or to come to know. Many of the times that Jesus appeared in the Old Testament, He was not recognized. Exodus 3:2-3 says, “And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Then Moses said, “I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.” At first Moses only thought that he was looking at a bush that was not being destroyed. Then Christ (the Angel of the Lord) said in Exodus 3:6, “Moreover He said, “I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.” It was only then that Moses realized that the flame that he saw in the bush was an appearance of Christ.

Jesus came to the Jewish people many times throughout the Old Testament. However, most of the people did not receive Him. Isaiah 65:2-3 says, “I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, according to their own thoughts; a people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face; who sacrifice in gardens, and burn incense on altars of brick.” However, there was always a small group of Jews who were faithful to the Lord. In 1 Kings 19 Elijah thought that he was the only one left that served God. Then God told Elijah in 1 Kings 19:18, “Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.” Here we see that all who did receive God (Jesus) in the Old Testament became the children of God.

They did not become children of God by physical birth. They did not become the children of God because of their own will. They did not become children of God because of the will of any other person. Instead all of the Old Testament saints became the children of God because that was the will of God. Old Testament saints became children of God by faith. Isaiah 55:2-3 says, “Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you—the sure mercies of David.” Then Isaiah 55:6-7 promises, “Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” God has always shown His mercy to those who come to Him by faith.

However, Jesus chose to become the God-man to pay the penalty for sin so that all who come to God by faith can have their sins forgiven. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” In John 1:1-3 we see that the Word is the One who created all things. In this verse, we see that Jesus is the One who is the Word and is the Creator of all things. Hebrews 2:14-15 says, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” When Jesus became a man He lived with His disciples and taught them. They had the opportunity to see the glory of Jesus. They recognized it as the glory of the Father. They saw that Jesus was full of grace and truth. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the fact that Jesus in the God-man and both the Creator of all things and also the One who became a man to pay for sin. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand why Jesus is both the Creator of the entire creation and also the One who became a man to pay the penalty for our sins so that we could be forgiven.

John the Baptist Introduced Jesus

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus is the creator of all things. We also want to help them understand that He became a man so that He could pay the penalty for our sins so that we could be forgiven. Here we see that Jesus is the God-man who is 100% God and 100% man. In this topic we are going to see that the Father sent John the Baptist to the world to introduce Jesus to the world.

John 1:14 said that Jesus is the One who is full of grace and truth. Now we see that John 1:15-18 goes on to write, “John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’” And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.” John wanted to make it clear that he was sent to introduce someone who was much greater than he. John said that this One was preferred before Him. John also said that the One that he was introducing existed before Him.

John understood the fact that Jesus is God. Even though Jesus was born into this world six months after the birth of John the Baptist, John understood that Jesus had always existed. That was why John said that Jesus was before him. The word translated “fullness” means to be filled and several places speaks of the fact that Jesus is filled with all of the fullness of the Father. Colossians 1:19-20 says, “For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.” Paul then warned in Colossians 2:8-9, “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” John said that we now have the fullness of God through Christ. We have also received the abundance of His grace.

The law was given to Israel at the time of Moses. The law had as its purpose to show that all people are guilty before God. Romans 3:19-20 says, “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” In contrast, grace and truth came to all people through Jesus. Paul explained the abundance of grace when he said in 1 Timothy 1:14-15, “And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” Grace was shown by the fact that Jesus came to save sinners.

Jesus is also the source of all truth. In John 14:6 we read, “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” Jesus also said that He would send the Spirit of truth so that the disciples could bear witness of the resurrection of Jesus. John 15:26-27 says, “But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.” The Spirit also gives us power to witness with boldness.

John the Baptist went on to describe his ministry in John 1:19-23. Those verses say, “Now this

is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, ‘I am not the Christ.’ And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the Prophet?’ And he answered, ‘No.’ Then they said to him, ‘Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?’ He said: ‘I am ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “make straight the way of the LORD,”’ as the prophet Isaiah said.” Here we see that John said that he was just a voice.

John was preaching and baptizing people in the wilderness. Mark 1:4-5 says, “John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.” The word translated “remission” is also translated forgiveness and means release from bondage or imprisonment. Ephesians 1:7 says, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” The fact that John was a priest and was both baptizing and preaching about the forgiveness of sins immediately caused the religious leaders in Jerusalem to react.

The high priest and the Jewish Sanhedrin wanted to know who John thought that he was to both baptize and to preach about the forgiveness of sins. As a result, they sent priests and Levites to question John. These men wanted to know if John thought that he was the Christ because that was what some of the people were beginning to think. Luke 3:15 says, “Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ or not.” John immediately told them that he was not the Christ. Then they wanted to know if he was Elijah or the Prophet. Malachi 4:5 says that Elijah will come before the Great Tribulation, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.” Moses had written in Deuteronomy 18:15, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.” The Jewish religious leaders wanted to know if John thought that he was one of these men.

When John said that he was not Elijah or the Prophet, the men from Jerusalem asked him who he was then. John answered their question by quoting from Isaiah 40:3 which says, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’” Here we see that John said that he was just a voice preparing people from the coming of the Lord. In that day when a king was going to travel he would send messengers ahead to tell the people of each town to prepare the road so that the king could ride into their town on a smooth road. Instead of telling people to prepare the road, John said that he was just a voice telling people to prepare their hearts for the coming of the Lord. The focus was on the Lord and not on himself.

That statement caused the priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask John another question. John 1:24-28 says, “Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. And they asked him, saying, ‘Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?’ John answered them, saying, ‘I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.’ These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.” The particular priests and Levites that had been sent were Pharisees. They wanted to know who gave John the authority to baptize since he was not the Christ, Elijah or the Prophet.

John explained that His baptism was a baptism with water. Mark 1:4-5 says, “John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.” Here we see that John baptized those who had

repented of their sins and received the forgiveness that God gives to all those who repent of their sins. Many years later Paul met some men who had been baptized by John. Acts 19:4-5 says, "Then Paul said, 'John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.' When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Here we see the men were rebaptized in the name of Jesus.

John said that there was a man standing among them that they did not know. He said that although that One came after him that He was actually preferred before John. The word translated "preferred" in this verse is normally translated to be or to become. By this statement John spoke of the fact that Jesus had existed before John was born. John said that this One was much greater than John. In fact John said that he did not even feel worthy to untie the sandal that this Person wore. John was not the Messiah, Elijah or that Prophet. However, he was actually going before and introducing the Messiah so he felt unworthy to even untie the sandal of that One. John wanted to make it clear he was just a voice who was introducing the promised Messiah.

The place where John was baptizing was Bethabara (Bethany). This particular Bethany was the one on the other side of the Jordan south of the area of Galilee and not the Bethany near Jerusalem. This Bethany was near the Jordan River so there was plenty of water where he could baptize those who repented of their sins. That is why the verse says that John was baptizing in Bethabara which was beyond the Jordan River.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why John was sent before Jesus to introduce Jesus. That way they will be able to explain to others why John said that he preached a baptism of repentance to those who repented of their sins. We also see that such individuals also received the forgiveness of sins. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the ministry of John the Baptist.

3.

Jesus was Introduced to Two Future Disciples

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the ministry of John the Baptist. We saw that John preached a message of repentance and the forgiveness of sins. We also saw that John was telling people to prepare their hearts for the coming of the Messiah. In this topic we will see that John introduced two men who had been baptized by John to Jesus and they followed Jesus.

The day after John was questioned by the priests and Levites from Jerusalem who wanted to know who he was another person come to visit John. John 1:29-31 says, “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.” John had earlier baptized Jesus before Jesus had been tested by Satan in the wilderness.

John would have known Jesus because they were related. However, John understood at the time that he baptized Jesus that Jesus was also the Messiah. Mark 1:9-11 says, “It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Here we see that the Father spoke from heaven to John and told him that Jesus is the beloved Son of God. As a result, John knew how to introduce Jesus when Jesus came to him that day

As Jesus came walking toward Jesus the day after the priests and Levites from Jerusalem questioned him, John said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” The word “behold” means to look and see. Throughout the Old Testament the people offered lambs as sacrifices as a covering for their sins. These sacrifices were to show that their faith was in the promise of God that one day God would send One who would take away sin. That is why this introduction by John was so important. He identified Jesus as the One who is the Lamb of God. He also said that Jesus would take away the sin of the world.

John also made it clear that this One coming after him was the One who had been in existence before him. John made it very clear that Jesus existed before John even though the physical birth of Jesus happened after the physical birth of John. This provided the same witness that the writer of John had given in the first verses of this book that Jesus is the One who is the Creator of all things. John the Baptist did not know that Jesus was the Messiah and the Creator of all things even though he knew Jesus as a relative. John knew that God had chosen him to reveal the One that would be the Lamb of God. That was why John had been baptizing those who repented of their sins.

John 1:32-35 goes on to say, “And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.” Here we see that it was the Holy Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and remaining on Jesus that caused John to know for sure that Jesus was the One that is the Messiah. The Father then confirmed that Jesus is the Messiah as Matthew 3:17 says, “And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well

pleased.” This voice from heaven confirmed the message that Jesus was the Messiah.

The Father had revealed to John that the Holy Spirit would descend on Jesus in the form of a dove. Then we see that the Father confirmed this by speaking from heaven. John also explained what Jesus would do for all believers in the future. John said that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. John said in Luke 3:16-17, “John answered, saying to all, “I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.” In his statements about the coming Messiah John had said that the Messiah would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. He explained that the Messiah would baptize all who believed with the Holy Spirit. In contrast, all those who rejected would be baptized with the eternal judgment of unquenchable fire.

Since John had seen the Spirit descend on Jesus and had heard the words of the Father, He could now introduce Jesus as the Son of God. That is why John testified that He had both seen and now gave formal witness that Jesus is the Son of God. Later in this book Jesus said in John 5:31-33, “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.” In addition to the witness of John in that chapter, Jesus also said that His works, the witness of the Father and the witness of the Scripture were all in agreement with the witness of John. God gave us many witnesses of the fact that Jesus is God.

The concern of John the Baptist was not to gain a large following for himself. Instead his concern was to help people get to know Jesus so that they could follow Him. John 1:35-39 says, “Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God!’ The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, ‘What do you seek?’ They said to Him, ‘Rabbi’ (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), ‘where are You staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and see.’ They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).” Here we see that John encouraged two of his disciples to get to know Jesus.

We see that John had introduced Jesus the previous day by saying, “Behold the Lamb of God!” In these verses, we see that Jesus used the same title the next day to introduce two of his disciples to Jesus. John wanted to help these followers become followers of Jesus. Later, when some of his followers became concerned because part of the followers of John were following Jesus, John said in John 3:28-30, “You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before Him.’ He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I *must* decrease.” John was glad to see his followers begin to follow Jesus. John understood the fact that he was to help people learn to follow Jesus rather than see how many people he could get to follow him. The same is true today.

When John said, “Behold the Lamb of God!” the two men who had become disciples of John immediately followed Jesus. They wanted to learn more about Jesus from Jesus. Jesus knew that they were following Him and turned to them. Then He asked them, “What do you seek?” They answered Him, Rabbi, where are You staying?” Perhaps they just wanted to know where He was staying so that they could come later and get to know Him better. However, instead of just telling them where He was staying, Jesus gave them the first of four invitations that He would give to His disciples.

Jesus just said, “Come and see”. This invitation was to just spend time with Jesus and get better acquainted. The other three invitations came at various times in the ministry of Jesus. About a year later Jesus gave a second invitation when He said in Mark 1:17, “Then Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” This was an invitation to “Come and Grow” and learn how to serve Jesus. About 21 months after this first meeting Jesus gave the disciples a third invitation. Mark 3:13-14 says, “And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach.” We could call this invitation, “Come and Serve” because Jesus invited them to spend even more time with Him and also to begin to go out and preach (first the twelve in Luke 9:1-11 and then as a part of the 70 in Luke 10:1-12).

The fourth invitation came after the resurrection and might be called, the call to “Come and Shepherd.” Jesus met seven of the disciples one morning by the Sea of Galilee. After giving them the breakfast that He had prepared for them, Jesus asked Peter three times, “Do you love me?” Each time Peter answered yes. After each answer of Peter, Jesus made a statement. The three statements taken together are “Feed My lambs”, “Shepherd My sheep” and “Feed My sheep”. Finally after giving these four calls, Jesus gave the disciples a commission in Matthew 28:19-20 where we read, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.” The one command was “Make Disciples.” This commission included three things: going, baptizing and teaching those who were baptized to obey all that Jesus had commanded.

The two men here in John 1:39 responded to the invitation of Jesus to “Come and See” at about 4 in the afternoon and then spent the rest of the day with Him. We also want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand each of the calls and commission that Jesus also gives to each of us. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the “Four Calls and a Commission” that Jesus gave.

Jesus Met More Future Disciples

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn about the “Four Calls and a Commission” that Jesus gave to His disciples. These are also the same calls that He gives to each of us. The four calls are: Come and See, Come and Grow, Come and Serve and Come and Shepherd. These were followed by the Commission - as you are going, “Make Disciples.” We want to help our children learn to respond to each of these calls and learn how to carry out that commission.

Jesus invited two men to come and just spend a few hours with Him. One of those men was Andrew. Once Andrew got acquainted with Jesus, the very first thing that he did was invite his brother to meet Jesus. John 1:40-42 says, “One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, ‘You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas’ (which is translated, A Stone).” John the Baptist had introduced these two disciples to Jesus. Now we see that the first thing that Andrew did once he met Jesus was to introduce his brother to Jesus.

Andrew gives us a great example that we want to help our physical and spiritual children fully understand and then show them how to apply it in their own lives. Andrew is only mentioned three times in the book of John. This is the first time and in these verses we see that Andrew brought his brother to Jesus. The second mention of Andrew is in John 6:8-9 where we read, “One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, ‘There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?’” In these verses, we see that Andrew found a boy and brought him to Jesus. Then John 12:20-22 says, “Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’ Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.” Philip did not know what to do but Andrew did. He brought these Greeks to meet Jesus. Andrew truly became a fisher of men.

In these verses, we also see how Andrew was able to bring his brother to Jesus. He told his brother just one thing about Jesus. Andrew said, “‘We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated, the Christ).” Simon Peter was familiar with the Old Testament. He was waiting for the coming of the Messiah which means “The Anointed One”. As a result, he was ready to meet Jesus when Andrew said that they had found the Messiah. Some people are like Peter and just need someone to introduce them to Jesus, the Messiah. God had already prepared the heart of Peter and the same will be true for some of the people that we and our children meet.

When Andrew brought Simon to Jesus, we see that Jesus immediately gave him a new name. He said that his name was Simon but that his new name would be Cephas which is the Aramaic (the language of Israel at that time) word for a stone. The name Peter is the Greek word for a rock or a stone. Jesus gave Simon this new name to show what he was going to become as he followed Jesus. Jesus also changes our lives as we follow Him.

John 1:43-46 tells us what happened the next day. Those verses say, “The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, ‘Follow Me’. Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth,

the son of Joseph.’ And Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.’” Here we see that the next day Jesus also invited Philip to spend time with him and get acquainted.

Just like Andrew, the first thing that Philip did after he met Jesus was to go and tell someone else. In this case he told his friend Nathanael. However, Nathanael was not as quick to believe as Peter had been especially when Philip said that Jesus was from the town of Nazareth. John 21:2 says that Nathanael was from the town of Cana as that verse says, “Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.” The people of Galilee had a negative attitude toward the people of Nazareth. We see that Nathanael thought that nothing good could come from that town. Philip did not argue with Nathanael about whether anything good could come out of Nazareth. Instead he just said, “Come and See.” Here we see an important lesson about sharing with others about Jesus.

Instead of trying to debate with a person, we should just share what the Bible says about Jesus. Hebrews 4:12 tells us, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” God also gave a promise in Isaiah 55:11. God promised in that verse, “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.” By just sharing the Word of God we are working with the Trinity and God will accomplish His purpose through His Word.

We are working with the Trinity because John 16:8-11 says, “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” The Holy Spirit convinces those who are not Christians of the sin of unbelief. He convinces unbelievers of the fact that Jesus is the Righteous One. He convinces unbelievers of the fact that Satan has already been judged and those who continue to follow him will share in his judgment. God said that The Seed of woman would defeat Satan in Genesis 3:15 where we read, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” Satan knew that he was defeated when Jesus rose from the dead.

We see that we are also working with the Trinity as we share the Word of God with others because John 6:44 says. “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” The Father uses the Word that is shared in love to draw individuals to Jesus. Then Luke 19:10 says, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Then Romans 10:17 adds, “So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Taken together we see that the Holy Spirit convicts, the Father draws, and the Son seeks and saves those who are lost as we share the Word of God with others in love.

We see that Philip brought Nathanael to meet Jesus. John 1:47-51 says, “Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!’ Nathanael said to Him, ‘How do You know me?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.’ Nathanael answered and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.’ And He said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.’” Jesus saw Nathanael coming with Philip and as soon as Nathanael arrived, Jesus described the

character of Nathanael.

Nathanael was amazed that Jesus knew all about his character when he had never met Jesus before. He realized immediately that only the Son of God could have such knowledge. John 2:24-25 says, "But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." Nathanael recognized that Jesus knew his heart. As an Israelite who avoided deceit Nathanael was very familiar with 1 Samuel 16:7 which says, "But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." Nathanael immediately recognized the fact that Jesus knew his heart showed that Jesus was the Son of God.

Jesus went on to assure Nathanael that he would see much greater things. Nathanael saw that Jesus had divine knowledge because Jesus knew where he was when Philip invited him to come and meet Jesus. However, Jesus also said that Nathanael would see much greater things in the future. Nathanael became one of the twelve that Jesus chose to be with Him. As a result, he saw many of the miracles of Jesus. However, the greatest of all of the miracles happened when he saw Jesus alive again after the crucifixion and resurrection. He spent the rest of his life telling others about that event.

Jesus also told Nathanael about one particular event that he would see in the future. He had heard about Jesus from a friend. However, he would later hear the Father confirm that Jesus is the Son of God. The father spoke from heaven when Jesus was baptized by John. Matthew 3:17 says, "And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Father spoke again in John 12:28 when Jesus said, "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." The life of Nathanael was changed because He got to know Jesus. In the same way, we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that their lives will be changed and transformed as they get to really know Jesus and learn to walk with Him. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children really get to know Jesus.

5.

Jesus Changed Water to Wine in Cana

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children really get to know Jesus. That will only happen as they learn to enjoy fellowship with Him. As our children begin to recognize the fellowship that we have with Jesus, they are being shown how to have that same fellowship in their own lives.

We see that Jesus began to make contacts to build His team immediately after Jesus was publicly introduced to His first disciples. The first day He met at least Peter, Andrew and John. The next day He met at least Philip and Nathanael. As we come to John chapter two we see what happened on the third day. John 2:1-4 says, “On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.” Here we see that Jesus took some of His early disciples along with Him to a wedding in the city of Cana.

A wedding celebration in that time often lasted for about a week. The man getting married was expected to provide all of the food and drink that the guests would eat and drink during that week. Mary, the mother of Jesus, had been invited to the wedding. Jesus had also received an invitation. A servant would often be sent to get the guests when the time for the wedding came. This is illustrated in Matthew 22:2-3 where we read, “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.” Since Jesus had disciples visiting Him at that time they were also invited to the wedding probably by the servant who came to say the wedding was ready.

However, a problem happened at the wedding. Before the final days of the wedding celebration the man getting married had run out of wine. Mary immediately told Jesus about this need. She may have felt responsible because of the fact that the disciples had been invited to come with Jesus at the last minute. The book of John focuses on the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. As a result, we see that Jesus called Mary “woman” instead of mother. This is true throughout the book of John. Even on the cross we read that Jesus called Mary “woman”. John 19:26-27 says, “When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’ And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*.”

Jesus asked Mary what her concern had to do with Him. Jesus showed that He was now focused on His purpose for coming to this earth as the Son of God. This statement is explained in the next sentence when Jesus said that His hour had not come. The phrase “My hour is not yet come” is always used to refer to the death, resurrection and return of Jesus to heaven. In John 13:1 we read, “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, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.” Then Jesus said the same thing later that night to the Father in His prayer in John 17:1 where 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.’”

Mary respected the statement of Jesus but still spoke to the servants. John 2:5-10 says, “His mother said to the servants, ‘Whatever He says to you, do it.’ Now there were set there six

waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the waterpots with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, 'Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.' And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, 'Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!'" The servants were told to do whatever Jesus told them to do and so they did.

There were six large stone pots that were setting there. These were normally used by the Jews for purification before the people ate. Mark 7:3 says, "For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders." Here we see that the Pharisees put great pressure on the rest of the Jews to wash their hands this special way before eating anything in order to stick to their traditions. These stone pots each held between 20 and 30 gallons of water. Jesus told the servants to fill up these stone pots with water. This would have taken a period of time since the servants had to go to get the water and bring the water to the place where the wedding was being held. However, the servants obeyed and filled the six waterpots until they were all filled right up to the very top of each pot.

Then Jesus told the servants to take some of the water out of the pots and take it to the master of the feast. The master of the feast was the person in charge of all of the details for the wedding so that the groom did not need to think about those things during the several days of the wedding celebration. The master of the feast tasted the water that Jesus had turned into wine. The servants did not tell him the source of the wine. Instead they just gave it to him to taste. The master of the feast immediately called the groom.

He told the groom that most people use their good wine first and then after the guests have finished drinking the good wine that then people start to put out the inferior wine. However, he said that the groom had kept the good wine until that moment. The word that is translated "good" means that which is good or excellent in its nature. The word is used twice in Luke 8:15 in the parable of the four kinds of soil where we read, "But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience." Jesus also used the word twice in John 10:11 to describe Himself. That verse says, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."

The servants and the disciples of Jesus knew the source of the good wine but neither the master of the feast or the groom knew the source of the good wine. The reason for that fact is explained in John 2:11-12 where we read, "This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him. After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days." In this verse, we see that this was the beginning of signs that Jesus did so that His disciples could see that Jesus is God.

In the book of John we see that seven signs are recorded before the crucifixion and resurrection. For part of these miracles only His disciples were present because Jesus did these miracles so that His disciples would believe. The seven recorded signs are:

John 2:1-11 – Jesus changed the water to wine – His control over quality.

John 4:46-54 – Jesus healed the son of a nobleman – His control over distance.

John 5:1-18 – Jesus healed a man crippled for 38 years – His control over time.

John 6:1-14 – Jesus fed the five thousand – His control over quantity.

John 6:15-21 – Jesus walked on the water – His control over nature.

John 9:1-41 – Jesus healed a man born blind. – His control over physical disability.

John 11:-1-44 – Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead – His control over life and death.

John explained why these seven signs were the seven that he recorded in this book in John 20:30-31. Those verses say, “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.” The books of Matthew, Mark and Luke had been written quite a number of years before the book of John so he only included these miracles. We see that his purpose for including these miracles was so that all who read them “May believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” That is why we want to help our physical and spiritual children clearly understand the fact that these miracles are recorded as signs.

John 4:54 says, “This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.” Then John 6:14 adds, “Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.” The people debated whether Jesus was God or not were forced to recognize these miracles as signs. John 9:16 says, “Therefore some of the Pharisees said, ‘This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.’ Others said, ‘How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?’ And there was a division among them.” The signs forced the people to either recognize or reject the fact that Jesus is God.

We see the attitude of those who rejected in John 11:47-50 where we read, “Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.” And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” We want to help our children understand that the signs caused the religious leaders to begin to plan the death of Jesus. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand the importance of the signs in John.

Jesus Cleansed the Temple in Jerusalem

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that the signs in the book of John were important to help the disciples come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. We also saw that the signs in John caused those who rejected Jesus to begin to plan the death of Jesus. In our topic today, we are going to see another reason why the religious leaders later wanted to destroy Jesus.

Jesus only spent a few days at Capernaum after the wedding at Cana. That was due to the fact that it was almost time for the Passover. John 2:13-17 says, "Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up." Many of the Jews living in Galilee went to Jerusalem each year for the Passover. Jesus went to Passover from at least the time He was twelve.

As a result, Jesus had been to the Passover many times. However, He did some very different things this time because He had begun His public ministry. We see that this time Jesus cleansed the temple at Jerusalem. The chief priests controlled what happened in the temple and the temple court. They had allowed the temple court to become a place to buy and sell because they received a part of the profits. This is shown by what Jesus said when He cleansed the temple a second time three years later. Matthew 21:13 says, "And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" The Jews who came from long distances would buy their animals after they got to Jerusalem instead of trying to bring the animals with them. Travelers also had to change their money to pay the temple tax with Jewish coins.

Jesus came into the temple court and saw the people selling animals and the people who were money changers doing business in the temple court. Jesus made a whip with small cords or ropes made from rushes. Jesus drove the people and their animals out of the temple court. He also overturned the tables of the money changers so that their money was scattered on the ground in the temple court. Then Jesus spoke and said, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" Jesus told them that it was time to stop making His Father's house a house of merchandise. Here we see that Jesus gave His first public statement in Jerusalem about the fact that He is the Son of God. We see that this brought immediate opposition from the religious leaders.

We see that it also caused the disciples to remember Psalm 69:9 which says, "Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me." Here we see that Jesus was showing His disciples by example that the temple was to be a place to worship God and not a place to do business. Psalm 69 is one of the Psalms that had several things written in it fulfilled on the day that Jesus was crucified so it is called a Messianic Psalm.

The action of Jesus in cleaning the temple caused immediate opposition from the Jews and some of the Jewish leaders immediately demanded a sign to show that Jesus had a right to do such things. These leaders were getting rich from the business that was being carried on in the temple and they did not want their business hindered or stopped. Jesus chose to give the Jews a

very interesting answer because He chose to use His future resurrection as the sign. However, the leaders lacked spiritual understanding and had no idea what Jesus meant when He spoke about His future resurrection. John 2:18-22 says, “So the Jews answered and said to Him, ‘What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ Then the Jews said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’ But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.”

Here we see that the religious leaders lacked spiritual understanding that day. They wanted a sign and Jesus gave them a sign when He said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The religious leaders immediately thought about the building that was located in the temple court. Herod the Great had started a building project 46 years earlier to beautify that temple. They told Jesus how long this process had already taken. Many years of work and much money were involved in this project to beautify the temple and it was still not complete. As a result, they had absolutely no understanding when Jesus said He would raise it up in three days. Their answer shows that they only thought about the building so the truth was concealed from them.

In contrast, we see that the disciples later did understand exactly what Jesus meant. They remembered what Jesus said but only after He rose from the dead. Then they believed the Scripture. They also believed the words which Jesus had spoken. Here we see that Jesus did the same thing that He did when He taught in parables. Luke 8:9-10 says, “Then His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘What does this parable mean?’” And He said, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that ‘Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’” Jesus revealed truth to His followers but hid truth from those who reject.

Today, Jesus still gives spiritual understanding to His followers but the natural man cannot receive the things of God. 1 Corinthians 2:13-14 says, “These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” It is important for us to understand that those who are not Christians cannot understand spiritual truth because they do not have the Holy Spirit to give them such understanding.

The disciples were given spiritual truth but they were not able to understand what Jesus had said until after the resurrection. Although we do not know how soon it was after the resurrection that the disciples thought of this statement, we see that when they did that they believed the Scripture. They also believed the words that Jesus had spoken. The night of His resurrection Luke 24:45 says, “And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” Jesus had also said to the disciples the night before He was crucified in John 14:26, “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.” Either when Jesus personally explained the Scriptures after the resurrection or after the Holy Spirit came, the disciples came to a full understanding.

John 2:23-25 says, “Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.” In these verses, we see a very key point that we want to help our children understand. We see that many people believed in the name of Jesus when they saw the

signs which He did. In contrast, 2 Corinthians 5:7 says, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” Many people believe when they see a miracle but that does not necessarily mean that they have come to true faith.

Christ said in Matthew 7:21-23, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” In these verses, we see that people can even do miracles in the name of Jesus without believing. That is why it is so important to help each person learn to walk by faith and not by sight. Many people can deceive themselves when they start depending on things they can see instead of coming to a true faith in Christ and then learning to walk in faith.

Jesus was able to do something that we cannot do. We see that Jesus knew all the people and that was why He did not commit Himself to them. 1 Samuel 16:7 says, “But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” Jesus knew the heart of each person because He is able to look at the heart instead of depending on the outward appearance.

Jesus did not need anyone to tell Him what is in the hearts of people because He was able to look at their hearts. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Jesus knew those who had true belief. He also knew those whose hearts were controlled by the wickedness of their hearts. Here we see that we are told that Jesus knew what was in man. In this case Jesus knew that people believed because they saw miracles but that was not true belief in the heart that changes an evil heart to a new heart. Just a few days later Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:18, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Here we see why it is so important to help our physical and spiritual children understand the difference between believing a miracle and having true faith in their hearts. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand true faith.

Jesus Talked with Nicodemus at Night

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the difference between knowledge and true faith. We saw that it is easy for people to believe in a miracle but not have true faith in their hearts. In this topic we are going to see that Nicodemus came to talk to Jesus one night while Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Passover. Jesus explained to Nicodemus the meaning of true belief.

In John 3:1-3 we read, “There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus was one of the leading Pharisees in the city of Jerusalem. His influence was shown by the fact that he was a ruler of the Jews. The Jews had 70 rulers or leaders that were known as the Sanhedrin. That was the group of men who controlled many things in the lives of the Jews so each member of the Sanhedrin had a great influence.

As a leading Pharisee and ruler, Nicodemus knew that he needed to learn about Jesus and His teachings because He would be expected to know. However, because Jesus had cleansed the temple, many of the Jewish leaders were upset with Jesus because He had stopped their business that they were carrying on in the temple for personal profit. As a result, Nicodemus chose to come and talk to Jesus at night. Nicodemus was much more open to learn from Jesus than most of the Sanhedrin. Nicodemus recognized that Jesus was a teacher. He also recognized that Jesus had to come from God because he knew that it was impossible for Jesus to be doing the signs (miracles) that he was doing unless He had been given power by God to do those signs.

The Pharisees were very quick to teach the law of God and tell others that they had to keep every rule in the Old Testament. They had determined that there were 613 laws in the Old Testament and they were working to keep those laws in an effort to try and earn their way to heaven. As a result, Jesus knew that Nicodemus was trying to earn his way to heaven by keeping the law. Jesus immediately said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Here we see that Jesus immediately made a statement that Nicodemus could not understand.

Nicodemus was like the rich young ruler or Paul and thought that he was keeping the entire law. In Luke 18 Jesus reminded the rich young ruler of the laws that cover the relationship of man to other people. The ruler said in Luke 18:21, “And he said, ‘All these things I have kept from my youth.’” Before he met Jesus on the road to Damascus Paul had a similar attitude. He later described that attitude in Philippians 3:4-6 where we read, “Though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” Here we see that both men thought they were blameless. Nicodemus had the same attitude so Jesus told him he would not see the kingdom of God unless he was born again. Nicodemus had no understanding of what it meant to be born again.

As a result, we read in John 3:4-8, “Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he

is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus had no understanding of spiritual birth. That is why he asked a question about physical birth. He asked how he could experience a second physical birth when he was already an adult and already old. He asked if Jesus wanted him to return to the womb of his mother.

Jesus had asked Nicodemus a question that Jesus knew Nicodemus would not understand. Jesus knew that question would give him the opportunity to explain to Nicodemus the difference between physical life and spiritual life. Jesus answered the question of Nicodemus with several statements to explain the difference between physical life and spiritual life. Jesus began by saying, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Born of water speaks of physical birth. In contrast, to be born of the Spirit speaks about spiritual life. Romans 8:9 says, "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." Once the Holy Spirit came to Jews (Acts 2:1-4), Gentiles (Acts 10:44-45) and Old Testament saints (Acts 19:5-6), every Christian is born of the Spirit and receives the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. At the moment we place our faith in Jesus, we are born of the Spirit. Nicodemus could not understand this so Jesus explained further.

Jesus went on to explain, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." At the moment that our human parents conceived us, we were conceived as human flesh. As a result, when we were born about nine months later we experienced a physical birth. Nicodemus could understand that physical birth. However, it was the spiritual birth that Nicodemus could not understand. At the moment of spiritual birth, Christ places the Holy Spirit in our human spirit and we experience spiritual birth. Ephesians 1:13-14 says, "In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." In these verses, we see that we received the Holy Spirit at the time we believed and that the Holy Spirit is the down payment and guarantee of our salvation until we enter heaven. That is why Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed both a physical birth and a spiritual birth.

Then Jesus illustrated spiritual life to Nicodemus. Jesus said that the wind blows where it chooses. He told Nicodemus that we can even hear the sound of the wind. However, Jesus also told Nicodemus that he could not tell where the wind came from or where the wind was going. As a result, it was impossible for him to understand what it meant to be born of the Spirit. Nicodemus showed that Jesus was right by asking another question. John 3:9-13 says, "Nicodemus answered and said to Him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of Man who is in heaven.'" Nicodemus made it clear that he could not understand about spiritual life.

Jesus began to answer the question of Nicodemus and the completion of His answer will be in our next topic. Here we see that Jesus asked Nicodemus if he was a teacher in Israel. He asked why he could not understand these things. A couple of years later Jesus would explain to His disciples what the scribes and Pharisees were like. Matthew 15:14 says, "Let them alone. They

are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.” Here we see that Jesus told His disciples that the scribes and Pharisees were blind leaders of the blind. Nicodemus was a teacher but at this point he could not understand spiritual truth because he lacked spiritual life. Later we will see that Nicodemus did follow Jesus and even helped to bury Him.

Jesus then said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.” Nicodemus spoke as a representative of the Jewish religious leaders and the entire nation back in verse 2. We see that in this statement Jesus also spoke for the Father and the Holy Spirit. Nicodemus and the other religious leaders should have understood because God spoke the same way in Genesis 1:26 which says, “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” We are made in the image of God because we have a body, a soul and a spirit. Nicodemus needed to know that the Spirit of God is the One who gives spiritual life.

Jesus told Nicodemus that if he did not believe when Jesus told him about earthly things that he would not believe if Jesus told him about heavenly things. Jesus said that no one on earth can ascend up into heaven and tell us what it is like in heaven. That question is asked in Proverbs 30:4 where we read, “Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son’s name, if you know?” A person cannot ascend into heaven in order to know God. That is why it was necessary for the Son of Man who was already in heaven to come down to this earth to tell us how to get to know God and how to have eternal life. We will see that Jesus explained that more fully to Nicodemus in our next topic.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to explain spiritual truth. That can only happen as they get to really know the One who came down from heaven to explain spiritual truth and give us the Holy Spirit to understand spiritual truth. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children grow in their understanding of Jesus.

Jesus Explained the Love of God for the World

We saw in our last topic that Nicodemus could not understand spiritual truth because he lacked spiritual life. Like many other religious leaders in Israel he was like a blind person who was trying to lead other blind people. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus went on to tell Nicodemus how he could have the spiritual life that would give him spiritual understanding so that he could effectively lead others.

Nicodemus was a religious leader but he lacked spiritual life. As a result, Jesus explained to Nicodemus what God was doing to provide eternal life and how to receive that eternal life. John 3:14-17 says, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” Jesus gave Nicodemus an Old Testament illustration.

During the forty years that Israel wandered in the wilderness, the people often complained and spoke against God and against Moses. One day the Lord sent fiery snakes among the people. Anyone who was bitten by the fiery snakes died. Finally the people came to Moses and said that they had sinned. God told Moses to make a bronze snake and put it on a pole. God said that any people that were bitten would live if they looked at the bronze snake on the pole. Numbers 21:9 says, “So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.” Those who had faith in the promise of God and looked lived. Those who did not have faith and did not look at the bronze snake died.

This is the first recorded statement that Jesus made about the fact that He would die on a cross. Jesus told Nicodemus that He would be lifted up on a pole in the same way. He said that those who would believe on the Son of Man would not experience eternal death. Instead all who would come to the Son of Man in faith would receive eternal life. Then Jesus gave what has become the best known statement in the New Testament to Nicodemus. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Although this is probably the most quoted verse in the Bible, it may be the least understood. The love of God is also described in Romans 8:38-39 where we read, “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Here we see that no created thing can separate us from the love of God because of what Jesus did for us on the cross.

We also see the cost of that gift to both the Father and the Son. Matthew 27:46 says, “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” We often talk about the suffering that Jesus went through to pay the penalty for our sin. However, we seldom talk about the fact that it was equally as hard for the Father to have to turn His back on His only Son. Both the Father and the Son made that choice so that they could freely give spiritual life to all who believe just as the people of Israel who were bitten by the fiery snakes received physical life if they would look to the bronze serpent in faith.

The next verse speaks again about the love of both the Father and the Son for the people of the world. In this verse, we are reminded that the Father did not send the Son to condemn the world. Instead the Father sent Jesus so that He could save all who would come to Him in repentance and faith. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” The Father loved us so much that He sent Christ to be sin for us so that the Father could place the righteousness of Christ on us at the moment that we believe.

We are also reminded that it is not the plan of God to condemn any person. Instead that is the choice of each individual. John 3:18-21 says, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” The word translated “believes in the name” means to believe so that a person places their trust in and commits their life to Christ as Lord.

In contrast, James 2:19 says, “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!” Here we see that the demons also believe but it brings fear to their lives because they do not believe “in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” In John 14:6 Jesus made it very clear that He is the only way to come to the Father when that verse says, “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” That is due to the fact that Hebrews 9:14 says, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Christ could offer His blood for our sin because He is the One without spot.

Jesus is also the One who brought Light into the world. John 8:12 says, “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’” Jesus is the One who is Light and can give spiritual light. No person has to walk in spiritual darkness. Jesus will give light to all who will come to Him. However, Jesus told Nicodemus why people love darkness rather than light. People love darkness rather than light because of the fact that their actions are evil. The word translated “evil” speaks of that which is bad in its nature or condition.

Satan is called the evil one or the wicked one twice in 1 John 2:13-14 where we read, “I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.” In these verses, we see that as Christians mature and become spiritual young men or women that they have learned to trust the Lord to give them victory over Satan. That does not mean that they become perfect but rather that their lives are experiencing consistent victory over Satan and his temptations and sin less.

However, for all those who have not come to true faith in Christ, even if they are very religious as Nicodemus was, they still love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Jesus illustrated this very clearly in the parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector who went to the temple to pray. Luke 18:11-12 says, “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’” Here we see that the evil heart of this Pharisee was shown by his pride. 1 John 2:16 says, “For all that is in the world—

the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.” This verse makes it clear that the pride of life is just as evil as the lust of the flesh or the lust of the eyes.

We also see the response of those who are practicing evil to the light. Jesus told Nicodemus that everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light because such a person knows that his deeds will be exposed. The word translated “exposed” means that the light will convict a person of evil. Such exposure will often cause shame to the person who is guilty. John 8:9 says, “Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.” These men had just brought the woman caught in the act of adultery to Jesus. Jesus then said, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.” Jesus is the Light and exposed the darkness of the hearts of those men and they were all convicted and left the Light.

In contrast, Jesus told Nicodemus what would happen if He came to the Light in faith. Jesus said that those who do the truth come to the light. They are not afraid to have their deeds exposed by the light. Instead their lives will show that their works are done through the spiritual light given by Jesus. Matthew 5:16 says, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” John tells us that Nicodemus later did come to the Light. After Jesus died on the cross, John 19:39-40 says, “And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.” Here we see that Nicodemus helped Joseph of Arimathea prepare the body of Jesus for burial and bury it. His life had been transformed as he thought about what Jesus had said that night and he boldly participated in the burial of Jesus.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain these verses very clearly so that they can be used by the Lord to draw others to the true Light. As they learn to share these verses clearly, Christ will work in the lives of others. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to explain the Gospel clearly.

John Gave his Last Teaching about Jesus

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain clearly the things that Jesus said to Nicodemus when he came to Jesus at night. We saw that Jesus clearly explained to Nicodemus how he could come to Jesus in true belief and receive eternal life. As our children learn to explain clearly passages like this chapter, the Lord will give them an effective ministry to others. In this topic we will learn about the public ministry of John the Baptist shortly before he was imprisoned.

After talking to Nicodemus Jesus left Jerusalem and went to another part of Judea. John 3:22-26 says, “After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. For John had not yet been thrown into prison. Then there arose a dispute between some of John’s disciples and the Jews about purification. And they came to John and said to him, ‘Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!’” Jesus and His disciples went into that area of Judea and remained in that area for a period of time.

While Jesus and His disciples were in the land of Judea, John was baptizing in a place named Aenon near Salim. Aenon means “springs” and we see that this was a place where there was plenty of water. During this time we see that John had not yet been thrown into prison. As a result, many people were still coming to him to be baptized. Some of the Jews used this as an opportunity to have a dispute with the disciples of John about purification. We saw at the wedding at Cana that there were six large pots of water for purification. Many Jews practiced a ceremonial washing. Mark 7:3-4 says, “For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.” These Jews used this question about washing as a way to try and bring conflict between John and his disciples and the disciples of Jesus.

The Jews which may have included some of the disciples of John came and told John, “Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!” Jesus had earlier come to John to be baptized when John was baptizing beyond the Jordan. Matthew 3:13-15 says, “Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?’ But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he allowed Him.” The Father used this baptism to identify Jesus as His beloved Son. However, the Jews here apparently wanted to make John jealous because they said that Jesus was baptizing and that all men were coming to Him to be baptized by Him.

Instead of becoming jealous, we see that John showed an attitude of true humility. John 3:27-30 says, “John answered and said, “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before Him.’ He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.” John began by pointing out the fact that all opportunities for ministry are given by God. Paul showed this

same understanding when he said in 1 Corinthians 15:9-10, “For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” God gives all opportunities for ministry that anyone is given by His grace.

John went on to remind those who were questioning him of something he had told the Jews earlier. John had said that he was not the Christ. Instead he had been sent before the Christ to prepare the way for Him. In fact John had just described himself as a voice. John 1:22-23 says, “Then they said to him, “Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?” He said: “I am ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Make straight the way of the LORD,”’ as the prophet Isaiah said.” John fully understood that his ministry was to prepare the way for Christ and not to build his ministry around himself.

John gave a very interesting illustration to show his relationship to Jesus. John said that the person who has the bride is the groom. The friend of the groom stands beside him and rejoices for his friend that is getting married. However, the friend does not try to draw attention to himself because he is just the friend. In fact the friend is just thankful that he has the opportunity to hear the voice of the groom. John said that he was filled with joy because of the fact that many people were now turning to Jesus instead of continuing to follow him. In fact John points out the attitude that all of us should have as we are given opportunities to minister for Christ. John 3:30 says, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” We want to show our children by our example that we want to bring glory to Christ and not to ourselves.

John went on to describe Jesus further in the following verses. John 3:31-36 says, “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. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” Here we see that John went on to give several reasons why Jesus was more important than he was.

First, Jesus had come from heaven. John said that the One from heaven is above all. In contrast, John said that he was earthly. In Luke 1 we see that John had been born by a natural conception and birth. In contrast, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. The angel told Mary in Luke 1:35, “And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.” Here we see that Jesus is the Son of God and was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Second, Jesus spoke what He had seen and heard from the Father. That was in great contrast to John who had been sent by God to prepare the way for the Christ. That was why John recognized that he was just a voice preparing the way for Christ. He recognized that he was fulfilling the words of Isaiah 40:3 which says, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’” He was preparing the highway for God because John knew that Christ was God and he was no comparison with God.

Third, the things that Jesus said were always in agreement with God. Later Jesus would say in John 5:30, “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.” Jesus made it clear

that He always spoke the things that were the will of the Father. Then in John 5:37 Jesus said, "And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form." Jesus said that just as He did the will of the Father that the Father gave testimony of Him.

Fourth, Jesus experienced the Holy Spirit in all of His fullness with no limitations. Jesus said that the Father sent Him and He always spoke the words of the Father because He experienced the Holy Spirit with no limitations. Jesus said in John 7:16-17, "Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. 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." Jesus said that those who do the will of the Father will recognize that His words are always in agreement with the Father.

Fifth, Jesus said that the Father showed that He was over all because the Father had given all things in His hand. In fact Jesus said in Matthew 28:18, "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'" Jesus said that He is able to show the same power as the Father. John 5:20-21 says, "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will."

Because Jesus is equal with the Father, John concluded this statement about Jesus in John 3:36 by saying, "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Jesus is the One who gives life to all who will believe in Him but those who reject Him will experience the wrath of God against sin. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain clearly that each person must make the choice to accept or reject. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to explain this choice to others.

Jesus Talked to the Woman at the Well

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what Jesus taught about the fact that every person must choose to either accept or reject the everlasting life that Jesus made available by His death and resurrection. Those who reject are making the choice to receive the wrath of God against sin while those who accept and receive Jesus also receive everlasting life. In this topic and the next two topics we will see that Jesus shared this same message with some Samaritans.

We saw that people were being baptized that came to Jesus in our last topic. Here we see that Jesus was not the one who was doing the baptizing. John 4:1-4 says, “Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria.” John had said that Jesus must increase but He must decrease. That is exactly what was happening. These verses tell us that more people were being baptized in the name of Jesus than were being baptized by John.

We saw in John 1:19-20 that the Jews had sent Levites from Jerusalem to question John why he was baptizing. That verse says, “Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, ‘I am not the Christ.’” Once the Pharisees knew that the disciples of Jesus were baptizing more disciples than John, Jesus knew that they would send people to question Him also. However, Jesus was going to reveal to the Jews that He is the Christ according to His time plan and not according to the time plan of the Pharisees. Here we see that it was actually the disciples of Jesus that were baptizing.

As a result of the fact that Jesus knew that the Jews would soon question whether He was the Christ and it was not His time to reveal that to them yet, Jesus then left Judea and went to Galilee. However, we see that He needed to go through Samaria. Usually the Jews would cross the Jordan River in order to avoid going through Samaria because the Jews did not get along with the Samaritans. In contrast, we see that Jesus said that it was necessary for Him to go through the Samaria. The word translated “needed” means it is necessary and so we see that Jesus was carrying out the will of the Father by going through Samaria. Jesus said in John 4:34 while they were in Samaria, “Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.’” In this verse, we see that Jesus was very conscious of doing the will of His Father at all times.

We will see that the will of the Father was to save many Samaritans. John 4:5-10 says, “So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from *His* journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, ‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?’ For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’” Here we see how Jesus got acquainted.

Jesus and the disciples had been very busy and so when they arrived at Sychar Jesus was tired. He chose to sit down by the well that provided water for the city while His disciples went into

the city to get food. We see that it was about the sixth hour. Matthew, Mark and Luke use Jewish time which divides the time from the morning until the evening from the first hour to the twelfth hour. In contrast, Roman time began with midnight. John 4:52 says, "Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." This was either at 1 p.m. or 7 p.m. depending on whether it is Jewish or Roman time. John 19:14 says, "Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" Here we see that the sixth hour was early in the morning which would be Roman time. As a result, we are not sure which time John used.

Soon after Jesus sat down by the well, a woman of Samaria came to get water. The disciples had gone into the city to buy food. Jesus said to the woman, "Give Me a drink." The Jews and the Samaritans had a mutual dislike for one another and so the woman was very surprised by the request of Jesus. She replied, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman? For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans." A Jewish man normally did not speak to any woman in public but especially not to a Samaritan woman. As a result, we see that this woman showed her surprise and probable rejection by the answer that she gave Jesus.

Instead of reacting to her statement, Jesus showed His concern for the woman by responding with love. Jesus said, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." Here we see an important lesson that we want to show our children by our actions. We want to learn to respond with love to others rather than react with anger. That way others can see the love of Christ in our lives. We will see that the woman did not fully understand Jesus. However, she did recognize that Jesus was offering her the gift of God. She also recognized that Jesus was offering her living water. She was not sure exactly what Jesus meant but she wanted to know more.

John 4:11-14 says, "The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." Jesus had treated the woman with respect and so she responded with respect by calling Him, "Sir".

We see by the statement that the woman made that she did not understand what Jesus meant by living water. Her first response was, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep." Although the later conversation will show that the woman was somewhat familiar with the Old Testament, there were probably many parts that she had never heard. Jeremiah had written in Jeremiah 2:13, "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, *and* hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water." Jeremiah had pointed out that God is the fountain of living waters. Here Jesus is offering this Samaritan woman living water. That pointed out the fact that Jesus is God. However, the woman was thinking about the water in the well. As a result, she wanted to know where Jesus would get living water.

However, she was searching for an answer and asked a second question, "Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" The kindness and love that Jesus had shown by His attitude toward her caused this woman to think carefully. That was why she asked Jesus if He was greater than our father Jacob. Here we see an important key to effective witness about Jesus. Any statement about Jesus will have a much greater impact if the statement is spoken with the love and kindness that

Jesus showed here.

Instead of answering her question directly Jesus chose to explain the difference between the water that she was getting and the water that He was now offering to the woman. Jesus said that the water in the well would not last because those who drank that water would soon be thirsty again. In contrast Jesus said that those who took the water that He offered would never have thirst again. Jesus explained what that water is in John 7:37-39 where we read, "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." Here we see that the living water to which Jesus referred is the Holy Spirit that would be given to all who come to God in repentance and place their faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit had not yet been given at that time because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

We see that Jesus explained about the water that He would give but the Samaritan woman could not understand what Jesus meant. Jesus said, "The water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." This is a reminder that those without spiritual life cannot understand spiritual truth without God giving them understanding. Here we see that Jesus wanted to give that woman the spiritual understanding that she needed to believe and have true faith in Him. Jesus said that the spiritual water that He offered would produce everlasting life.

This is the key thing that each person needs to have the Lord help them understand in order to come to the point of receiving spiritual life. We want to help our physical and spiritual children grow in their understanding so that they can explain to others how to have spiritual life. Then the Holy Spirit will use their ministry to convict, the Father will use their ministry to draw so that they can come to Jesus who is seeking them because He wants to save those who are lost. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to work with the Trinity in evangelism.

Jesus Introduced Himself as the Christ

In our last topic, we saw that Jesus talked with a Samaritan woman that came to get water at the well near the city of Sychar. We also saw that Jesus provided an example of the way to make contacts and build relationships with those who are of a different culture and religion. We want to show our physical and spiritual children what we have learned from this passage by our example. In this topic we are going to see how Jesus introduced Himself to the woman as the Christ.

The woman had become very interested as Jesus talked to her about living water even though she did not exactly understand what was meant by living water. John 4:15-18 says, “The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.’” Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.” Here we see that the woman asked Jesus for this living water. We see that the woman thought that living water would eliminate the work of going to the well, drawing water and carrying the water back to her home. She did not realize that Jesus was talking about her spiritual life.

Jesus just told the woman, “Go call your husband and come here.” Suddenly the woman became very uncomfortable. Jesus had just hit some very painful wounds from her past. Proverbs 15:13 says, “A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.” This woman had probably experienced a lot of sorrow of the heart. In many cultures of that day only the man was allowed to get a divorce so this woman may have experienced much rejection or may have had one or more husbands who died. As a result, the woman just answered, “I have no husband.” Jesus complemented the woman for telling the truth about having no husband. He then said that she had been married to five different men but that the man that she was now living with was not her husband. Then Jesus complemented her again for telling the truth. The fact that Jesus complemented her twice for telling the truth means that Jesus chose to show great grace to a hurting woman.

Even if the woman had a very sinful past, Jesus had still spoken the truth in love. Jesus did the same thing with the woman caught in adultery in John 8. In that case when the men kept pressuring him, John 8:7 says, “So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.’” Jesus also chose to show great grace to this woman. The final result in that conversation is seen in John 8:10-11 where we read, “When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, ‘Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?’” She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.” In both cases these women were drawn to Jesus and placed their trust in Him because He chose to speak the truth in love.

This Samaritan woman immediately tried to cover her pain from her past by changing the subject. John 4:19-26 says, “The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.’” Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 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. God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am *He*.’” This woman recognized that Jesus must be from God because He knew all about her past.

The Samaritans had built a temple on the nearby mountain where they worshiped. In contrast, the Jews said that people should worship God at the temple in Jerusalem. This woman chose to change the subject by asking which place was the right place to worship God. Christ quickly made it clear by His answer that it is not where a person worships but who a person worships. The Jews knew more about salvation because they regularly read the Old Testament in their synagogues every Sabbath. However, that did not mean that all of the Jews worshiped God. Jesus explained this to the Jews by quoting from Isaiah 29:13 in Mark 7:7-8 which says, “He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.”

However, Jesus chose to explain to this Samaritan woman the meaning of true worship. Jesus said that the hour had arrived when true worshipers must worship God in spirit and in truth. This is talking about our human spirit. False worship tries to worship God by following rules set by a particular religion. First, true worship with our spirit must come from the heart because such worship talks about the attitudes in our hearts. 1 Samuel 16:7 says, “But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’” Many people depend on religious actions but God is looking for proper heart attitudes.

Second, true worship must be according to truth. That is the truth which is revealed to us in the Word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The Father is seeking people who will worship Him with true heart attitudes and according to the Word of God.

The woman was growing in her understanding of who Jesus was as she talked with Him. As a result, she said, “‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’” The fact that Jesus knew all about her past and chose to speak to her with grace caused this woman to think about the things that she had been taught about the Messiah. She knew that the Messiah would be called the Christ and would come from God. She realized that the Messiah would know all things just as Jesus had shown the woman that He knew all about her past and still had a great love for her. Then Jesus told the woman that He is the Messiah.

Meanwhile the disciples had arrived back from their trip into the town to get food. John 4:27-30 says, “And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, ‘What do You seek?’ or, ‘Why are You talking with her?’ The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ‘Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’ Then they went out of the city and came to Him.” The disciples were very surprised to see that Jesus was talking with this woman from Samaria. We see that the disciples said nothing but just watched and listened as Jesus spoke to the woman.

The woman had learned through talking with Jesus that He was the Messiah. As a result, she

immediately changed her purpose. She had come to the well to get water. However, we see that she now left her waterpot and went into the city to tell others about Jesus. There were many things that she did not yet know about Jesus. However, she did know that Jesus knew about her past. She also knew that He accepted her in spite of her past and in spite of the fact that she was a Samaritan. As a result, she wanted to tell others in the city about Jesus. One of the things that we have seen in the book of John is that the first thing that several people did after they met Jesus was go and tell others about Him.

The woman had one message to share with each of the men that she met. John 4:29 says, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" In her words we see that the woman gave a very interesting statement of her conversation with Jesus. Jesus had said to the woman, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." Here we see that the woman felt that Jesus had summarized her entire life by just that one statement. She knew that her life had been a life of failures. At the same time Jesus complemented her twice for telling the truth in His statement so the woman knew that she was accepted by Jesus. By that statement Jesus had given this woman hope for the future.

The woman was convinced that Jesus was the Christ because He knew all about her past life and He still accepted her. He had also told her that He was the Christ. At the same time she asked the men whether this could be the Christ because she wanted them to meet Jesus and decide for themselves if this was the Christ. We see that excitement in the voice of the woman caused the men to go out of the city to meet Jesus. Here we see an example of the powerful impact that Jesus has on the lives of those who feel that their lives have been a series of failures. We want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that they can also give hope to those who feel that they have made such a mess of their lives that no one will accept them. Jesus said in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Jesus offers hope to every person who feels that he or she is so sinful that Jesus would never forgive them. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn how to share this message of hope.

Jesus Saw Many Believe in Him in Samaria

We saw in our last topic that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to give hope to those who feel that their lives have been such failures that no one would ever accept them or forgive them. Jesus helped the woman at the well realize that He knew all about her past and that He still accepted her. We saw that acceptance by Jesus changed the life of that woman. In our topic today, we will see how many others also had their lives changed when they met Jesus.

In our last topic, the disciples came back to Jesus while He was talking with a Samaritan woman from the city of Sychar. They did not say anything but just watched and listened as Jesus spoke to the woman. However, that changed quickly once the woman left to go back into the city. John 4:31-34 says, "In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, 'Rabbi, eat.' But He said to them, 'I have food to eat of which you do not know.' Therefore the disciples said to one another, 'Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?' **34** Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.'" The disciples immediately encouraged Jesus to eat the food that they had bought while they were in the city.

Instead of eating, Jesus made a very important statement to His disciples. Jesus said, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." This immediately caused the disciples to begin to question one another. They wondered if someone else had brought Him food while they had been in the city buying food. Of course the only thing that the disciples even thought about was the physical food that we eat. 1 Corinthians 2:13 says, "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." The disciples had no idea that Jesus was actually trying to help them begin to compare spiritual things with spiritual.

Then Jesus gave a second statement. He said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." Suddenly the disciples were forced to realize that Jesus was not talking about physical food. Jesus had just said that His food was to do the will of the One who sent Him and that had nothing to do with eating physical food. The disciples had only been following Jesus for a short time. They had to learn to think in a whole new way. One of the first things that they had to learn was that the greatest concern of Jesus was always to do the will of His Father. Jesus would repeat that same thought to them many times in the coming months.

However, Jesus also added a second thing to that statement when He said "and to finish His work." Here we see that the Father had given Jesus a particular work to finish. The word translated "work" means a business, that in which anyone is occupied, or that which a person undertakes to do. This is not talking about the fact that Jesus would pay the penalty for sin on the cross. Jesus did not use this word in relation to His death on the cross. The last time this word is used by John is in the prayer of Jesus the night before He was crucified. John 17:4 says, "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant because they were His work. He had been sent to equip them to become reproducing disciples that would continue to reproduce until Jesus returns. In Acts 13:2 we see that Barnabas and Saul were sent out to do this same work. That verse says, "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" In Acts 14:21 we read that they made many disciples. Then in Acts 14:26 we read, "From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had

completed.” In the same way, our work as Christians is to make disciples.

Jesus went on to help His disciples learn to see the spiritual harvest field. John 4:35-38 says, “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.” Here we see that Jesus wanted to help His disciples learn to recognize that they were in a spiritual harvest field. They had gone into this Samaritan city and never saw the spiritual needs of the people there. They just bought some food and came back to Jesus. In the next group of verses we will see that the woman went into the city and came probably less than an hour later with a large group of men that were looking for spiritual life.

That is why Jesus told the disciples to lift up their eyes and look so that they could begin to recognize the preparation that God does to prepare a spiritual harvest. Jesus said that the fields were white for harvest. When a grain field is golden the harvest is already ready. However, when a harvest field is white the harvest is already ripe and must be gathered quickly or the grain will fall off the stocks and be lost. Jesus was saying that the spiritual harvest in this city must be gathered quickly before the present harvest was lost.

Then Jesus explained why this harvest field was ready. First, Jesus explained that in a spiritual harvest that both the sower and the reaper receive their wages from the Master. It is true that the one who reaps receives wages and does gather fruit for eternal life. However, the one who does the reaping is only a small part of the total work put into that harvest. Jesus said that both the one who sows and the one who reaps are able to rejoice together because they have both had a part in the harvest and both are promised a reward.

Second, Jesus explained that there had already been sowers. Mark 4:36-39 says, “And He said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.’” The disciples were there with Jesus to see the harvest. However, Jesus said that others had already labored to sow the seed of the Word of God among the Samaritans. Now the disciples were just being given the privilege of being there for the harvest time. Others had already worked and would receive their wages. The disciples were going to have the privilege of entering into the labors of others as they later shared with others about the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Third, the disciples were given the privilege to see how God had already prepared this harvest field. John 4:39-42 says, “And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, ‘He told me all that I *ever* did.’ So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, ‘Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.’” The Samaritan woman had one message as she had gone into the city. John 4:29 says, “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” We see the response of the Samaritans to the message of the woman.

In these verses, we see that many of the Samaritan believed in Jesus because of the saying of the woman. This woman had a past that was filled with pain to her human spirit. However, she met Jesus and He changed her future. We see that the first thing that happened in her life was

that many of the Samaritans believed the saying of the woman and followed her out to the well to meet Jesus. These people did something that was very unusual for the Samaritans when they talked to Jews. They urged Jesus to stay with them for a few days so that they could learn more about Jesus. Jesus accepted their invitation and stayed in that city for two more days. During those two days the disciples learned many things about a harvest field that is spiritually ripe.

Those two days also had a powerful impact on the people of the city. We see that many more people in that city believed as they heard Jesus speak to them. Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. During those two days the people of that city had the opportunity to hear the Word of God taught by the One who is the Word of God. They realized as John 1:14 says, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." We see the response of the people at the end of those two days of observing and hearing Jesus.

We see that many more people believed after they had heard the teaching of Jesus. John 4:42 says, "Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." The people of that city saw that Jesus was full of grace and truth. They saw the grace in His life. They heard and understood the Word of God as Jesus explained the Word to them. These Samaritans now knew for sure that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world. However, because they now believed they also knew that He was their Savior. Jesus had healed the pain of the Samaritan woman and set her free from her past. Then He had done the same thing for many other people in that city. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to clearly share that message of liberty. Galatians 5:13 says, "For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to share that same message with others so that their lives can be set free also."

Jesus Healed the Son of a Nobleman

In our last topic, we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children how to recognize a spiritual harvest field. We also saw that we want to help them become reproducing Christians that can be used by the Lord both to sow and to reap in the spiritual harvest field where the Lord places them. They will become effective in the spiritual harvest field as they learn to share the Word of God with grace so that the truth of the Word of God can be used by the Lord to draw others to Christ. In our topic today, we will see that Jesus healed the son of a nobleman.

We saw three topics ago that Jesus was on His way from Judea to Galilee but had to go through Samaria. In the last three topics we have seen why Jesus had to go through Samaria. Now as we come to John 4:43-45 we read what happened when Jesus arrived in Galilee. Those verses say, “Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.” Jesus returned to Galilee but did not make His headquarters in His hometown of Nazareth.

Luke 4:14-16 says, “Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.” Jesus preached in various towns and villages when He came into Galilee. People throughout the region were talking about Him because of His public ministry and His cleansing of the temple in Jerusalem. We see that Jesus was received in many cities of Galilee. However, when Jesus said the Scripture that He read was fulfilled that day, the people of His home town turned against Jesus. Luke 4:28-29 says, “So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.” We see the people of His hometown of Nazareth tried to kill Him.

Jesus had said to the people of Nazareth in Luke 4:23, “Then He said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.’” The people in the town of Nazareth had watched Jesus as He had grown from a boy to a man. At least some of the people of Nazareth had probably heard about Jesus staying behind in Jerusalem at the age of twelve and talking with the teachers in the temple. They had even had the opportunity to observe Jesus for a number of years after He became an adult. They regularly heard Him read from the Word of God in the services of the synagogue. However, they refused to believe Him and instead were ready to kill Him when He pointed out their lack of belief. This is an example of the fact that many people will not accept a person as an adult when they have observed that person from childhood.

While Jesus was in Cana of Galilee, a nobleman from the city of Capernaum came to Cana to get Jesus to come and heal his dying son. John 4:46-49 says, “So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Then Jesus said to him, ‘Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.’ The nobleman said to Him, ‘Sir, come down before my child dies!’” Cana was nearly 20 miles from Capernaum so this man had walked quite a distance to get Jesus to come and heal his son.

The word “nobleman” means a royal official. He was probably given this title because he worked for King Herod Antipas who ruled Galilee for the Romans for over 40 years including the entire time that Jesus was on the earth.

A nobleman heard that Jesus had returned from Judea to Galilee. This nobleman came to Jesus and implored Him to come and heal his son. The word translated “implored” means to request or to beg. This man was desperate because of his concern for his dying son. This man had heard about the miracles that Jesus had done and so he begged Jesus to come and heal his son. Parents who love their children will do anything to try and help their child if they think that the child is dying. As a result, the nobleman had traveled that long distance and continued to beg Jesus to come and heal his son. He was desperate because he knew that his child was at the point of death.

Jesus answered at first, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.” Signs and wonders do not always mean that something is done by God. In 2 Thessalonians 2:8-9 says, “And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.” Here we see that the lawless one (antichrist) will deceive the world by doing signs and wonders. He will do these signs and wonders through the power of Satan. Jesus said that people refuse to believe unless they see signs and wonders. Those who believe because they see signs and wonders will often have a false belief because they believe what they see instead of coming to God through repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus wants to help people learn to come to Him in true faith. Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” This nobleman again begged Jesus, “Sir, come down before my child dies!” Jesus knew that this man was having a hard time believing. As a result, Jesus gave this nobleman an opportunity to demonstrate true faith. John 4:50-54 says, “Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your son lives.” So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, ‘Your son lives!’

Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, ‘Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.’ So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, ‘Your son lives.’ And he himself believed, and his whole household. This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.” Jesus just told the man that he could go home because his son would live.

The faith of the man can be seen by what he did. We see that the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken to him. He immediately stopped pleading with Jesus to come to the city of Capernaum and heal his son. Instead he turned and began the walk back to Capernaum. Several hours passed as he walked toward Capernaum. Then he saw some of his servants walking toward him on the road. The servants were excited as they met the nobleman and spoke to him. They told Him, “Your son lives”.

The nobleman immediately asked when his son started to get better. The servants answered, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” The nobleman realized that his son had been healed at the very hour that Jesus had told him that his son would live. The boy had been ready to die. He was now alive and well. That miracle had happened at the very hour that Jesus had spoken the word. The father had made the choice to believe the word of Jesus and Jesus had healed his son at that very moment.

We also see another very important lesson in these verses. The choice of this man had an impact on his entire household. In that day the household included the family, any servants or

slaves and anyone else living with the family in that house. In Acts 16:31 we read, “So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Then Acts 16:34 says, “Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.” We also see several other illustrations in the book of Acts where entire households became Christians at the same time. From this we see that many times when the head of a household becomes a Christian that it will lead the entire household to follow the example of the head of the household. This shows us the importance of learning to work with the Lord by clearly sharing the message of salvation with the heads of households.

We also see that this is the second sign which Jesus did when He came out of Judea into Galilee. We saw in an earlier topic that the miracles that are recorded in the book of John are actually signs to the Jews of the fact that Jesus is the Christ. John 20:30-31 says, “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 did not focus on the number of miracles that Jesus did. Matthew, Mark and Luke had been written quite a number of years before the book of John was written and they all included more miracles.

Since those three books and others were being widely circulated among the Christians, John was led to write about those miracles that are signs that showed that Jesus is the Christ. The purpose of the book of John is to show that Jesus is the Son of God. The same is true about each of the things that are written in the book of John. John shows that Jesus said many times that He is the Son of God. He quoted Scriptures from the Old Testament to show Jesus is the Son of God. John will give us a real picture of the fact that Jesus is God as we look at the prayer that Jesus prayed to the Father in the Garden the night before He was crucified. We want to equip our physical and spiritual children to show others that Jesus is the Son of God. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this clearly.

Jesus Healed a Crippled Man

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to be able to show others from the Word of God that Jesus is the Son of God. We also want to help them learn to explain clearly to others how to come to Jesus in repentance and faith so that they can receive the eternal life that Christ promises to give to all those who come to Him. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus healed a crippled man who had lain at the pool of Bethesda for many years.

Jesus experienced opposition in Jerusalem from the day that He cleansed the temple of those who were buying and selling in the temple in John 2. In this topic we will see that opposition becomes stronger because Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath. John 5:1-6 says, “After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’” In these verses, we see that Jesus returned to Jerusalem for another feast.

In the city of Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate there was a pool called Bethesda. The word “Bethesda” means house of mercy, flowing water or house of outpouring because the water in this pool would move at certain times. There were five porches around this pool. Many people who were sick, blind, lame or paralyzed spent their time on these porches because people considered these waters to have healing power. These people with physical problems were hoping that their diseases would be cured by the water in this pool. As a result, some people had spent a long time on one of these porches.

We read that a man who had an infirmity for 38 years was lying on one of the porches. Many people probably knew that this man had been unable to walk for many years. Jesus chose to walk by this pool while He was in Jerusalem for this feast. Jesus saw the man lying there and knew that he had been in that condition for many years. As a result, Jesus asked the man a question that would change his life. Jesus asked the man, “Do you want to be made well?” This is a key question to a man in his condition.

We see how the man answered the question of Jesus. John 5:7-10 said, “The sick man answered Him, ‘Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.’” Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.” We see that the man actually did not ever answer the question of Jesus. Instead he began to give reasons why he could not be healed. He said that he had no one to help him. He said that others always got into the water before he did when the water in the pool was stirred up.

This man gives us an example of many people today. Many people today do not answer the questions that they are asked. Instead they give excuses to explain why it is impossible for their lives to be changed. Jesus did not ask this man why he could not be healed. Instead Jesus

asked, “Do you want to be made well?” Jesus came to change lives. He did not come to listen to reasons that people think that they cannot be changed. Paul explained some changes that Jesus wants to make in the life of every person in Acts 26:18. Jesus told Paul that He came, “to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.” Jesus will also work through our lives to do these same things in others: to open their eyes; to turn people from darkness to light; to turn people from the power of Satan to God; to give them forgiveness of sins; and to give them an eternal inheritance.

Jesus listened to the excuses why the man could not be healed. Then Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” At this point the man now had a choice. He could continue to give excuses why he could not be healed or he could obey Jesus. This man chose to obey Jesus and he was immediately made well. Then he took up his bed and walked. However, we see that Jesus had more in mind than just healing this man. This was an opportunity for the Jewish religious leaders to make the choice whether they were going to accept or reject Jesus because Jesus chose to heal this man on the Sabbath day.

The man quickly experienced opposition from some of the Jews. They saw the man carrying his straw mat on the Sabbath day. The Jews immediately said to this man, “It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.” We see the answer of the man and what happened later in the following verses. John 5:11-16 says, “He answered them, ‘He who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your bed and walk.’” Then they asked him, “Who is the Man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk?’” But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.” The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.” Here we see that the Jews were actually accusing the man of working on the Sabbath.

The man just answered that the One who made him well told him to, “Take up your bed and walk.” Exodus 20:8-9 says, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. In the Ten Commandments God had told Israel that they were to have a day of rest from the work that they did to earn their living. However, the Jewish rabbis had added 39 things in their written traditions that were not to be done on the Sabbath. One of the 39 things that the people were not to do was carry anything from one place to another. As a result, Jesus had told this man to do something that was against a part of the traditions of the rabbis. It was not a violation of the Word of God. However, the Jews were very upset that this man was breaking their traditions.

This man just quoted the exact words that Jesus had spoken to him to answer these Jews. He said, “He who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your bed and walk.’” The Jews who were questioning the man immediately demanded who the Man was who had told him to take up his bed. The man said that he did not know who had healed him. Since there was a large crowd in the area of the Pool of Bethesda Jesus had just disappeared into the crowd and the man did not know who it was that had healed him. Here we see that the man was so excited that he was healed that he did not even think to ask Jesus His name or to find out anything about Him.

Later Jesus found the man in the temple and gave him a further instruction. Jesus found him and said, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.” We learn an important lesson from this statement of Jesus. Jesus made it clear that some sicknesses are the result of sin. Galatians 6:7-8 says, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap

corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.” This man apparently had this infirmity for 38 years as a result of some sin in his life.

In contrast, in John 9:1-3 says, “Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.’” Here we see that this man was born blind so that the works of God could be shown in him. By comparing the two men we see that we are never to judge. Only the Lord knows if a person has an infirmity as a result of sin or for some God given purpose. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, “And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” In this case Paul was given an infirmity to show the Lord’s strength.

After the man learned that Jesus was the One who had healed Him, he told the Jews that it was Jesus that had made him well. We see two immediate changes in the way that the Jews in Jerusalem began to relate to Jesus. First, we see that for this reason the Jews in Jerusalem started persecuting Jesus and continued to persecute Jesus every time that He came to Jerusalem from that day. Second, we see that from this time on the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem had a strong desire to kill Jesus because He had ignored their traditions by healing this man on the Sabbath. Jesus also healed on the Sabbath in Galilee. Mark 3:4 says, “Then He said to them, ‘Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?’ But they kept silent.” Then Jesus healed that man as well. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to make a clear distinction between the commandments of God and the traditions of men. Many religious people today still try to impose their traditions on others. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to teach the Word of God and not the traditions of men.

Jesus Taught that He is Equal with the Father

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to share the Word of God and not the traditions of men. We saw the religious traditions of the leaders of the Jewish religion in Jerusalem were more important to them than the Word of God. As a result, they began to actively oppose Jesus and their desire to kill Jesus also began at this time. In our topic today, we will see that Jesus taught that He is equal with the Father. This gave the Jews an even stronger desire to kill Him.

Although Jesus knew that some of the Jews had a strong desire to kill Him because of healing on the Sabbath, Jesus used to the opportunity to talk about His relationship to the Father. In John 5:17-18 we read, "But Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.' 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." The Jews were upset that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. However, what He said in these verses caused the Jews to become even more upset. Jesus said that His Father had been working from the beginning of time until now. Needless to say, since God holds the whole creation together this work is continuous.

Paul wrote in Colossians 1:15-19, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell." Here we see that these verses make the statement that Jesus is before all things and by Him all things consist or are held together. Here in John Jesus said that He has been working since the creation just as the Father has been working. The Jews immediately understood what Jesus said.

They knew that Jesus was claiming to be God and equal with the Father. This gave those Jews and even stronger desire to kill Jesus. We will see that Jesus claimed to be from the Father throughout the book of John. Each time Jesus made that statement the Jews became more determined to kill Him. John had already written in John 1:14, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Then John the Baptist gave testimony of that fact. John 1:34 says, "And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." In John 2:16 Jesus said that God was His Father to the people in the temple at Jerusalem. That verse says, "And He said to those who sold doves, 'Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!'" Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:13, "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven." Now Jesus was back in Jerusalem and again He told the Jews that He is the Son of God. We will see Jesus continues to say the same thing throughout the book of John.

Jesus also said that because He is from God that He is able to give life to whom He chooses. John 5:19-21 says, "Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.'" Jesus

made it very clear that He did not work in opposition to the Father. In fact everything that He did was in agreement with the Father. He said that He did nothing of His own will.

Here we see that in the Trinity that it is the Father that exercises the will. We saw in chapter one that the Father willed the creation and the Son spoke the creation into existence as He carried out the will of the Father. Here Jesus said that whatever the Father does that the Son does the same things. This meant that the fact that Jesus healed on the Sabbath happened because He was carrying out the will of the Father. It also meant that Jesus was equal with the Father. We will see that Jesus says in several different ways in this chapter that He is equal with the Father.

Jesus went on to say that the Father loves the Son. In addition, Jesus said that He shows Him all things that He himself does. The word translated “shows” in this verse means to give evidence or proof of a thing. In John 10:30-32 Jesus used this same word when those verses say, “‘I and My Father are one.’ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, ‘Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?’” Jesus said that He had given evidence of the fact that He and the Father are one by the works that He had shown them. In fact the stones were in their hands at that very moment. Jesus just asked them for which of those good works were they going to stone Him.

However, here we see that Jesus went on to tell the Jewish religious leaders that He would do even greater works. Those works would cause them to be amazed but they would not cause the Jewish religious leaders to believe. Jesus then said that the Father raises the dead and gives life to them. Jesus said that He also had power to give life to whom He chose to give life. Jesus knew that He would be raising Lazarus from the dead just a few weeks before His own death. That would happen only about two miles from where these men were standing at that very moment. John 11:43-44 says, “Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth!’ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Loose him, and let him go.’”

We see the response of the Jewish high priest to the resurrection of Lazarus in the next few verses. John 11:49-50 says, “And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, ‘You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.’” Then John 11:53 adds, “Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.” John also explained why the religious leaders made that decision in John 12:37-40 where we read, “But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: ‘Lord, who has believed our report? and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?’ Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: ‘He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.’”

At the very time that they were rejecting Him, Jesus also told the people how to have everlasting life. John 5:22-24 says, “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, 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. ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.’” Here we see that the Father judges no one. Paul and Barnabas said in Acts 13:46, “Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.” Here we see that people reject themselves when they reject the eternal life that Jesus offers. They are responsible for their own choices.

Jesus said that those who honor the Father will also honor the Son. In contrast, those who reject

the Son will also reject the Father who sent Him. That is why the Father has committed all judgment to the Son. The Father will one day make all those who reject Jesus on this earth honor Him. Philippians 2:9-11 says, "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Those who reject Him now will be forced to recognize that He did deserve their honor and they deserve the judgment for all who reject Jesus.

Jesus then explained what the future holds for those who choose to honor Jesus and receive Him while they are on this earth. Jesus said that those who believe are those who really hear His Word. That true belief causes them to also believe in the Father and that He sent Jesus to pay the penalty for sin. That day Jesus promised three things to those who heard His Word and believed that the Father had sent Him. Jesus said that they would receive eternal life. John 3:17 says, "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." Jesus said that those who believed in Him would face no judgment. Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." Then Jesus said that those who believed passed from death to life. John 10:10 says, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others how they can receive that life by honoring Jesus and receiving Him while they are on this earth. We want them to be able to explain how to have that abundant life that Jesus died to provide. May the Lord richly bless you as you share with your children how to explain to others how to have eternal life.

Jesus Taught about the Two Resurrections

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain the fact that those who choose to honor Jesus and receive Him while they are here on this earth receive everlasting life. We also want to help our children learn to explain the way to have that abundant life that Jesus died to provide. In this topic we will see that Jesus went on to teach that there are two resurrections.

Jesus said that all people will be raised from the grave. John 5:25-27 says, “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. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.” All people who die will be raised from the grave. Those who have placed their faith in Jesus will be raised to eternal life as we saw in the previous topic. Those who have not placed their faith in Jesus will be raised for judgment and will then experience eternal judgment. That judgment is described in Revelation 20:15 where we read, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

These verses focus on those who have heard the Word of God and placed their faith in Jesus. We see that the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God. At the moment of physical death our soul and spirit go immediately to be with the Lord in heaven and our body goes to the grave. When Jesus comes at the Rapture 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 tells us that He will bring our souls and spirits with Him. Then 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says, “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.” Here we see that our dead bodies will be raised and rejoined with our souls and spirits. All those who hear the voice of the Lord will live and experience everlasting life.

We read that the Father has life in Himself. We also see that the Father has granted to the Son to have life in Himself. John 1:3-4 says, “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” From these verses we see that Jesus is the One who created all things and gave life to all at the time of creation. We also see that the Son is the One who has been given the authority for all judgment. In His prayer to the Father the night before His crucifixion, Jesus said in John 17:2, “As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.” In this prayer we see that the Father gave Jesus authority over all flesh. As a result, Jesus is the One who gives eternal life to all those who place their faith in Him. That is why Jesus said in Matthew 28:18, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” Jesus is the One who has authority in both heaven and earth.

Jesus went on to explain in more detail that some would be raised to eternal life and some would be raised to eternal judgment. John 5:28-30 says, “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. 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.” Here we see that there will be a day when all those who are in the grave will hear the voice of Jesus and be raised from the dead. However, there will be a very different end after they are raised to life.

Jesus said that those who have done good will be raised to the resurrection of life. The word translated “good” means that which is good in its character and beneficial in its effects. John 3:21 says, “But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” Here we see that those who have come to Christ for life will do those works that are according to truth. It will be very clear that the works of such individuals are done through the power of God.

In contrast, John 3:20 says, “For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.” Here we see why those who have not repented of their sin do not come to the light. They realize that their evil works will be exposed by the light. Such individuals realize that their works are evil in their character. They will be raised from the dead to the resurrection of condemnation. The resurrection of condemnation is the judgment of Satan and all those who continue to follow him. John 16:11 says, “Of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” Satan has already been judged and is waiting for the sentence to be carried out. Those who continue to follow him will share his judgment with him for all eternity.

We also see that this judgment by Jesus is a righteous judgment. This judgment is also in agreement with the will of the Father. Jesus just said a little while earlier in John 5:19, “Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.” Here we see that the judgment by Jesus is always in agreement with the will of the Father because they are both righteous and both hate evil. In fact Jesus said that He did not seek His own will. Instead we see that Jesus always seeks to do the will of the Father. However, their wills are in perfect agreement because they are both righteous.

However, Jesus did not just depend on His own witness about the fact that He judges according to truth. We see that there are four others witnesses whose testimony is in agreement with Jesus. John 5:31-36 says, “If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.” Two of the witnesses are mentioned in these verses and the other two witnesses will be mentioned in the following verses in our next topic.

Jesus said that His witness should not be believed if He was the only One that gave testimony about Himself. Here we see that Jesus was following the instructions given in the Old Testament. A person could not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. Deuteronomy 17:6 says, “Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.” Jesus knew that the Jews were trying to accuse Him of blasphemy. Such a judgment carried the death penalty. As a result, that is why Jesus said that there were additional witnesses of the statements that He made about Himself.

The first witness that Jesus mentioned was John the Baptist. Mark 1:6-8 says, “Now John was clothed with camel’s hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, “There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” John said that the One coming after Him was so great that he was not even worthy to loose the sandal of Jesus. Then John 1:33-34 adds, “I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the

Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.” Here we see that John gave verbal testimony of the fact that Jesus is the Son of God.

Jesus said that John had a mighty witness during the time that he was preaching. Many people came to him and were baptized by him. However, his most important ministry was to give witness of the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. People enjoyed listening to John during the time that he was preaching. They had recognized that he was a burning and shining light that came from God. They were willing to enjoy that light for as long as John had the opportunity to preach.

However, Jesus said that there was a greater witness than John. Jesus said that the works which that Father gave Jesus to finish on this earth provided a greater witness than even the ministry of John the Baptist. These works were the miracles that Jesus did during the time that He was preaching. In fact we have already seen that seven of the miracles that Jesus did are recorded in the book of John as signs to the people. John 20:30-31 says, “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.” Here we see that the miracles that Jesus did were done as signs so that people would believe in His name. Jesus said that the works that He did were a witness that the Father had sent Him.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand each of the formal witnesses that the Father gave to prove that the testimony of Jesus was true. When they fully understand the testimony of each of these witnesses, they will be able to explain to others why we can know for sure that Jesus is the Son of God and that He came to this earth to give life to all who will believe. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to share this message with others.

Jesus Taught that the Scriptures Spoke of Him

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children clearly understand each of the formal witnesses that the Father gave about the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. Then they will be able to explain to others how they can know for sure that Jesus is the Son of God and that He came to this earth to give life to all who will believe. In this topic we are going to see that Jesus said that there were two other formal witnesses of the fact that He is the Son of God.

In our last topic, we saw that John the Baptist and the works of Jesus both gave testimony of the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. Next we will see that the Father also gave that same witness. John 5:37-38 says, “And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.” Here we see that the Father also gave witness that Jesus was His beloved Son.

Mark 1:9-11 says, “It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Here we see that the Father spoke from heaven to say that Jesus was His beloved Son. Then just a few days before His death, Jesus said in John 12:27-28, “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour?’ But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.’” Then a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.’” The Father made it very clear that Jesus was His Beloved Son who was carrying out His will.

However, we see Jesus gave three reasons why the Jews would not accept the witness of the Father. First, they did not hear His voice. Second, they had not seen His form. Third, they did not have the Word of the Father abiding in them. Jesus said that they could not have the Word of the Father abiding in them because they refused to believe in the One that the Father had sent. Here we see that most of the Jews gathered that day to listen to Jesus had neither the Father nor the Son abiding in their lives. Needless to say because they did not have the Father abiding in their lives they refused to believe in the One that the Father had sent.

We go on to see that Jesus said that the Scriptures also gave testimony of Him. John 5:39-43 says, “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. “I do not receive honor from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. 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.” Many of the Jews prided themselves on the way that they searched the Old Testament Scriptures. However, 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” Those Jews who were depending on their own efforts for salvation read the Old Testament and saw a history of the Jews.

The Old Testament spoke about Jesus from the beginning to the end but most of the Jews never saw Jesus in the Old Testament. Jesus gave understanding to two disciples when Luke 24:27 says, “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Then later that evening Jesus was talking to His other disciples. Luke 24:44-45 says, “Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of

Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” Even the disciples lacked understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures until Jesus explained the Scriptures to the disciples.

Jesus told the Jews that most of them were not willing to come to Him so that they could have life. John 1:11-12 says, “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 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.” Most were unwilling to receive Jesus when He came. However, those who did receive Him were born of God and received spiritual life which will last forever. That was the reason why Jesus did not receive honor from most of the people. They were happy when He healed them and fed them. The greatest desire of Jesus was to do to the will of the Father and that immediately caused opposition especially from the leaders of the Jews.

Jesus explained that the real problem of most of the Jews was the fact that they did not have the love of the Father in them. Romans 5:5 says, “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Here we see that the love of God is poured out in the hearts of all those who believe. Then 1 John 2:5 says, “But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.” It is by the love of God in our hearts that we know that we know Him. Finally 1 John 5:3 says, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.” Most of the Jews did not have the love of God in them because they had not come to Him by faith and so they did not keep His commandments.

Jesus had come in the name of the Father and most of the Jews refused to receive Him. In contrast, there were many false christs who claimed to be the Messiah during that period of the history of the Jews. These false christs came in their own name and many of the Jews believed them. They chose to receive their false christs and reject the true Messiah because they did not have the love of the Father in them. In fact when the Roman soldiers told the Jewish chief priests about the resurrection of Christ, we read in Matthew 28:11-13, “Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, ‘Tell them, His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.’” Here we see that the Jewish religious leaders chose to pay a large sum of money to keep the soldiers from telling the truth.

Jesus went on to say in John 5:44-47, “How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God? Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” In these verses, we see that Jesus talked about the problem that many of the Jews had in their hearts. Mark 8:20-23 says, “And He said, “What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.” Jesus said that the thing that defiles a man is the sin in the heart. The Jews showed the pride in their hearts by seeking honor from one another.

Jesus said that He did not need to accuse the Jews of their sin because there was already one who was accusing them. The Jews claimed that they followed the law of God which had been written by Moses. Jesus said that they claimed to believe Moses. However, Jesus said that they really did not believe Moses either. Moses wrote about Jesus in many different places in the Law (Genesis through Deuteronomy). When Jesus appeared to Moses at the burning bush, He

asked God to tell who had sent him. Exodus 3:14 says, “And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me to you.’” We see throughout the book of John that Jesus is the I AM.

Moses also called Jesus a Prophet. Deuteronomy 18:15 says, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.” John the Baptist said he was not the Prophet in John 1:21. Then the next day he said in John 1:29, “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” Here we see that John introduced the One who was the Prophet. Many of the Jews later said in John 7:40, “Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, ‘Truly this is the Prophet.’” Even though most of the religious leaders rejected Jesus part of the common people later believed and placed their faith in Him

Nearly all of the Jews in the time of Jesus claimed that they believed in Moses. Yet they showed that they did not believe Moses because they refused to believe what Moses wrote about the Messiah even though Jesus did many signs to prove that He was the Messiah. We want to help our physical and spiritual children both believe and learn to explain to others from the Word of God that Jesus is the Messiah and fulfilled all of the prophecies written about Him in the Old Testament that said He would come as the Savior of the world. We want to help them learn to show from Scripture that Jesus is the Son of God who is the One that gives everlasting life. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to show from the Bible that Jesus is the Son of God.

Jesus Fed the Five Thousand

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children both believe and learn to share with others from the Word of God that Jesus is the Messiah. He is the One who fulfilled all of the prophecies written about Him in the Old Testament. He also came as the Savior of the world. In this topic we are going to see that Jesus fed a large crowd of five thousand men plus their families.

A large crowd began to follow Jesus as they saw the miracles that He did. John 6:1-3 says, "After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples." We see that this crowd of people following Jesus was in the area around the Sea of Galilee. We also see that the Sea of Galilee was known for a time as the Sea of Tiberias which was the name of the Roman emperor.

We see the reason why this large crowd began to follow Jesus was due to the fact that they saw the signs (miracles) that Jesus did by healing people with various diseases. People love to see things happen and they heard about the miracles that Jesus did and so they came to see Him. We see that they quickly stopped following when they heard the teaching that Jesus gave. In this chapter we see that there was a crowd of 5000 at the beginning of the chapter. Then they heard the teaching of Jesus. As a result, John 6:66 says, "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" Here we see that the crowd quickly went from 5000 to 12 because the people were not ready to accept the message that Jesus is the Bread of Life. Miracles draw crowds but they do not make disciples. The people wanted to be entertained rather than become disciples.

Because of the crowds Jesus went up on the mountain so that He could teach His disciples. In John 6:4-9 we read, "Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?' But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, 'Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.' One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, 'There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?' We see that this happened close to the time of the Passover. Since chapter five was at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles this would be about six months later.

We see that the disciples had just returned from being sent throughout Galilee to preach that people should repent. Mark 6:30-31 says, "Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat." Here we see that Jesus had actually taken the disciples to an isolated place so that they could get some rest. The people saw Jesus and the disciples leave and a crowd quickly followed. Jesus was on the mountain talking with His disciples and teaching them when He saw this great crowd of people coming toward them.

We see what Jesus did when He saw this large crowd coming toward the place where He and the disciples were talking. Mark 6:34 says, "And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things." Jesus saw the crowd and saw their spiritual

need. As a result, Jesus spent the rest of the day teaching this crowd of people. Jesus also saw this as a time to test His disciples and so He asked Philip this question, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” Instead of answering the question, Philip gave a financial report. He said that they did not have enough money to buy even a little food for such a large crowd. Since that time, many Christians have followed the example of Philip and have done the same thing when the Lord has opened great opportunities for ministry.

We read that Jesus knew what He was going to do but just asked this question to test Philip. Philip saw the problem of a lack of money but forgot that Jesus is the problem solver. That was why he said that they did not have enough money to buy food for the people. In contrast, we see that Andrew saw an opportunity to minister to the people even though he did not know what Jesus would do. Andrew came to Jesus and said, “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?” Andrew had found out that this boy had brought a lunch for himself and had not eaten it yet. Andrew realized that was a very small amount of food for such a large crowd but He also realized that Jesus was the One asking the question. That was the reason why his answer was very different from the answer of Philip.

Andrew is only mentioned three times in the book of John. However, every time that he is mentioned he is bringing someone to Jesus. Here he brought a boy with a lunch. In John 1:40-41 we see that he brought his brother. Those verses say, “One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated, the Christ). Then in John 12:20-22 we read, “Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’ Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.” Every time we see Andrew he was bringing someone to Jesus.

Jesus knew what He was going to do. In John 6:10-14 we read, “Then Jesus said, ‘Make the people sit down.’ Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.’ Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, ‘This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.’” We see that there were 5000 men plus women and children so this was a very large crowd.

Jesus quickly taught the disciples how to organize the people. Luke 9:14-15 says, “For there were about five thousand men. Then He said to His disciples, ‘Make them sit down in groups of fifty.’ And they did so, and made them all sit down.” We see that Jesus performed the miracle that the disciples could not do and then He gave the disciples the responsibility to distribute the food to the people. Jesus gave thanks to the Father for the food (while the amount of food that He had was just the lunch of one boy) and then Jesus divided up the food and gave the food to the disciples to distribute to the various groups of people that were seated all over the mountainside. The bread and the fish just kept multiplying as Jesus broke them.

Jesus just kept breaking the bread and fish so everyone of that mountainside that day ate until they were full. Then Jesus told the disciples, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.” Jesus was probably using a physical illustration to teach a spiritual principle. The disciples gathered up the food that the crowd had been unable to eat. In all they gathered twelve baskets full (one for each of the disciples). However, this also gave the disciples a visual illustration of what Jesus had seen earlier. We saw that Jesus was moved with

compassion because the people were like sheep without a shepherd. Just like the fragments of food needed to be gathered, Jesus wanted the disciples to see that when people are like sheep without a shepherd they need to be gathered to the Lord so that they do not wander away and get destroyed.

We also see that this miracle was called a sign just as each of the miracles in the book of John is called a sign. Again we are reminded of the words of John 20:30-31 which read, “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.” These signs have been given so that all will believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Here we see that the men recognized that Jesus was the Prophet predicted in Deuteronomy 18 that would come into the world.

We see that most of the men saw Jesus as the Prophet for the wrong reasons. The next day many of these same people asked Jesus when He came back to their side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus said in John 6:26-27, “Jesus answered them and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. 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.’” In contrast, there were a few who believed because they were true disciples. We want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that it is important to help each person realize the importance of following Jesus for the right reasons. Many people are like the crowd who only follow Jesus for the physical benefits in this world. They will not have eternal life because they focused on the wrong things. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to explain what it means to follow Jesus.

Jesus Walked on the Water

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others the importance of following Jesus for spiritual life and not for material blessings in this world. Those who become true followers of Jesus come to Him for eternal life and not for physical blessings on this earth. In our topic today, we are going to see that after feeding the five thousand that Jesus walked on the water later that evening.

After Jesus fed the five thousand, we read in John 6:15-17, “Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone. Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them.” Jesus understood the hearts of the people and He knew that they wanted to come and take Him by force to make Him a king.

The people had seen the miracles and ate the food and they wanted a king who would meet their physical needs. Jesus would warn them the need day about the danger of just seeking to get their physical needs met. Jesus said the next day in 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.” Here Jesus reminded the people that there are two kinds of food. The food that will meet our physical needs will quickly perish. We can be full for a few hours but within a few hours we become hungry again. In contrast, Jesus told the people to seek the food that endures to everlasting life.

Jesus had told His disciples earlier in Samaria in John 4:32-34, “But He said to them, ‘I have food to eat of which you do not know.’” Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?” Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.’” Jesus said that His food was to do the will of the Father. Here Jesus told the people to seek the food that would produce everlasting life. Jesus would say the next day in John 6:35, “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.’” We will see that Jesus offered that spiritual food to the Jews the next day but they chose to reject the food that produced everlasting life. Most of the Jews in Judea had rejected the fact that Jesus is the Son of God in chapter five. Now we will see that most of the Jews in Galilee reject the fact the fact that Jesus is the Son of God.

In order to carry out the will of the Father, Jesus knew that it was time to take action. Matthew 14:22-23 says, “Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.” As a result, Jesus sent the disciples away in the boat. Then he sent the multitudes away and went alone up into the mountain to spend time talking with the Father in prayer. Jesus was carrying out the will of the Father and knew that the crowd had no understanding of His purpose on this earth.

When the evening had come the disciples had started across the sea toward the city of Capernaum. Meanwhile it became dark and Jesus had not come back from His time of prayer on the mountain. However, the disciples were having a difficult time as they tried to row the boat across the water to Capernaum. Matthew 14:24 says, “But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.” Here we see that the wind was blowing from the direction of Capernaum and so that made it much more difficult to travel

across the water with the wind blowing against them.

Several of the disciples had been fishermen who fished in this very area. They were used to going across this water and the trip normally probably took about two hours. We read in John 6:18-21, “Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid. But He said to them, ‘It is I; do not be afraid.’ Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.” The fact that the sea arose meant that the waves were getting higher and higher. As a result, this trip was taking them much longer than it had in the past.

Meanwhile Jesus was observing their trip from the shore and knew what was happening to them. Mark 6:48 says, “Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by.” Here we see how much the wind had affected these men as they tried to cross the sea. The Jews divided the night into four watches. The fourth watch would be from three in the morning until sunrise. As a result, these men had been rowing the boat for many hours and had only rowed about three or four miles. Jesus went walking across the sea and as Jesus got close to the boat the disciples saw something coming across the water and were afraid.

Jesus immediately called to the disciples to calm their fears. Matthew 14:26-27 says, “And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, ‘It is a ghost!’ And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.’” Matthew tells us about one thing that happened that Mark and John do not mention. Matthew 14:28-31 says, “And Peter answered Him and said, ‘Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.’ So He said, ‘Come.’ And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’ And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’” As long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he was able to walk on the water. As soon as he took his eyes off Jesus he began to sink and prayed the shortest prayer in the Bible. “Lord, save me!” Jesus immediately caught his hand and they went to the boat together.

The other disciples were very glad to receive Jesus into the boat. Mark 6:51 says, “Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled.” However, two other things happened in addition to the wind ceasing. Matthew 14:33 says, “Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God.’” Here we see that the disciples were caused to recognize again that Jesus is the Son of God. Then John tells us that immediately the boat was at the land where they were going. After spending most of the night rowing the boat against the waves and the wind, the disciples saw Jesus take the boat a majority of the way across the sea in a moment.

When Jesus sent the crowd away, some had walked around the lake back to the area of Capernaum. John 6:22-24 tells us, “On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone— however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks—when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.” The next day when some of the people went down to the water of the Sea of Galilee, there was only one boat at Capernaum. Those people recognized it as the boat that the disciples

had taken. The people knew that Jesus had not gone with the disciples in that boat so the people thought Jesus must still be on the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

Apparently someone had carried word to the town of Tiberias that Jesus had fed all of the people the previous day since the place where Jesus fed the people was just across the Sea of Galilee from Tiberias. Many of the people were still in the general area where Jesus had fed the people. The Sea of Galilee is about 13 miles long and 7 miles wide but the area across from Tiberias was closer because the Sea of Galilee was narrower at that point and also several miles south of the city of Capernaum. As a result, the people came across the sea from Tiberias in little boats looking for Jesus.

The people coming across in the little boats found part of the people that Jesus had fed the previous day. However, they saw that Jesus was not there. They also saw that the disciples were not in the area either. As a result, these people from Tiberias got back into their boats and went northwest across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum looking for Jesus. Here we see that there were additional people who wanted to see Jesus after hearing about the feeding of the five thousand. They were eager to see Jesus and possibly see some miracles. Instead of returning to Tiberias they took their boats and went to the city of Capernaum. These people were seeking Jesus but they were seeking Him for the wrong reasons. John 6:26 says, "Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled." They were seeking free food rather than seeking a Savior from their sin.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand the fact that people have various reasons for doing the things that they do. Some will seek Jesus because of their spiritual need while others will seek Jesus for earthly blessing. Those who only seek earthly blessing do not receive eternal life because they come to Jesus for the wrong reasons. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand the various reasons why people seek Jesus.

Jesus Taught that He is the Bread of Life

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that many people seek Jesus for the wrong reasons. Many people came seeking Jesus the day after He fed the five thousand but most of them came because of their desire for food and other earthly things. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus explained to the people what they should really seek.

The people had come in their boats to Capernaum looking for Jesus. We read in John 6:25-27, “And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, ‘Rabbi, when did You come here?’” Jesus answered them and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. 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.” Here we see that when the people found Jesus they wanted to know when He had come to Capernaum. They knew that He had gone up into the mountain to pray the previous evening. However, they had no idea how He had traveled from that mountain to Capernaum during the time in between.

Jesus knew the hearts of these people. He knew their real reason for looking for Him. They had seen Jesus do miracles of healing. However, that was not the reason why they had come looking for Him that day. Instead Jesus said that they looked for Him that day because they had eaten the bread and were filled. Here we see an example of the selfish nature of people. It was one thing for the people to see Jesus do miracles that benefited other people. However, everyone had been benefited by this miracle. John 6:11 says, “And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.” We see that every person got as much food as they wanted. They would like to have had that happen every day so that they would no longer need to work. That was the reason why they had wanted to make Him the king the previous day.

Jesus told them not to work for the food that was only earthly and temporary. Instead Jesus told the people to seek the food which will provide eternal life. Jesus would explain a few verses later in John 6:35, “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.’” Jesus is the only One that is able to give food that produces eternal life because He is the One who is the source of life. That is why He told the people that the Son of Man was the One who could give them that life. Jesus said that the Son of Man was the One that the Father had sealed. The word translated “sealed” means to place a seal on a document to prove that the testimony of the writer of that document is who he professes to be. As a result, Jesus said that the Father had placed His seal on Jesus to show that Jesus is the One who is both the Son of Man and the Son of God.

Jesus went on to tell the people that the true work of God was to believe the One that the Father had sent. John 6:28-31 says, “Then they said to Him, ‘What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?’” Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.’ Therefore they said to Him, ‘What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Here we see that the people had no understanding of what the Old Testament teaches or of what Jesus meant. They thought that Jesus must be talking about the works that they were supposed to do to earn spiritual life. Most of the people of that day thought that they were accepted by God because of the works that they

were doing.

Instead Jesus told the people that the work of God was to believe on the One that the Father had sent. Isaiah 64:6 says, "But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Isaiah had said that the works of people were like the rags that were used to cover bleeding sores. They were unclean and absolutely useless. Romans 3:19-20 says, "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." The purpose of the law was not to show man how to work for salvation. Instead the purpose of the law was to silence every person and show that every person is guilty before God. Works can never save.

That is why Jesus told the people that the work of God was to believe the One that the Father sent. Malachi 3:3 says, "He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness." This passage from Malachi was talking about the One that John the Baptist would introduce. Jesus is the One who can purge away sin. He is the One who can replace our sin with His righteousness. That is why 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." As a result, all who believe in the One that the Father sent can stand before God in the righteousness of Christ instead of their own sin.

The Jews immediately asked Jesus what sign He would do to prove that they should believe Him. Then they asked Him to do a greater work that Moses did in the wilderness to prove that He was from God. They reminded Jesus that their fathers ate manna in the wilderness for 40 years. In fact they even quoted from Psalm 78:24 which says, "Had rained down manna on them to eat, and given them of the bread of heaven." God had fed the people under Moses for 40 years and so the people talking to Jesus said that He should feed them at least as long as Moses did in the desert to prove that He was from God. The people said that if Jesus would do a greater sign than Moses that then they would believe in Him. Here we see the unbelief of many of the people of Galilee.

Jesus answered their demand in John 6:32-37 where we read, "Then Jesus said to them, "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. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." 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. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out." Jesus made it clear that Moses was not the source of bread from heaven that gives eternal life. John 6:48-50 says, "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die." Those who ate the bread in the Old Testament all died including Moses.

Jesus said that the Father is the One who gives the true bread from heaven. Jesus said that the bread of God is the One who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. The Jews were still thinking of physical food to eat like the 5000 ate the previous day. They wanted more of that physical food that would give them physical life. As a result the people said, "Lord, give us this bread always." Because of their spiritual blindness, the people had no idea that Jesus was offering them the eternal life which He would provide by His death and resurrection. That is why they could not understand when Jesus said that the work of God was to believe in the One that the Father had sent.

Then Jesus spoke even more clearly and said, "I am the bread of life." Since Jesus had just said that they had to believe in the One that the Father had sent, this was a clear claim to the people that day that Jesus is the One who had been sent from God. They had to choose to believe in Him or they were making the choice to reject Him as the One that the Father had sent. Then Jesus explained some important promises to all who would believe in Him. Jesus said that those who would come to Him would never hunger. Jesus said that those who believe in Him will never thirst. Earlier Jesus had told the Samaritan woman in John 4:13-14, "Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." Jesus told the woman that the water that He would give her would result in everlasting life.

At a later time Jesus said in John 7:38-39, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." At the moment of salvation all those who believe receive everlasting life and receive the Holy Spirit as the down payment and guarantee of that everlasting life. Jesus realized that most of the people that had seen Him had not believed in Him. Jesus understood that the Father must draw them to Him and said in John 6:44, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. Jesus also gave a wonderful promise to all those who would believe and come to Him. Jesus promised that He would receive everyone that came to Him and that He would never cast them out. This is a tremendous promise that we want to help our physical and spiritual children clearly understand. First, it will prevent them from having doubts of their salvation in their own lives. Second, they will be able to explain to others why those who come to Jesus in true belief will never have to fear the fact that Jesus will not accept them. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the tremendous peace that this promise gives.

Jesus Taught that it is the Father who Draws People to Him

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children explain the promise that Jesus gave to all who would come to Him for spiritual life. Jesus promised that He would satisfy their spiritual hunger and quench their spiritual thirst by giving them spiritual life which is eternal life. In our topic today, we are going to see that it is the Father who draws all those who come to Jesus for this eternal life.

Jesus went on to explain to the people why He came down from the Father to the earth. John 6:38-40 says, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Here we see that Jesus came from heaven to do the will of the Father.

We also see that Jesus gives us an example for our own lives. He said that He did not come to do His own will. Instead He came to do the will of the Father. Jesus had told the disciples earlier in John 4:34, "Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." Jesus did the will of the Father throughout the time that He was on earth and provides an example for us. His greatest example is in Matthew 26:39 we read, "He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." Jesus wanted the will of the Father even though it meant that He would experience crucifixion and separation from the Father while He bore our sins.

Jesus also said that it was His Father's will that He would lose nothing of all that the Father gave Him. As Jesus prayed to the Father the night before His crucifixion He said in John 17:12, "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." Jesus kept all of His disciples that were true followers since Judas was not a true follower. Jesus said in a statement that also applies to each of us who are followers today in John 10:27-28, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." Christ will certainly keep each Christian today, because no one is able to pluck us out of His hand.

We also see the will of the Father for each of us. His will is that we believe in Christ so that we can have eternal life. In John 6:44 we see that the Father is the One who draws us when we read, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." However, we also see our responsibility in John 1:12 which says, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." Here we see it is our responsibility to receive Him. Jesus promises that if we believe Him and receive Him that we will have everlasting life and He will raise us up at the last day.

Instead of receiving that message, John 6:41-44 says, "The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, 'I am the bread which came down from heaven.' And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." Here we see that the Jews complained because Jesus said that

He was the bread which came down from heaven. They knew that Jesus was saying that He was the Son of God. The people said that they knew the family of Jesus. They knew Joseph and Mary. They had seen this couple raise Jesus from childhood. As a result they said it was impossible for Jesus to say, "I have come down from heaven." They did not know Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus knew that the people were murmuring and complaining among themselves. These people tried to deny that Jesus came down from heaven. They knew that would be admitting that He is the Son of God and they chose to reject Him instead. This gave Jesus the opportunity to explain the ministry of the Father in salvation. Jesus said that no one can come to Him unless the Father draws him. It is necessary for the Father to draw because the Gospel is hidden from those who are perishing. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 says, "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them." The word translated "veiled" means to hide or hinder the knowledge of a thing.

Jesus also gave a great promise to all those who are drawn to Him. Jesus promised, "I will raise him up at the last day." Throughout the book of John we see that Jesus promises to give eternal life to those who believe in Him. At the moment we die our souls and spirits are taken to be with the Lord. However, our bodies will also one day be raised back to life. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first." Here we see that our dead bodies will be raised and rejoined with our souls and spirits. This resurrection body will be like the resurrection body of Jesus. 1 Corinthians 15:53-54 says, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'" This body that corrupts and dies will be replaced with a body that does not corrupt and does not die.

Jesus went on to say in John 6:45-50, "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die." Here we see that the reason people come to Jesus is due to the fact that they have been taught by God. This statement comes from Isaiah 54:13. In that verse the word translated "taught" means to be disciplined or to learn, in this case, from God the Father. Only those who have learned from God can be drawn to Jesus.

Jesus said that there is only One person that has seen the Father. That One is the One who is from God. Jesus went on to make it clear that He is the One that has seen God. Jesus then said, "He who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life." Earlier in His message Jesus had promised in John 6:35, "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.'" Jesus is making it clear that each person must come to Him and believe in Him. All those who do will have their spiritual hunger satisfied. They will never experience spiritual hunger again because Jesus gives everlasting life.

In contrast, Jesus reminded the people what happened to those in the wilderness who ate the manna for 40 years. They all ate the physical manna and they all died physically. Jesus is very different from the manna that the people of Israel ate for 40 years as they traveled through the wilderness. That manna had to be gathered every day except on the Sabbath. Exodus 16:4-5 says, "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the

people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.” Some of the people did not listen to Moses. Exodus 16:19-20 says, “And Moses said, “Let no one leave any of it till morning.” Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.” Here we see that the manna could not give them everlasting life because it would not even last one extra day.

Jesus said that He is the true bread that came down from heaven. Those who eat this bread will never experience spiritual death. Jesus made it very clear that the people must believe in Him in order to have eternal life. Jesus had taught this same thing when He was in Judea. John 5:24 says, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.” We saw that the people of Judea rejected this message of Jesus about Himself. We are going to see that most of the people in Galilee also chose to reject this message. For those who did believe and receive Him, Jesus said that they would never experience spiritual death. Physical death is the separation of the body from the soul and spirit. Spiritual death is the separation of man from God. Adam and Eve experienced spiritual death the moment that they sinned.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children really understand the fact that when they believed and received Jesus that they received the spiritual life that Adam and Eve lost when they sinned. We want them to understand that they no longer need to fear spiritual death once they have received Jesus because of the fact that Jesus has promised them spiritual life. Jesus gave that spiritual life to each of us at the moment that we experienced spiritual birth. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand why spiritual life also gives true peace for eternity.

Jesus Taught that He is the One who Gives Eternal Life

We saw in our last topic that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that they received spiritual life at the moment that they believed and received Jesus into their lives. That eternal life is given to each one who receives it as a free gift. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus explained again that He is the One who gives that spiritual life to each one who comes to Him.

Jesus summarized all that He had said to them about the fact that He is the bread of life. John 6:51-52 says, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.’ The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, ‘How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?’” The previous day Jesus had fed the 5000 with the bread and fish that came from the lunch of one boy. However, that bread was just the physical bread and the people were hungry again the next day. That was why they had come seeking Jesus that day because they wanted another free meal for their physical hunger. Instead Jesus chose to explain that they needed living bread.

Now Jesus began to summarize His teaching that day by saying, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven.” Jesus made it very clear that He came from the Father. He also said that He is the living bread that can give life to all who come to Him as He said that anyone that eats this bread will live forever. The people listening to Him that day had to make a choice. They either had to believe what Jesus said or they had to reject Him. The bread that Jesus offered was very different than the manna that the people of Israel had eaten while they were in the wilderness.

Then Jesus said that the bread that He would give was His flesh. Jesus said that He would give His flesh for the life of the world. 1 Peter 2:24 says, “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.” In this verse, Peter explained how Jesus gave His flesh for the life of the world. He is that sacrifice that makes it possible for us to die to sin and live for righteousness. It was that payment for sin by Jesus that brought spiritual healing to lives that were spiritually dead.

Since the Jews listening that day had not repented of their sin of unbelief, they lacked spiritual understanding and could not understand what Jesus meant. In fact they started arguing among themselves. They asked, “How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?” Here we see that those Jews did the same thing that Nicodemus had done when He talked with Jesus in John 3. John 3:4 says, “Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus had given a physical illustration of a spiritual birth and Nicodemus could not understand it. In the same way Jesus gave these Jews a physical illustration of how He would provide spiritual life and they did not understand what Jesus meant.

Jesus went on to give the Jews a second physical illustration and that illustration caused the Jews to become even more upset. John 6:53-56 says, “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. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.” The reason this

illustration upset these Jews even more was due to the fact that Leviticus 17:10-11 says, “And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.” The Jews knew that the Old Testament said that anyone who ate or drank blood was to be cut off from the people of Israel.

At the same time we see that verse eleven from this passage in Leviticus perfectly illustrates what Jesus was teaching about His blood. Jesus was going to give His blood on the cross to make atonement for the souls of all people. The word translated “atonement” in Leviticus means to cover, purge or make reconciliation. The blood of the Old Testament sacrifices provided a covering for sin. John the Baptist introduced Jesus in John 1:29 by saying, “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” Jesus did more than just cover sin. His blood takes away our sin. We were also reconciled to God through the blood of Jesus. 2 Corinthians 5:18 says, “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.” These things cannot be understood without spiritual understanding.

Jesus then gave a promise to those who would eat His flesh and drink His blood. Jesus promised that He would raise from the dead all who did these things. Jesus was using this illustration to help the Jews there that day to understand that they had to both believe Him and receive Him and they would have eternal life. John 3:36 says, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” Then John 1:12-13 says, “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. Jesus said who eat His flesh and drink His blood (believe in His death and resurrection and receive Him) experience spiritual birth which gives eternal life.

Jesus said that His flesh is the true spiritual food and His blood is the blood that gives true spiritual life. Jesus then gave the promise that they would abide in Jesus and He would abide in them. Jesus explained what this promise meant in terms of fruitfulness to His disciples more fully the night before his crucifixion. John 15:4-5 says, “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. 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.” In these verses, we see that Jesus used a vine and branches as His illustration. Jesus said that as we abide in Him and He abides in us that He will cause our lives to bear much fruit. It is the life of Christ abiding in us that makes our lives fruitful.

Jesus also said that those who eat His flesh and drink His blood will live forever. John 6:57-59 says, “As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 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.’ These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.” Jesus said that it was the living Father who sent Him. The word translated “sent” means to go to the place appointed. Jesus used this same word in John 5:36 where He said, “But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.” In this verse, Jesus told the Jews that the works that He did were evidence that the Father had sent Him. Jesus said this same thing in the prayer to His Father in John 17:3, “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

Jesus also said that those who feed on him will live because of Him. This is a reminder of the fact that the only way that we can have eternal life is through Jesus. Jesus later told Thomas and the other disciples in John 14:6, “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” The word that is translated “to eat on” means to gnaw or to chew as a slow process of eating and speaks of the habit of spiritually feeding on Jesus.” It is similar to the thought in Psalm 1:1-3 which says, “Blessed *is* the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, or sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” However, there is also a great difference between the two passages. Psalm 1 talks about meditating on the written Word of God while John 6 talks of meditating about Jesus, the living Word of God.

Jesus is the living bread that came down from heaven. That is why He is so different from the physical bread (manna) that God used to feed the nation of Israel for the forty years that they were in the wilderness. That was physical bread and could only keep physical life alive for a short period of time. All those who ate that bread in the wilderness died. In contrast, Jesus is the living (spiritual) bread that comes down from the Father. All those who abide in Him are promised eternal life. Jesus later said in John 10:27-30, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father’s hand. I and *My* Father are one.” Those who receive eternal life will never perish. Jesus taught these things in the synagogue at Capernaum.

We also want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others what it means to eat the flesh of Jesus and drink His blood. We want to help them understand that it means the same things as believing and receiving Jesus. We need to help our children understand that those who lack spiritual life will often need these things explained many times because they lack spiritual understanding. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to patiently explain these things.

Jesus Saw Many People Stop Following Him

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what it means to eat the flesh of Jesus and drink His blood. We saw that many of the Jews listening to Jesus had no understanding of spiritual things and so they had no idea what Jesus meant and they totally misinterpreted what Jesus said. In our topic today, we are going to see that many of the Jews in Galilee stopped following Jesus.

Jesus had just told the Jews that those who eat His flesh and drink His blood would have eternal life. We see the response of many who claimed to be His disciples in John 6:60-62, "Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, 'This is a hard saying; who can understand it?'" When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?" We see that many of the people that were in the synagogue at Capernaum that day claimed to be disciples of Jesus. Later Jesus would say in John 8:31, "Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.'" Jesus said that those who are true disciples will abide in His Word.

Many of these who claimed to be disciples of Jesus said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" Jesus actually used this statement to separate those who were true disciples from those who just claimed to be disciples. Here we see that this group said that the statement of Jesus was a hard saying. The word translated "hard" means harsh, rough or stiff. This word is used in Jude 15 where we read, "To execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." We see that the ungodly speak harsh words against Jesus. Here those who claimed to be disciples of Jesus claimed that His words were harsh.

They said that because his words were harsh that they could not understand the meaning of what Jesus was saying. Jesus knew the thoughts of these people and knew that they were complaining. As a result, Jesus asked them if what He had said offended them. The word translated "offended" means to cause a person to begin to distrust and fall away or to cause a person to stumble. Jesus used this same word when He said to His disciples in Matthew 26:31 as the disciples ate the Passover supper, "Then Jesus said to them, 'All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'" In that case the disciples forsook Him and fled. Here we will see with these who claimed to be the disciples of Jesus that most of them would turn from Him as a result of the message of Jesus about the fact that He is the bread of life.

Jesus also asked these people here what they would do if they saw the Son of Man ascend where He was before. This speaks both of the fact that Jesus had already existed before He came to this earth and also of the fact that He would return to heaven. These two things caused many that were there to think more about whether they would continue to follow Jesus because both facts pointed to the fact that Jesus is God. Jesus went on to say in John 6:63-65, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life. But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, 'Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.'" Jesus knew that many of those there that day did not believe that He was God.

Christ pointed out the fact that it is the Holy Spirit that gives life. Christ had told Nicodemus earlier in John 3:6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." In that verse Jesus made it clear to Nicodemus that physical birth produces only physical life. A person must be born of the Holy Spirit to have spiritual life. Here Jesus says the same thing to all those who were gathered to hear Him that day. He told them that physical life has no value for eternal life. Jesus also said that the words that He spoke were both spirit and life. These words had their source in the Holy Spirit because the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are One. These words told how to receive spiritual life because Jesus told them that day how to have eternal life.

Jesus knew that many of those there that day did not have a true belief. John 2:24-25 says, "But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." Those verses at the very beginning of the public ministry of Jesus showed that He was God and knew the hearts of every person. In the same way, Jesus knew the heart of every person that heard Him here in John 6. He knew those who believed and those who did not believe. He also knew the one that was there that day who would later betray Him.

Then Jesus reminded those who were present that day what He had said earlier in His sermon. John 6:44 says, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." Now Jesus told them the same thing in words that were a little different. Jesus said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." Many of the people there that day had come to Jesus that day because Jesus had fed them the previous day. They were not coming to Him for spiritual life. Instead they were coming to Him for more physical food. They were not being drawn to Jesus by the Father for spiritual life.

We see that the words of Jesus caused many people to make a choice that day. John 6:66-71 says, "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you also want to go away?' But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answered them, 'Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?' He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve." Here see that many people made the choice that day that they would not follow Jesus any longer. In doing so they showed that they did not have spiritual life.

When these people were all gone, Jesus turned to the twelve who were still with Him. Jesus then asked them the question, "Do you also want to go away?" Here we see that Jesus also gave the twelve the opportunity to follow the crowd of those who had just left. However, Peter spoke for eleven of the twelve who still remained. Peter began with a question, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" At least Peter, Andrew, James and John had all known John the Baptist. John 1:37 says, "The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." These two were Andrew and John. John the Baptist had said that Jesus was the Lamb of God that would take away the sins of the world. Then Jesus had begun doing signs so that His disciples would believe. John 2:11 says, "This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him." Just the previous day Jesus had given a sign by feeding five thousand men with the lunch of a boy. John 6:14 says, "Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.'"

Early that morning Jesus had come walking to them on the water during a storm. Peter had even started to walk on the water to Jesus. When Jesus and Peter got into the boat Matthew 14:32-33 says, "And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the

boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.” These men had recognized that Jesus came from God and that He had the words of eternal life. Eleven of those men knew that their hearts had been changed by Jesus. They had come to believe in Jesus. They had seen that Jesus is the Christ that had been promised throughout the Old Testament. John 1:12-13 says, “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.” They had believed and understood that Jesus was the Son of the living God and they had received Him. As a result those eleven had received eternal life.

However, Jesus knew the hearts of all twelve. Jesus knew the heart of Judas Iscariot just as He knew the hearts of the other eleven. Jesus had even chosen Judas to be one of the twelve so that the Scripture could be fulfilled. Jesus knew the heart of Judas Iscariot but He did not tell the eleven that He was referring to Judas. This is shown by what is said in Matthew 26:20-22. There we read, “When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. Now as they were eating, He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.” And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, “Lord, is it I?” Each one of the eleven wondered if he could be the one who would do such a thing. None of the others even suspected Judas. Jesus described the character of Judas that day even though He did not name him. Jesus said that one of them had a devil. The word translated devil means “the false accuser or the slanderer” and is usually used to refer to Satan. Jesus clearly understood the character of Judas.

We have seen that there were many people who had followed Jesus just for the earthly benefits that they could receive. They did not have true belief and quickly chose to stop following Him once they saw that He was not going to give them more physical food. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that there are many people with the same heart attitudes today. They will claim to follow Jesus for a time because they are seeking earthly benefits. However, they do not have true belief. Many the Lord richly bless you as you help your children discern that many do not have true belief.

Jesus was not Believed by His Brothers

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that there are many people who only follow Jesus for the earthly benefits that they hope to receive. Such individuals do not have a true belief. The result is that they focus on present physical benefits rather than forgiveness of sins and eternal life. In our topic today, we will see that even the brothers of Jesus did not have a true belief at first.

Most of the Jews in both Judea and Galilee had turned away from Jesus due to the lack of a true belief from the heart. We see that at this time even His own brothers did not yet believe in Jesus although they did believe at a later time. John 7:1-5 says, "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." For even His brothers did not believe in Him." For a period of time Jesus stayed in Galilee because He knew that many Jews in Judea wanted to kill Him.

John 7:2 says, "Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near." As we begin we see that it was time for the Feast of Tabernacles. As a result, John did not write anything about the things that happened during the more than six months that passed between these two feasts. The Jews in Judea had turned against Jesus and wanted to kill Him because He said that He was equal with the Father. John 5:18 says, "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." As a result, Jesus had spent those months in Galilee. However, his brothers now encouraged Jesus to go to Judea.

Notice the reason why his brothers told Jesus to go to Judea. They said that way His disciples that lived in the area of Judea could also see the miracles that Jesus was doing. The brothers thought that Jesus wanted to be known openly. The word translated "known openly" means to speak plainly or to speak boldly. The word is translated boldness in Acts 4:13 where we read, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus." Then Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." The brothers of Jesus were encouraging Him to go to Judea and speak boldly so that the people of Judea would see His miracles and start to pay attention to His teaching.

Judea had Jerusalem as its main city and so it was the center of power, education and influence among the Jews. That was why his brothers told Jesus that if He wanted to be known that He should go to Judea and show Himself to the world in an area where there was much power and influence. We also see the reason why the brothers made this suggestion to Jesus. We read that His brothers did not believe Him. Jesus gave them His answer in John 7:6-9 which says, "Then Jesus said to them, 'My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come.' When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee." Here we see that Jesus was very conscious of the fact that He was to carry out the will of the Father according to the time planned by the Father.

Jesus said, “My time has not yet come.” The word translated “time” meant a definite time or the right time. Galatians 6:9-10 use this word twice when those verses say, “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” In verse nine the word is translated season and in verse ten it is translated opportunity. We might say now is the right time to do good because at a future time we will reap the reward. Jesus and the Father knew the time at which everything in the life of Jesus would happen because they had planned that particular time. In contrast, Jesus told His brothers that they could go to Jerusalem at any time because they were not working according to the schedule of God.

Jesus also told His brothers that there was another difference between Him and them. John 16:9 tells us that the Holy Spirit convicts of the one sin that keeps people from having eternal life when that verse says, “Of sin, because they do not believe in Me.” The world could not hate them since they were still a part of the world because they did not yet believe in Him. In contrast, the world did hate Jesus because Jesus told the people of the world that their works were evil. In fact Jesus told the Pharisees later in John 8:44, “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” The evil desires of their hearts caused them to do evil.

Jesus had said similar things to the Jewish religious leaders before and they were already filled with hatred toward Jesus. Luke 6:7 says, “So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him.” Both the religious leaders in Galilee and the religious leaders in Judea saw Jesus as a threat to their desire for power and so they were continually looking for an opportunity to accuse Him. This hatred continued to intensify.

Jesus told His brothers that they could go up to the feast right away. Jesus said that He was not yet ready to go to this feast because His time had not yet fully come. Jesus reminded them again that He had a right time for everything that He did. In fact Ephesians 5:15-16 says, “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” Here we see that the Lord also wants all believers to make the best use of our time during the period of time that He has placed us in the world. Christ gave us an example to follow by His example. Since His brothers did not yet believe in Him, Jesus said that time was not a particular concern for them.

Jesus then remained in Galilee for a period of time. John 7:10-13 says, “But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, ‘Where is He?’ And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, ‘He is good’; others said, ‘No, on the contrary, He deceives the people.’ However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.” Jesus waited until His brothers had left to go to Jerusalem for the feast. Then Jesus also left Galilee and went to the feast but He and His disciples did not go with a larger group so that the Jews would not know His plans or where He was before and during the early part of His time in Jerusalem on this trip.

Meanwhile the Jews were all looking for Jesus at the feast. Here we see that this verse uses the word “Jews” while the next verse uses the word “people”. In John 1:19 we read, “Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’” John 5:10 says, “The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, ‘It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.’” Then John 5:16-18 say, “For this reason the Jews

persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.” 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.” In each of these passages we see that John used the word “Jews” to speak of the Jewish religious leaders. Here in John seven it was the religious leaders that were already seeking an excuse to kill Jesus.

Meanwhile the rest of the people were all complaining among themselves about Jesus. The word translated “complaining” means to have a secret debate or to complain quietly. This form of the word is only used four times in the New Testament. Philippians 2:14 says, “Do all things without complaining and disputing. 1 Peter 4:9 says, “Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.” Then the word is also used in Acts 6:1 where we read, “Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution.” In all four passages the word talks about murmuring.

Here we see that the people were divided in their opinions about Jesus. Some of the people thought that Jesus was a good person. Others had a very different opinion. They thought that Jesus was deceiving the people. This is a reminder to us that people who are not yet Christians can have very different opinions about Jesus. We saw that His brothers did not yet believe. Here we see that the people who came to the feast at Jerusalem all had an opinion about Jesus. These opinions varied greatly. However, none of the people were talking openly about Jesus because of their fear of the Jewish religious leaders.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to recognize that those who are not followers of Jesus will have many different opinions about Jesus. Some will be favorable while others will be opposed to Jesus. We want to help our children understand that our responsibility is to share the Word of God with those who are not yet Christians. The Holy Spirit is the One who convicts. The Father is the One who draws. Jesus is the One who came to seek and to save. We want to help our children learn to share the Word of God effectively so that each member of the Trinity can work in the lives of others. May the Lord richly bless you as you equip your children to work with the Trinity.

Jesus Went to the Feast of Tabernacles

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that those who have not yet come to Jesus in true faith and belief will have many different opinions about Jesus. We saw that we want to help our children learn to share the Word of God clearly so that the Trinity can work to change those opinions. In our topic today, we are going to see what Jesus taught when He went to the feast.

We saw in our last topic that Jesus had gone up secretly to the feast. John 7:14-19 says, “Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. And the Jews marveled, saying, ‘How does this Man know letters, having never studied?’”

Jesus answered them and said, ‘My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. 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*. 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. Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?’” Here we see that Jesus waited until the middle of the feast and then He went into the temple and began teaching.

The Jews were amazed at the teaching of Jesus. They asked the question, “How does this Man know letters, having never studied?” This was the same reaction that Jesus had received twice before. Luke 2:46-47 says, “Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.” In these verses, we see that the religious leaders in the temple were amazed at the understanding of Jesus when He was just twelve years old. Then when Jesus first taught in Galilee Matthew 7:28-29 says, “And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” Jesus had never studied under any of the Jewish rabbis. Yet the Jews recognized that His teaching was greater than any rabbi.

Then Jesus explained the source of His teaching in answer to their question. Jesus began His answer by saying, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.” Jesus said that the source of His teaching was supernatural because it was from the Father who had sent Him. Jesus said that those who chose to do the will of the Father would know whether He was speaking from God or speaking from His own authority. Jesus had said earlier in Jerusalem in John 5:30, “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.” Then Jesus said in Galilee in John 6:38, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

Then Jesus gave a very important statement. He said that those who speak from themselves seek their own glory. That is common in many people today. In contrast, Jesus said, “He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.” Jesus never looked for His own glory because He is the One who is both the truth and also true. He is the One who has no unrighteousness in Him. Jesus was the One who also kept the law perfectly. Then Jesus reminded the Jews that Moses had given them the law. However, He pointed out that none of them had kept the law perfectly. Romans 3:19 says, “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” In fact they were seeking to kill Him at that very moment. The fact that they were seeking to kill Him only revealed the purpose of the law. The law could never make a person righteous. It can only show a person when he is

guilty.

The people immediately reacted when Jesus said that they wanted to kill Him. John 7:20-24 says, “The people answered and said, “You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?” Jesus answered and said to them, “I did one work, and you all marvel. Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” Here we see that the people said that Jesus had a demon because He thought that they wanted to kill Him.

The Jewish religious leaders tried to cover up their desire to kill Jesus. In John 5:16 says, “For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.” Jesus had just healed the man that had been paralyzed for 38 years when the Jews wanted to kill Him. Then in John 5:17-18 we read, “But Jesus answered them, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.” 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.” This was the first return of Jesus to Jerusalem since the things that happened in John 5. As a result, this is the work that still caused the religious leaders to want to put Jesus to death.

The first reason for the anger in John 5 was due to the fact that Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath day. Jesus then reminded the Jews that Moses had given them the law and that they were to circumcise each baby boy on the eighth day. That meant that there were boys being circumcised every Sabbath. However, it was Abraham who had been told to circumcise each male child on the eighth day and that happened hundreds of years before the law was given. Genesis 17:12 says, “He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant.” In addition, this was a direct command from God to Abraham. Jesus said that He did no more work to speak the words that healed a man on the Sabbath than Abraham, Moses or the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus day did to circumcise a child on the Sabbath.

Jesus then told them to stop judging according to the outward appearance. 1 Samuel 16:7 says, “But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” The Jewish religious leaders were giving an example of what the Lord had told Samuel. They were judging Jesus because He had healed on the Sabbath. That did not break any commandment in the Bible. However, the Jews were upset because it showed that their traditions were not from God but from their own human ideas.

Jesus told the Jewish religious leaders that they needed to learn what it meant to judge according to righteous judgment. In the Old Testament the Jews had accused the Lord of not judging. Habakkuk 1:4-5 says, “Therefore the law is powerless, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore perverse judgment proceeds. Look among the nations and watch—be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you.” God told the Jews in the Old Testament that He would judge in His time. Then in 1 Corinthians 6:5 we read, “I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?” Here we see that God also equips wise men to judge with righteous judgment in cases where there is a dispute.

There were other Jews in Jerusalem that knew that the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus. John 7:25-27 says, “Now some of them from Jerusalem said, “Is this not He whom they seek to kill? But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ? However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from.” Here we see that the Jews who knew that the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus were very confused in their thinking. They saw that Christ was speaking boldly in the temple and the religious leaders were not saying anything to try and stop Jesus from speaking.

Suddenly these Jews reached a new conclusion. They said among themselves, “Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ?” Here we see that they began to wonder if the religious leaders actually knew that Jesus was the Christ and were unwilling to admit it. This explains why the people had become very confused. One of the responsibilities of the religious leaders was to protect the people from false teachers. Since the religious leaders were doing nothing to stop Jesus these people began to wonder if the religious leaders actually knew in their hearts that this was the Christ.

The Jews in Jerusalem all knew that Jesus came from Galilee. They also thought that no one would know where the Christ would come from when He came. As a result, they could not figure out things clearly in their minds. In John 6:42 we see that the Jews in Galilee had said, “And they said, ‘Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, ‘I have come down from heaven?’” The fact that many of the people in Galilee knew the family of Jesus had been one of the things that caused the Jews in Galilee to refuse to believe that Jesus was the Christ. Here this same confusion was now present among many of the Jews who lived in Judea because they saw that their religious leaders were not doing anything to stop Jesus from speaking while at the same time they knew that the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that today there are also many people confused about whether Jesus is God. That confusion will continue in those people until they come to Jesus in repentance and faith. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand the results of unbelief in the lives of others.

Jesus was Opposed by the Pharisees

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that as long as people lack faith that they may not believe that Jesus is the Christ. Ephesians 2:8 says that faith is the gift of God when that verse says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” That faith to believe is given to people by the Father as a part of the fact that He is drawing them to Jesus. Our part is to share the Word of God because Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” In our topic today, we will see that the Pharisees became stronger in their opposition to Jesus.

In John 7:28-31 we read, “Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, ‘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, whom you do not know. But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.’ Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. And many of the people believed in Him, and said, ‘When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this *Man* has done?’” Here we see that Jesus spoke loudly so that a larger number of people could hear Him.

Some of the people in the temple that day had known Jesus since He was a child. They knew that He had grown up in the city of Nazareth. They understood about His physical life on the earth. Their problem was due to the fact that they did not know and understand that Jesus had come from the Father and had been conceived by the Holy Spirit. The angel told Mary in Luke 1:35, “And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.” Jesus would say the next day in John 8:19, “Then they said to Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.” That was why they could not understand what Jesus said.

After mentioning His physical life and background, Jesus when on to say that He did not come of Himself. Jesus said that the One who sent Him is true but that the people did not know the One who sent Him. In this statement Jesus was talking about the fact that the One who sent Him was God, the Father. That is why Jesus could say that He knew Him and had come from Him. In fact it was God, the Father who had sent Him. The Jews recognized that He was talking about God but they could not understand how He could be from God because some of them had known Him as He grow up. Here we see again why 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Without spiritual understanding, it was impossible for the Jews to recognize that Jesus was the Messiah who had come from the Father. As a result, they wanted to arrest Him but could not because the hour for Him to die had not yet come.

The religious leaders rejected Jesus. We see a different reaction by many of the people that had seen the signs which Jesus had performed asked if the Christ would be able to do more signs than Jesus had done. These people recognized that Jesus must come from God in order to be able to do these signs. We see the response of the Pharisees in John 7:32-36 which say, “The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘I shall be with you a little while longer, and *then* I go to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me and not find *Me*, and where

I am you cannot come.’ Then the Jews said among themselves, ‘Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What is this thing that He said, ‘You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come?’” The Pharisees and chief priests were upset and sent officers to arrest Jesus.

These officers were Levites who were responsible to maintain order in the temple and carry out the other assignments that the religious leaders gave them so that was why they were sent to arrest Jesus. Meanwhile Jesus continued to talk to the people. Jesus said that He would only be there for a little longer and then He would go to the One who had sent Him. As we look back to that time we can understand that Jesus was talking about the fact that He would return to heaven after the resurrection. In contrast, none of the people in that day could understand what Jesus meant. Jesus said that the Jews would look for Him and would not be able to find Him. Jesus said that where He was going the people would not be able to follow. This caused further confusion among the people.

The people wondered where Jesus planned to go. The word translated “Dispersion” meant the Jews who were scattered in other nations among the Gentiles. As a result, we see that the Jews had no understanding of what Jesus meant. It was the plan of Jesus to reach out to the Jews that were scattered and also to the Gentiles. Acts 1:8 says, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” This verse shows that it was the plan of Jesus to reach to every people group on the earth. However, that plan would be carried out through His disciples and all who have become true followers of Jesus. In fact we are each called to share the news of Jesus and His death and resurrection with the people with whom we have contact.

Jesus said, “You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come.” Jesus would later explain to His disciples in John 14:1-3, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” The people would not be able to find Jesus because He would return to the Father. The only way that any person can come to the Father is through Jesus. Jesus went on to say to Thomas in John 14:6, “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Jesus continued to teach throughout the rest of the time of the feast. John 7:37-39 says, “On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” Here we see that Jesus chose to introduce the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the people on the last day of the feast. However, none of those who heard Jesus that day were able to understand what He meant.

Jesus had told the woman of Samaria in John 4:10, “Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’” Jesus went on to explain to the Samaritan woman in John 4:13-14, “Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’” Now we see that Jesus was offering that living water to all who are thirsty. We want to follow the example of Jesus and explain to others the difference between physical thirst and spiritual

thirst. Physical thirst will continue to be a need for each person. In contrast, those who have their spiritual thirst satisfied will receive spiritual life that will last forever.

Jesus made a great offer to all those who would come to Him and drink. He said that those who believe in Him are the ones who chose to drink that living water that gives eternal life. Here we see that Jesus also said that those who come to Him will have a changed heart. In fact Jesus said that each person who believes in Him will have rivers of living water flowing out of his heart. John explained that this was talking about the fact that each person who believes receives the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:9 says, "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." Each person that has true faith in Jesus also has the Holy Spirit in his or her life. Anyone who does not have the Holy Spirit has not yet repented of his or her sin and placed his or her faith in Jesus.

We see that this verse says that each person who has the Holy Spirit will have rivers of living water flowing out of his heart. Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." The Holy Spirit now lives in our human spirit and assures us that we are the children of God. However, having the Holy Spirit in our hearts also gives us boldness to witness about Christ to those who are not yet Christians as we yield to the Holy Spirit. In Acts 4:8 we see that Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then in Acts 4:13 we see the results when that verse says, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus." Then Acts 4:31 adds, "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness."

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that as they yield to the Holy Spirit that they are filled with the Holy Spirit. We want to show them by our example that the Holy Spirit will give boldness to witness for Christ. He is the one who makes it possible for rivers of living water to flow from our hearts. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to have boldness to witness.

Jesus Caused the Officers to be Amazed

In our last topic, we saw that we want to show our children that the Holy Spirit is the One who gives us boldness to witness as we yield to Him. We want to help them learn to yield to the Holy Spirit so that rivers of living water can flow from their hearts to help others learn that Jesus is the Christ. In our topic today, we will see that the men who were sent to arrest Jesus were amazed as they heard Him teach.

Jesus knew that it was only a few months until He would be crucified. Many of the people were beginning to believe that Jesus was the Christ. However, there was a divided opinion. John 7:40-44 says, “Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, ‘Truly this is the Prophet.’ Others said, ‘This is the Christ.’ But some said, ‘Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?’ So there was a division among the people because of Him. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.” The signs and teaching of Jesus were forcing the Jews to form strong opinions about who Jesus was.

Many of the people said that Jesus truly was the Prophet. These people made this statement about Jesus because of the words of Deuteronomy 18:15 which says, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.” Then Deuteronomy 18:18 adds, “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.” Here we see that many of the people were beginning to recognize that Jesus was the promised Prophet.

The people did not understand that the prophecies about the Prophet and the Christ were both talking about the same person. As a result, part of the people said that Jesus was the Christ. That caused other people to respond that the Christ would not come out of Galilee. The people responded with this answer because Micah 5:2 says, “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.” Here we see that each of these three groups knew part of the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled but none of the people fully understood that Jesus was the One who fulfilled all of these prophecies. This lack of complete knowledge and understanding caused a division among the people. This is one of the reasons why Paul said in Acts 20:27, “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.” Christians need to become familiar with the whole Word of God as that will help Christians learn to function in unity instead of have conflicts due to a lack of knowledge.

Meanwhile the officers that had been sent to arrest Jesus had returned to the religious leaders. John 7:45-49 says, “Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, ‘Why have you not brought Him?’ The officers answered, ‘No man ever spoke like this Man!’ Then the Pharisees answered them, ‘Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.’” The chief priests and Pharisees were upset when the officers did not return with Jesus.

The chief priests and Pharisees immediately questioned, “Why have you not brought Him?” The chief priests were Sadducees and were usually in conflict with the Pharisees. However, we see that they were all in agreement in their opposition to Jesus because they all felt that He was a threat to their power. Jesus described the attitude of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:4-7 where we read, “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. But all their works they do to be seen

by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’” In these verses, we see that the Pharisees were controlled by pride and they saw Jesus as a direct threat to their control.

The chief priests were no better. They were the men who controlled the buying and the selling of animals for sacrifices in the temple. Luke 19:45-46 says, “Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, “It is written, ‘My house is a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’” In these verses, we see why the chief priests did not want to lose their power. They were actually using their position as chief priests to steal from the people. Just a few months after this time in John 7, the high priest said in John 11:49-50, “And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” Here we see that the high priest felt that it was better to murder an innocent person than for the chief priests to lose their power.

The officers who had been sent to arrest Jesus answered, “No man ever spoke like this Man!” These officers had probably served as officers in the temple their entire adult lives. They had heard many well known Rabbis teach in the temple. As a result, they recognized that the teaching of Jesus was different than the teaching that they had heard from any of the Rabbis. That difference is described in Matthew 7:28-29 where we read, “And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” An example of that difference is seen in Matthew 5:27-28 where we read, “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” The religious leaders of the Jews placed their focus on the outward appearance and wanted to be seen by men. In contrast, Jesus focused on the condition of the heart.

The Pharisees were upset at the answer of the officers and mocked them for their ignorance. They said, “Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?” Here we see that the Pharisees were actually making fun of the Levites who served as the temple officers by saying that they were deceived. Then the Pharisees showed their own pride by saying that none of the rulers or the Pharisees had believed in Jesus. This was just another example of the pride of the Pharisees. They wanted to make the officers feel like they were ignorant in contrast to the Pharisees. This is a common action of those controlled by pride. That is why Proverbs 16:18 warns, “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” The Pharisees did not realize that their own sin meant that they were facing eternal destruction.

In addition to mocking the officers, the Pharisees also mocked the rest of the people when they said, “But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.” The word translated “accursed” means facing divine judgment. The Pharisees claimed to keep the law and so they said that the people were facing the judgment of God because they did not know and obey the law. In actual fact the Pharisees were facing the judgment of God. John 3:36 says, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” Most of the Pharisees had chosen to reject Jesus, the One who could give them life.

However, at least a couple of the Pharisees had believed in Jesus. John 7:50-53 says, “Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, ‘Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?’ They answered and said to him, “Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.” And

everyone went to his own house.” Nicodemus just asked the other Pharisees a question, “Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?” The law said in Deuteronomy 19:15, “One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.” Here we see that the law which the Pharisees claimed to follow required at least two or three witnesses. Nicodemus had talked with Jesus and knew that the words that Jesus spoke were true.

In contrast, most of the other Pharisees just condemned Jesus because of their pride and the fear of losing their power. Instead of answering Nicodemus, the other Pharisees just mocked him as they had mocked the temple officers. They mocked Nicodemus by saying, “Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.” Because the Pharisees were proud of their knowledge of the law, the Pharisees looked down on the people of Galilee and considered the people of Galilee to be ignorant. Now that pride caused them to turn against one of their own. They accused Nicodemus of being from Galilee. They told him to go and search the Scriptures. They told him that no prophet had come from the land of Galilee. Here we see that the Pharisees actually showed their own ignorance. Nahum and Jonah were both prophets from Galilee. The Pharisees showed that they had never checked to see where Jesus had been born. After this debate among themselves, the religious leaders all went home.

Here we see an important principle that we want to teach our physical and spiritual children. Romans 15:7 says, “Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.” The word translated “receive” means to accept, to take to one’s self or to grant one access to one’s heart. We want to show our children by our example that we accept others including those who disagree with us. May the Lord richly bless you as you provide an example for your children to follow.