

**Record of Sermons delivered during the month of**  
**October 2017**

(added progressively after each Sunday)

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(see following pages)

## I AM the Bread of Life (introduction)

Per S Olyott

(Review of last week) -

John continues with His eye-witness account<sup>1</sup>, where he chooses eight 'signs' that Jesus performs and gives special place to them (we've see six already<sup>2</sup>). Throughout his Gospel he also makes a point of eight great claims that Jesus made about Himself. Today we get to the first of these great claims:

<sup>35</sup> **Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."**

We now consider 3 questions:

- where did Jesus make that claim,
- when, and
- what exactly does it mean?

Where? (verses 22-25): The feeding of the 5000 had taken place on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee; the people had seen the disciples go into a boat and set off, towards evening, without Jesus. Jesus had gone off into the mountains alone, to pray. The people were scattered for the night. The next morning they had regathered as they had been doing during this time of national holiday (Passover). This is why they had time to scurry after Jesus and hear what he had to say. Knowing that Jesus hadn't got into any boat they assumed he must be still nearby, but they couldn't find him.

Meanwhile other boats had come near to that eastern shore and so many people boarded them to return home to Capernaum. Not only were the disciples found to be there, but so was Jesus!

They were astonished. "How had Jesus got there?" Even if he had walked all night he couldn't have walked around the edge of the sea. No boat had been available after the disciples left until the boats they had used that morning.

We know the answer: Earlier in Chapter 6 the Scripture has told us things that they hadn't seen. The fifth & sixth of the miraculous signs recounted by John – the walking on water and calming the storm, rescuing the disciples in their distress.

So the crowd's first question was (verse 25) <sup>25</sup> ... , "*Rabbi, when did you come here?*"

They are curious. When and how did He get there?

That is the 'where', the setting, for what follows. It is Capernaum where Jesus makes

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1 John is an old man when he writes. He remembers the 3 ½ years he spent with the Lord Jesus Christ, taking up his pen to add to the things already written, and circulated, by the other Gospel writers. Things that he experienced and would otherwise be forgotten.

2 The 'signs' so far are: Water to wine; Christ by a Word of authority driving people out of the Temple; a nobleman's son healed – although the boy was nearly 30 miles away, Jesus spoke the Word and the boy was cleansed; a man beside the pool at Bethesda, 38 years made whole, when Jesus spoke a word to Him; 5000 men, plus their women and children, fed with 4 small barley buns and 2 sardines; and the stilling of the storm as Christ walks on the waves, got into the boat, and immediately they were safe in the harbour. Great displays – miracles.

the first of the great claims recorded by John in the course of several questions and answers with this crowd that has been following Him around. This then, is the 'when'.

The questions and their responses:

- To the question: how did He get there? (verse 25) His answer does not pick up the question so much as to address why they were looking for Him in the first place. <sup>26</sup> *Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves."* <sup>27</sup> *Do not labour for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal."*

He ignored their curiosity and spoke straight to their hearts, their inner motivation.

Some find this verse difficult to understand. Because Jesus said, that they were seeking Him not because they saw signs, yet they had seen the signs. It was because they had seen the feeding of 5000 that they continued to seek Him out. So what did He mean?

Our Lord didn't do miracles to impress or entertain – like magic tricks – but always to teach a spiritual truth. He had fed them not simply to alleviate their hunger. When they saw Him take the food in His hands; bless it, and then have it multiplied as He passed it on, they were supposed to acknowledge that only God could do that. That it was really God that did it. And when it was passed on and everybody was satisfied by what Christ had given, they were supposed to recognise that the human man or woman can only be satisfied from the hand of Christ. A spiritual lesson!

But Jesus needs to tell them here that they haven't come to Him because they understood the spiritual lesson. From a sense of spiritual need. From an understanding of what the miracle was all about. But they were only there again because yesterday they had received free food; their stomachs had been satisfied and they wanted that again today.

So speaking straight to their heart, He tells them that their only interest in Him and His signs is materialistic. All they were interested in was physical bread. All they were interested in was **this** life. They wanted 'this life' to be a little bit better, but it was to be still 'this life'. All they still wanted was just for 'this life' to be better.

So in verse 27, Jesus makes it plain that they should not put all their attention and effort into the things that satisfy in this world, since all physical things perish. Everything they see and enjoy always comes to an end. One day even your life will finish. This shouldn't be the consuming concern in your life.

“What you should be getting 'worked up' about,” says Jesus, “is eternal sustenance. You should be asking the question: 'How can you have eternal

life?' You should be thinking about spiritual things. I can give it – eternal life – because God's seal of approval rests on me. The highest priority in your life should not be to make this life better, but to find how you can have everlasting life.“

Like them, but here and now, what about us? Are we interested in this life but having it a little bit better. Is that what really grips our attention?

Or is there a desire to know how to have eternal life? The very life of God in ones own soul. If we are in the situation where we just want this life, but a little bit easier. A little richer and a little more of the good things, then we are no better than those who came across the lake to get what they could out of Jesus for this life. In this case he has nothing to say to them or to us.

- Second question of the crowd. Verse 28. <sup>28</sup> *Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?”*

Jesus has just, been telling them that they shouldn't be working at giving their time and energy to obtain physical bread. The priority should be towards working to gain everlasting life.

Here is the universal response of the unconverted when such is said. They latch on the word 'work' – “What do I have to do?”

It was the same with this crowd. “To please God what must we do?” Clearly they expected Jesus to come up with a list of dos and don'ts to gain God's acceptance. Jesus answer was, “What God requires of you is not something that you can do. It is faith in the One whom He has sent!”

You see: you and I could never live a life – do anything – that would please God. But Another has. You and I could never bear the punishment for our sins, even if we were punished for all eternity. But Another has. Therefore the way to get right with God is only to trust (have faith) in the One He has sent for this very purpose. Turn to the One who has lived the perfect life and borne the penalty that sin deserves. Have faith in Him. Approach Him. Go to Him for refuge. Commit yourself to Him. Staking everything on Him. “That's what God requires of you,” says the Lord Jesus Christ “if you are to have eternal life.” They were hearing that from the lips of their Maker. What was their response?

- Third question (verse 30): Having been told that they needed to have faith in Jesus Christ they ask. <sup>30</sup> *So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? <sup>31</sup> Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”*

What could be plainer than Christ's answer?

<sup>32</sup> *Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.*

<sup>33</sup> *For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”*

When they were told, plainly, that what was required, to received eternal life, was

to have faith in Jesus Christ, they were reluctant to believe it.

That's the way it still is!<sup>3</sup> Normally we all like to think that if we work hard enough and earn enough 'brownie points', we will buy our own ticket to heaven. If we preach some sort of message, which says "Friends and neighbours: try hard enough and do well enough, you can earn your way into the favour of God." All the world wants to believe that way. But when you tell the world God's recorded truth – such as in this passage (and others) – that you can't do a thing to save yourself, but there is Another who has done everything that's necessary and you must come like a child and cast yourself on Him and if you don't there's no help for you. If you preach the truth! They don't want to know.

Men and women don't like being humbled and they don't like being told that they must come as a suppliant and as a beggar – as someone beseeching mercy. They're so inflated with pride they like to be told that they can do it. They hate to be told that they can't do it but that Another has done it!

So when Jesus says, <sup>29</sup>... *"This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."* They knew very well that He was claiming to be the one who was sent and they said, "We can't believe your claims unless you give us a sign." <sup>30</sup> ... *what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you?*

Think of it! The day before, 5 little buns and 2 little sardines had fed 5000 men plus women and children. The very next day they say to Him, "We can't believe who you say you are unless you give us a sign."

Men and women aren't convinced by signs and miracles.

If miracles were seen today would it make a difference? It didn't back then. What if a person today came back from the dead and told us at first hand what was in store, would any believe? No! Jesus mentioned this specifically<sup>4</sup>. "If they won't believe the Scriptures, then they won't believe even if they see with their own eyes the dead being raised. Miracles don't convert anybody.

It is the Bible – the Word of God – which is the vehicle for the Holy Spirit<sup>5</sup>. People cannot believe who He is, that He says He is, unless the Holy Spirit, changes their nature (their natural tenancy). When the Holy Spirit changes their mind and their mentality, their affections and their powers of choosing. When they are changed as persons – inwardly. Then when they encounter the Gospel (clearly spelt out in God's Word) they come to Christ most gladly.

But this can't happen unless the Holy Spirit, changes their nature. Because by nature men and women are opposed to what God says. And the Holy Spirit only works through the Scriptures. The answer to unbelief is not more miracles but more attention to, meditation on, prayer with, and declaration of God's Holy Word through which the Spirit works to create believers.

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3 Imagine if we set up a booth at the Royal Show, where weekly contributions could be received until a certain threshold value was reached, at which point you get a certificate which says that God is now pleased and you will receive everlasting life. What a busy place it would be! Human pride likes to believe this way. All the world's man-made religions use this same principle.

4 Luke 16:13 (quoting the voice of Abraham in a parable) " <sup>31</sup>He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

5 Paul said this in Ephesians 6:17 ... *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*

These people were saying (verse 31), “Yesterday, you fed over 5000 people, with just 5 loaves and 2 fishes. But look at Moses, he fed a million people (or even as many as 3 million) for nearly 40 years. We're not going to be impressed by what you did yesterday. If you're going to prove to us that you're God's Son, then you'll have to work another miracle of much greater power and significance than even Moses worked.”

That's the way people are. You think that they'll be convinced by a miracle, “No! I must see something more than that.” And so on and so on. They say, “Give me proof and then I will believe,” You give proof and then they still need more. No one is persuaded that way.

<sup>32</sup> *Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, ... “ “It wasn't Moses who gave that bread in the wilderness.” But Jesus is going to go further than that, “The bread of which I'm speaking, the bread that gives eternal life, Moses never gave you that. It was only physical bread that Moses administered. You ate some today but was hungry again. But there is another sort of bread. The one I have been speaking about today. A bread that gives eternal life. <sup>32</sup> ... but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. And that bread is a **person**. <sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is **he** who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”*

He is a person of heavenly origin and a person who gives life to the world!

So Jesus, instead of answering their request for a greater miracle, He preaches to them the Gospel. He says, “There is a bread that gives eternal life: it's me. There is a bread that gives eternal life its a person who came down from heaven. There is a bread that gives eternal life and every person in the world who has eternal life has it because they partake of this bread. Of me!”

[2354]

**Pray this be so for all the saints gathered here today! Amen.**

Next week we look in detail at exactly what Christ's first 'great clam' means.

## I AM the Bread of Life

Per S Olyott

(Review of last week) -  
(continuing the 4<sup>th</sup> question:)

- The fourth comment of that crowd:  
Verse 34: <sup>34</sup> *They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."*

Just like Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman before, they still have the mind set on the physical examples. "Give us this marvellous bread, you are talking about."

Now the conversation has reached the point where our Lord can make His great claim!

Where did He make this claim? Capernaum.

When did He **make** this claim? When questions were being asked of Him; answers were being given by Him and these now reach the point where He makes this great claim.

Once Moses had seen a burning bush. A voice had spoken out of it. It was God! Moses said that he must know your Name. If I am to go in your name to other people I must know Your Name. The voice said, "I AM, who I am."<sup>6</sup>

Jesus now takes up that expression, I AM, and He makes it the basis of His great claim. The first, that are so specific as this, that John reports through the rest of this Gospel.

Precisely then, what was this claim? (Verse 35)

<sup>35</sup> ***Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."***

In other words, Jesus says, "No one who comes to Him, shall have any longing unsatisfied." Later we will sing: '*Now none but Christ can satisfy*'. The great truth is that He can satisfy!

What is the great longing of your life? It should be a longing for pardon. Christ gives it!

It should be a longing for peace with an angry God. Christ gives it!

It should be acceptance by a God, whom you have offended. Christ gives it!

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<sup>6</sup> The Hebrew and translations as at Exodus 3:14 – אֶהְיֶה (aeie) I AM (shall become, am becoming, who I AM) – compared with the general Name of God (the tetragrammaton) as at Exodus 3:15, and throughout the Old Testament –

יְהוָה (ieue) Yahweh (LORD)

Your longing should be for a changed character. Christ gives it!

Your longing as a mortal man or woman, should be longing for eternal life. Christ gives it!

For everyone this life on earth comes to an end. Then the judgement bar of God. You should be longing for acquittal. Christ gives it!

You should be longing for eternal happiness and Christ gives that.

For purpose and direction in this life so that you know why you're here and Whom you serve. Christ gives that because He is the 'Bread of Life'.<sup>7</sup>

In Him no true longing remains unsatisfied.

Here is the bread: I come to the bread. I make it my own, and I'm satisfied.

Here is the Lord Jesus Christ: I come to Christ. I make Him my own, and I'm satisfied.

He stands there in Capernaum, before this crowd. They hear what He says, but look what He says to them: Verse 36. <sup>36</sup> *But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.*

There He stands freely offering Himself. Freely offering eternal life if they will come to Him as Saviour. But they will not believe.

Here He stands before us today, by His Word speaking to us from Scripture. Yet some will not believe. He tells us in this passage that eternal life is found no where else except in Him. But you won't believe. He's told you that every true longing of the human heart is satisfied in Christ. But you don't come to Him. You treat Him as a stranger. As if He's not there. As if He had never spoken, never done anything: as if He had never lived; never died; and never risen again!

It's a miracle that anybody comes to Christ!

When you came into the world you had a nature which was against God. You're self-centred. You live on this planet as if you were the centre of it. You weigh up everything on the planet as to how it affects you. You're selfish. You even weigh up God in terms of how He affects you. If what God requires cuts across your wishes, you'd rather not have a God. Selfish!

When you hear the Gospel and it says that you must finish with sin – but there are sins you don't want to finish with -- you resent it.

When you hear the Gospel that: if you're to have eternal life from Christ you must submit to Him – you don't want it!

It's a miracle that anybody comes to Christ.

Why do people come to Christ? Verse 37. <sup>37</sup> *All that the Father gives me will come to me, ...* Long before the world was made. Long before a mountain stood. Long before even an angel drew breath. When there was only God – the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Three who are God (not three God's) the Father promised to His Son,

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<sup>7</sup> The ORIGINAL “Act; Belong; Commit” Simple as ABC!



the Lord Jesus Christ, a certain people. This is so! Here is one of the references to it in the Scripture.

So, it's because certain individuals were given to the Son by the will of the Father, and because the Father's will must be done, that anybody comes to Christ. The people who come to Christ are those whom the Father gave to the Son. When they come to Christ, during this life, not one of them is turned away! That's what verse 37 says: <sup>37</sup> *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*

But someone may say, "I don't know if I'm one of those chosen people?"

But some know this. How? Because when they came to Christ they found that – **He didn't turn them away.** So on finding that the second part of the verse was true – *and whoever comes to me I will never cast out* – they knew! I knew and you knew.

Filled with our sense of need and our longing for eternal life with pardon, we believed: Christ lived His perfect life on our behalf, and He died on our behalf. We came to Christ and asked for pardon. **He didn't turn us away!** So we have come.

We have come because the Father gave us to Christ. Before the world was made.

We didn't know that we were one of those special people until we came. But now we have come we know we are one of those special people.

Look at verse 38: <sup>38</sup> *For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.* It is the Father's will to save that people.

Jesus came into the world not to make those people savable, but to **actually save them.** Jesus died on the Cross, not to just open a door, but to open the door and **bring them in.** Jesus on the Cross accomplished something: He did something. He purchased something. He actually accomplished something at the Cross, He didn't just make something possible.

**It's the will of God that all the people He gave to Christ should all be saved.** Not one will be lost. Christ will raise them up to everlasting life and glory at the last day. Read again verse 38 and continue on to verse 39. Can anything be more plain than this?

<sup>38</sup> *For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.* <sup>39</sup> *And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.*

But the someone may say, “I still don't know if it includes me!” Read verse 40. If nothing else read verse 40.

*<sup>40</sup> For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”*

Therefore, do you 'see' God's Son. Not a special vision, or voice or even a special feeling. Simply, do you see that Jesus Christ is who He says He is? The eternal Son of God, who became man and was and continues to be God and man. Do you see that? Do you see why He came? To live in a way that you failed to live; to die so that people like you should not have to bear the punishment you deserve. Do you see that?

Having seen that do you believe on Him? Not just believe those things to be true, but you believe on Him. It's what the sages in earlier times would call recumbency.<sup>8</sup> Here is an analogy: You come into church and there is a seat. The one your sitting on now. Did you test the seat for strength etc before you committed yourself to put your weight on. To trust that it would support you? You believed that if you put your weight on it it wouldn't let you down. Your belief resulted in your sitting down now. Did you remain standing throughout the service, because – even though you believed that it would take your weight – you did nothing to benefit from that belief?

In the New Testament the word 'belief' means recumbency. It means you actually put your weight on something that you believe in. You don't just say “It will hold me”, but you put your weight on it.

Jesus said, “ *who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life ...* “ You see the Son and you put your whole weight on the fact of His promise. Believe on Him. Rest, rely, believe on Him.

My trust is not on anything I do or hope to do. My trust is in what you have done. This is how you find Jesus Christ to be the Bread of life. Such people as this are raised up at the last day.

So, whether or not you follow that certain people are given by God the Father to God the Son, before the foundation of the world, verse 40 is plain for everyone. When, then, you come to Christ and you look back on how it all happened, you see quite easily how God was working in your life before it happened. So it's not hard to believe that He was working for you even before you were born, and before the world was born. It all happened because it was His Sovereign plan. So marvellous! Isn't it?

What did the crowd want that day? They wanted life. What sort of life? This life, just a bit better.

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<sup>8</sup> An interesting definition of recumbency applying in a biological context is: Resting on the surface **from which it arises**.

What did Jesus offer that day? Life! What sort of life? Eternal life.

The first is not to be found necessarily in Christ. Many people when they have come to Christ have found that this life was worse than before. Perhaps a family has been divided; opposition has arisen at work or in their previous circle of friends. New anxieties and problems. People who just want this life to be better, there is nothing for them in Christ. But people who want to live this life in fellowship with God and beyond (eternal life) whatever it may cost. To have pardon for their sins and peace with heaven. To be able to die knowing that they will be raised up by Christ in the last day – and even enjoy communion with Him in their spirit before then. To be acquitted at the judgement seat of God and welcomed by God into everlasting happiness, they find everything they are looking for in Jesus Christ.

Some of us are like the 'prodigal son'. He wanted to be rich, so he ran away from home. Took his riches with him, but it was all soon gone till he had nothing. It was only when he came back to the father that he knew what real riches are. He wanted to live a bit; he wanted happiness; he wanted to shake off the shackles. So he turned his back on dad and went into a far country where it all seemed to be going well. But it all ran out. It wasn't until he came home that he heard the words, "Let us make merry".

Some turn their back on God because they think that everything they want can be found without Him only to find that no real satisfaction has been found in anything away from Him. The Gospel says, "Arise and go to your Father."

And return you can and while you are still away off He will run to meet you. Welcome you and cover your wretchedness with the cloak of the righteous of Christ. Then you will know what it means when Jesus said:

***"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.***

[2143]

**Pray this be so for all the saints gathered here today! Amen.**

## **Reaction to His Claims**

Per S Olyott

(Review of last week) -

The people have seen a sign of divine power: Jesus has received 5 small buns and two tiny fish, blessed them and passed them to the disciples. In the hands of the disciples as they distributed the food it has been multiplied.

Displays of the deity of Christ – the ordinary people just regarded them as wonders. But people with spiritual perception could recognise them as displays of His deity.

He makes a startling claim (one of eight in John's Gospel) as He speaks in the Capernaum Synagogue. See verse 35

By this He was saying that if they would come to Him (He used the 'picture' of bread and water) and take of Him and make Him their own all their longings would be satisfied.

You should be longing for pardon because you're guilty before God – in Christ you may have that longing satisfied.

You should be longing for peace with God because He has a controversy with you, because of the way that you live. – in Christ you may have longing satisfied in Christ.

You should be longing for purpose because your life has no meaning apart from the God who made you. You should be longing for eternal happiness. You should be longing for eternal life. You should be longing for acceptance by the God who made you and is your judge.

When Jesus said He was the bread of life and people never hunger when they come to Him, and they never thirst, He was explaining to the world that those who come to Him have all their longings satisfied. Every longing is met. That's how we preach Christ. This is the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Pardon and peace, eternal life, forgiveness, acceptance with God all found in the Person of Jesus Christ. Those who separate themselves from Christ are separated from all those blessings. But the person who comes to Christ receives all those blessings.

When Christ is preached this way in the world, it always meets with strong reaction:

Some are overcome with a sense of guilt and fear because they know that they're 'out of sorts' with God. When they hear that Jesus Christ is the 'Bread of Life', their strong reaction is one of relief. They come to Christ and cast themselves on Him. Trust Him and love Him and give their lives to His service.

But there are other people who when they hear that Jesus Christ makes such a bold claim, they despise Him and reject Him.

What reaction was this claim given when it was first made?

Today if you speak to your friends and neighbours about it. It will bring a reaction.

In John 6:41-59, we see the reaction of the Jews to that great claim. (that will be our main discussion today). While from verse 60 to the end of the chapter we see the reaction of those who claimed to be His disciples. (we'll cover this next week)

Affect on the Jews:

(verse 41) The Jews grumbled (murmured), and in verse 52, they disputed (strove). So the initial reaction was grumbling and strife. At verse 61, we find that some of the disciples also grumbled and went away (verse 66)! But a small group (verse 68) said, *“Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”* Here is the picture: The Jews grumbled and the Jews disputed – not one of them benefiting from Christ's great claim to be the 'Bread of Life'. Even amongst those who claimed to be His disciples the majority grumbled and left Him. Only a small group ever benefited from that claim.

**That's what makes this passage unspeakably sad!**

Yet that's the way it still is today. When we say that Christ is the 'Bread of Life', we tell perishing men and women that in Jesus Christ all their longings are satisfied and all their needs are met. The vast majority when they hear that message never benefit from it. Some grumble, some dispute and some professing Christians even walk away. But thank God there is always a small group, who are able to say, *“... you are the Holy One of God.”* It's a matter of belief with them. It's a matter of which they are sure.

More particularly then, consider the Jews. (verse 41- 59)

In verse 41 we have said they grumbled. In effect they say that, “We can't accept what He said. That He is the bread of life and that He came down from heaven. We know who His mother is. It's Mary. We know his father, it's Joseph. (they were wrong about this, but it's what they thought) We know where he comes from! He's the carpenter from Nazareth. We know all about Him but now He claims to be the One who comes down from heaven to satisfy the needs of the world. We can't believe that sort of claim!”

When Jesus heard them say that (verse 43) He called grumbling to a halt.

“Very well,” He said to them, “you can't see the truth about me. You can't accept my claim. You can't believe it. Nobody can! Unless he is drawn by the Father. Nobody can believe the truth about Christ unless the Father does something, in their lives. Yes.” says Jesus, (verse 45) “remember that the Prophets predicted that one day there would be a nation upon the earth, where everybody was taught of God.”

Notice that there is today, all over the world a 'people' who are - none the less a nation. People who believe and can see the truth about Christ.

But Jesus says in verse 45 that, 'Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.'

No one can see the truth about Christ, except the Father does something in his life. Everybody in whom the Father does do something, actually does come to Christ. That's what Jesus is saying. People cannot have faith in Christ unless they are changed people. And it is God the Father Himself who has to change them. But everybody whom God the Father does change does come to Christ.

What a marvellous (though unexpected) truth. We go out into the world, to persuade people of the truth of the Christian message – as we should – but the fact still remains – not one person to whom you speak can actually see that what you are saying is true, unless God enlightens their mind, They can't come to Christ unless they are drawn (as if by a divine magnet). They cannot come to the Saviour unless the Father draws them. But everyone in whom God does a work – does come to Christ.

Next in verse 46, Christ points out that those drawn by the Father do not know and interact with the Father directly. Christians know God the Father, but only through Christ. No one can know the Father without coming through Christ. The only person who can know the Father directly is Christ Himself. There is no way to God the Father except through Christ. That's why Jesus is emphasising: coming to Him in this passage.

Verses 47 – 51. The Jews grumbled at His claim, but that didn't stop Jesus repeating it.

- Verse 47: To believe in Him is to possess eternal life. Everlasting life!
- Verse 48: He repeats the claim that He is the Bread of Life. If you're to have everlasting life it is to Christ you must come and make Him your own.
- Verse 49: He repeats the claim that He is different from the manna that the people fed on in the wilderness so long ago. They ate it but eventually died because it was only physical bread. But His bread is not physical bread – He's talking in spiritual terms using bread as an analogy, to indicate sustaining that everlasting life.
- Verse 50 & 51: He says that, He is that bread. You come to Him and you take of Him, you make Him your own and then you live for ever.

How can that be so? How is it that when people come to Christ they live for ever? Verse 51, the second half tells us. " *...And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.*"

You and I deserve eternal condemnation, but Jesus Christ who deserved no punishment from God had His flesh broken at the Cross – coming there under the anger of God. He took the penalty due to each of us. My deserved death was taken by Him. That I may have everlasting life. He is explaining that He only is the bread of life because He will give His flesh, His life, at the Cross.

He said. "I am the Bread of Life." And they grumbled!

Now verse 52: The second thing the Jews did was to *dispute among themselves*. Jesus was speaking in 'picture' language when He spoke about being the Bread of Life. Jesus used vivid illustrations like that to make the truth understandable. However if one listens to the words of Jesus having a 'literal' type of mind, it could appear that Jesus was talking about cannibalism. Regrettably the Jews in Capernaum and many people today, have very literal minds. They couldn't see that Jesus was speaking in 'picture' language, they felt that He was talking literally and so they started having an argument between each other as to what it meant for Jesus to give His flesh to eat.

Sometimes these days we may say that, someone eats and drinks and breathes and sleeps music. By that we mean that their whole life is given to music. Music is everything to them, thinking of nothing else. They live for music. But we don't mean that for breakfast, there is a piece of paper with music all over it, which has sugar and milk put on it. Or that when breathing: out comes little notes. Or that such a one sleeps musically. (Ignoring the rhythm of snoring as being any from of music) regrettably the Jews of Capernaum would have thought that was what was meant.

The Jews were very literal minded. In the Old Testament it was said that the Law of God must be bound as front-lets between your eyes and you must bind it on your hands. What God meant was you must think about the Law of God and put it into practice. But the literal minded Jews got a little piece of the Old Testament, put it in a box, bound it around their head so the the box, was exactly in the middle of the forehead and so on, because they couldn't understand the language which God was using.

And the same thing was happening when Jesus was speaking in Capernaum. He's talking about His flesh being eaten. Immediately the Jews have an argument as to what it means to eat Christ. Of course He didn't mean physical eating at all. He meant partaking of Christ and making Him your own.

When this great misunderstanding arose, how did Jesus deal with it?

Verse 53 and 54: He continued to talk in picture language! Our Lord deliberately used picture language. He also often spoke on parables. The reason for this was that people who were really looking for the truth could see it and people who weren't interested very much – they heard a nice story or some picture language but they didn't benefit. Because Christ only has things to say for people who really want to know. (Who are 'drawn' by God.)

So Jesus continues to speak in such a way, in verses 53 & 54. Then He went further to say that you must drink His blood as well as eat His flesh if you're going to receive eternal life. If you're to be raised up at the last day.

What it means is that when His body was broken on the Cross we believe that we can personally appropriate what Christ did. When His blood was spilt, we believe that His blood was spilt on our behalf. We personally appropriate (derive the benefit from) what He did. We don't eat any flesh or drink any blood, but we make Christ our own. We believe what He did He did for us.

So we conclude today by looking again at verse 54. Which starts with that all encompassing word, 'whoever': <sup>54</sup> *Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.*

[2123]

**Pray this be so for all the saints gathered here today! Amen.**



## Reaction to His Claims – continued

Per S Olyott

(Review of last week) -

Last week we paused in our study of this passage with a reminder of Christ's words in verse 54:<sup>54</sup> *Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.* Digging beneath the graphic 'picture' language and not being sidetracked by being literal minded we are reminded that Christ offers to **whoever**, eternal life – with the promise that He, *will raise him up on the last day.* The *whoever* is defined as all those who come to Christ in a personal way.

Continuing at verse 55 (and in the same analogy) He confirms that He is true food and true drink for the soul. Verse 56. In the spiritual sense: those who 'eat; and 'drink' Him, enjoy an intimate union with Him. Verse 57. Just as He shares the Father's life, those who come to Him share His divine life. "I'm not talking," He says, verse 68, "about physical bread which you eat and then die." It's obvious that He is speaking of spiritual sustenance (bread).

Those are the words He spoke that day at Capernaum, in the Synagogue, with Jewish leaders present. They are some of the most difficult words that Jesus ever spoke. But true Christian believers ever since, while not grasping every detail, nevertheless have known in their heart the point of what Jesus is saying. Because all true believers know what it's like to come to Jesus in a personal way. You have trust in Jesus Christ as a Person, whose body was broken for you, (the 'bread'). Your trust is in Jesus Christ as a Person whose blood was spilt (the 'wine'). He's not a distant Person. He is a Person to whom you have come and had union with. The Person you have approached and cast yourself upon. The 'picture' language is difficult to explain to others but you know in your own conscience what it means. That's one of the great 'marks' of being a Christian: that you understand and avail yourself of the promise made at verse 54 and elsewhere. The One who is the 'Bread of Life', you have come to personally, while the other people grumble and dispute when ever this claim of Jesus is put to them.

That was the reaction of the Jews, now, as foreshadowed last week, we consider the reaction to His claims by His disciples.

We probably weren't too surprised at the reaction of the Jews. We know from John's Gospel that they were repeatedly Christ's enemies. Whatever He said they put the worst possible interpretation on it. Which is what they do to these words. But how about His disciples?

Our Lord had quite a number of people who claimed to be 'followers' which were generally called disciples. There was the 'twelve' and the 'seventy' which were specifically picked out but many others (after the resurrection referred to as the 500 by Paul), possibly many more than the later 500.

When the 'followers' heard the passage which we have just explained, what was their reaction? When they heard this great claim to be the 'Bread of Life' and then

underlined and reinforced and repeated, what was their reaction?

Verse 60 -66: Some of them grumbled! And went away.

Now the reaction of what some of the disciples to what Jesus said, was that they found it offensive. In verse 60, *“This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?”* Doesn't just mean it's a difficult saying – it is difficult – but it means it's a hard saying, like when you may say, “He's a hard man!” It's an offensive saying. When they heard about Jesus and flesh to eat and blood to drink, it was repugnant to them.

Now what was repugnant? It wasn't because they were literal minded Jews that thought that Jesus was talking about cannibalism. Look back at verse 53 and you'll see: <sup>53</sup> *So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, **you have no life in you.**”* Jesus taught there that the only people who are saved from their sins – the only people who have everlasting life, are people who have come to Christ in a personal way. And nobody else whatever, anywhere, at any time, is saved. That's what they found repugnant and offensive. They didn't like the exclusiveness of the Gospel.<sup>9</sup>

They couldn't bear it when He said He was the only way to be saved. That if people didn't come to Him as a Person for salvation, then they had nothing to do with eternal life.

There are people like that today. They'll go to a Christian church. They'll sing Christian hymns, They'll engage in Christian prayers, but when they hear that there is salvation only for people with a personal faith in Christ and that every other man and woman, boy and girl is without eternal life: they find that repugnant. And they say, “If that's Christianity, I don't want anything to do with it!” They don't mind it being preached that there is salvation in Christ, but they cannot tolerate the truth that there is salvation in Christ alone. They like to think that the heathen who has never heard – is saved. They like to think that the sincere people of false religions are saved. They like to think that people who have some sort of Christian teaching are probably saved. But they cannot bear the truth that to be saved you must come as an individual in a personal way to Christ. Having a faith in His broken body and spilt blood.

That's what offended them and Jesus read their thoughts. (verse 61)

“Do you take offence at this? ... “ He said. “If this offends you what will you do when the ascension takes place?” As long as Jesus was there in the synagogue, preaching, they could reject His opinion. But the day was coming when He would be crucified; buried; then He would rise from the dead; then He would present Himself alive for six weeks; and then He would ascend up to where He came from as the man Christ Jesus – God in the flesh for ever more.

Just as long as He was a rabbi in a synagogue, they could reject Him<sup>10</sup>, but when His claims were proved by His resurrection and ascension. When it became plain that He

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<sup>9</sup> Inclusive in the sense that **whosoever** (any and all types of people) can come, but exclusive in the sense that coming can only be to Jesus Christ.

<sup>10</sup> A 'luxury' we cannot assume now, since He has ascended to His glory. The Bible says so.

is who He said He is. When it's plain that He really does tell the truth, then if they were offended when the truth was open to doubt, how much more would they be offended, when it was plain that He had been telling them the truth all along. That was the point of verse 61 & 62.

But now verse 63: <sup>63</sup> *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.*

These people although they were disciples, they had not had that great change in their minds and heart, which we mentioned earlier. Their minds were minds of flesh. People can't grasp difficult and offensive truths and believe them unless the Spirit of truth has worked on their minds. The flesh gets them nowhere. It's the Spirit which gives life to a mind and brings it to the point of understanding and belief in spiritual things.

“The things that I speak to you,” says Jesus, “they are spirit and they are life.”

Verse 64 & 65:

“You profess to be believers,” says Jesus, “but some of you aren't. You take upon you the name of Christian, but you're not really.” He knew even at that moment who was going to walk out on Him and never come back.

<sup>65</sup> *And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”* They were going to walk away. Except. Except for those in whom that great spiritual change had taken place. They were all going to walk away except those who had a faith given to them by God. Those in whom there had been a divine work!

To sum up: Jesus had told them an offensive truth and they were 'put out' by it. They wouldn't accept that offensive truth, even though it came from His lips and that's because human reason and human logic was still king in their minds and they hadn't got the necessary spiritual enlightenment to see the truth of spiritual things. The fact that they failed to believe an uncomfortable truth, proved that there had been no real work of God in their lives.

There are some people who hear Jesus say a thing. They won't believe it because it seems unreasonable. That is the proof that no real work of God has gone on in their lives. There are others who accept a thing on the ground that Jesus Christ said it. Human logic can't work it out. It may not be something that naturally appeals to them, but because it comes with the authority of Christ, they believe it and submit to it. Those are the people who display that a real change has taken place in their character, thoughts, lives and consciences. The great difference between a believer and a counterfeit believer, is that a believer believes what Christ says and the counterfeit believes only what suits him.

As we close look at verse 67: Some of the Jews had grumbled and disputed; of the disciples, many of them had grumbled and had walked away. <sup>66</sup> *After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.* But in verse 67 a few, just a few, confessed the truth and remained.

Just imagine that crowd of people walking away<sup>11</sup>.

They had said they were followers of Christ but they were walking away from Christ. They were becoming more and more distant from Him. Our Lord turns and there are still 12 standing there. “You've heard this offensive truth as well. The truth that people are saved – only those who have faith in Christ – has caused all these to walk away. Aren't you going as well?”

Peter speaks in verses 68 and 69. He shows that the truth that was so offensive to others had in fact conquered his own mind. The truth that causes the others to walk out, he shows was a truth he believed in his 'heart'. *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ... . Here's the great difference again between a true Christian and a counterfeit. A counterfeit Christian says, “Well the Gospel preaches that there is salvation in Christ alone, If that's Christianity I don't want anything to do with it”. But the true Christian says, “The Gospel teaches that there is salvation in Christ alone. That being so I can never walk out on him. That's the difference between natural logic and spiritual logic.*

What do we say when we hear that there is salvation in Jesus **alone**. Do we say, “We don't want anything to do with that word”. Or do we say, “That's the truth, therefore I must remain a follower (or become a follower) of Christ.

Peter then submitted to the truth that the others found so offensive. He went on to say, “ ... <sup>69</sup> *and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.*” Peter displayed that He had that enlightenment, that we spoke of earlier. Everybody who is spiritually enlightened recognises who Christ is. Peter does! Everyone who is spiritually enlightened comes to Christ and chooses Him. Peter does! Everyone who is spiritually enlightened can't walk out on Christ. He must continue with Christ because he knows that Christ alone has the words of eternal life. Peter does!

The majority opinion says that, that truth is unreasonable: we won't believe it. But Peter submits to it and believes it because the rule of his enlightened thinking is – what Christ says.

“And yet even one of you twelve is a counterfeit. The proof that I have chosen you is

<sup>11</sup> You can see it every Sunday – just down the road there are the football worshippers. On our way here we pass several boat ramps where those worshippers have filled the parks with their cars and trailers. Local Councils 'invest' your rates in the sporting and leisure facilities to encourage such worship. It's a long time since they invested in facilities for the worship of the true God.

that you say the truth about me and remain close to me. But even one of you 12, is a devil.” Many others are walking out but even one of those who are continuing is going to walk out eventually. Betray Christ and sell Him for 30 pieces of silver.

So in John chapter 6 we have an example of the validity of the parable of the sower: As in this case where ever the Gospel is preached there are the 4 responses.

- The Jews heard the truth and it made no lasting impression on their minds at all. The seed falling on the harden ground – a path. The Devil came down and stole the Word.
- The professing disciples who when they heard something difficult, they walked out on the Christian life. The seed was growing it appeared, very well, but when the sun shone it withered up quickly and it was soon gone.
- Then there was Judas. He looked very promising indeed. Looked like he was going to continue and grow and become fruitful. But something else was growing up alongside – many other things, the love of riches for one. That eventually choked the Word and he never realised the promise that appeared to be in his life.
- But there were just a few, that heard the Gospel that day who continued. They continued even when all the others had gone and they bore fruit in their lives.

All the others in one way or another, sooner or later, rejected Christ's great claim. Just a few believed it right to their last hour.

That's the way it is today!

[2332]

**Pray that we are spiritually enlightened, come then to Christ alone and be the saints gathered here today! Amen.**

## **Come – See Who Christ Is**

Per S Olyott

(Review of last week) -

[Not a serial, but a series. Each message is self contained.]

[Overall, John's Gospel picks out 7 or 8<sup>12</sup> great signs, which have spiritual meanings and some marvellous claims, plus lengthy discourses that our Lord spoke.]

### Chapter 7.

These events occurred just six months before our Lord died. In the three years to this point: the 'year of obscurity' is over; the 'year of popularity' is over; and the 'year of opposition' is over. But the opposition isn't over. So now we come to the last six months – every thing from Chapter 7 to the end of the Gospel takes place in this six months – most of it in the last week.

This chapter shows many signs of the coming crisis:

- Verse 1. ... *the Jews were seeking to kill him.*
- Verse 13 <sup>13</sup> *Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.* They would speak in small groups amongst their friends, but they were afraid because they knew the Jews were out to kill Him. They didn't want to be identified with Him! They stopped speaking publicly about Christ.
- Verses 19/20. <sup>19</sup> *Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?* <sup>20</sup> *The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?"* In verse 20 there is a hint that some thought He was over exaggerating the threat.
- Verse 25. ... *"Is not this the man whom they seek to kill?"*
- Verse 30. Where they plot to arrest Him, but don't. <sup>30</sup> *So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.*
- Verse 32. Where some more people are sent out by the religious authorities to capture Christ. <sup>32</sup> *The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him.* Then look at their reaction in verse 45: <sup>45</sup> *The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?"* <sup>46</sup> *The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!"*

So there were all the signs of a coming crisis.

The various events of Chapter 7 take place during the Feast of Tabernacles. Three times a year every Jewish man was expected to go to Jerusalem, to three great feasts. A 'feast', in this context was NOT a 'smorgasbord' of goodies. These were great festivals in Jerusalem. The feast of Tabernacles lasted a whole week (eight days, the way the Jews count days). It was a time of great rejoicing – a glad time. The harvest had been gathered in; and now in Jerusalem they lived in temporary shacks and booths during the day. The idea was to remind them that God had redeemed them out

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<sup>12</sup> Depending on if the calming of the sea as the disciples received Jesus into the boat after he walked to them on the water as they were rowing to Capernaum, is given a number.

of Egypt; they had lived 40 years in the wilderness, before God brought them into the 'promised land', where His bounty has produced such a fruitful place: 'flowing with milk and honey!' (Exodus 3:17 and elsewhere.). It was a time to remember God's goodness in the past.

If you had walked around the edge of Jerusalem you would be surprised to see whole families camping out in open with rough shelters of woven branches and coats held up with poles, filling the Mount of Olives and anywhere else they could.

[brief description of Sukkot as celebrated at Carmel School. ]

On the last day (the eighth day of the feast), which is called in verse 37, ... *the great day*, ... . There was a special celebration. Near the Temple precinct they would get pitchers of water and pour it out on the ground, to the accompaniment of certain prayers. Because they thanked God not only for the harvest, but for the gift of rain. Without which there would be no harvest. They acknowledged this as a gift from God. Saying a grace not only at meals but also when it rained.

That's why Jesus said: *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ... .*

This then was the last great festival to which Jesus came. The next time He came to Jerusalem was six months later. To the Passover, when He was killed at the same time as the Passover lambs. Because Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us. He is the Lamb of God, which takes away our sin.

Even before Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, there was discussion about Him. Look at verse 10f: <sup>10</sup> *But after his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly but in private.* <sup>11</sup> *The Jews were looking for him at the feast, and saying, "Where is he?"* <sup>12</sup> *And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man", others said, "No, he is leading the people astray."* <sup>13</sup> *Yet for fear of the Jews no one spoke openly of him.*

Then verse 14: There in the Temple precinct, teaching publicly, no longer secretly, before them all is the One they have been seeking and discussing, Jesus Himself. Preaching in the 'middle' of the feast.

He refers to a miracle that He did on an earlier occasion, taking the opportunity to reprove them for their attitude towards Him.

On the last day of the feast He makes a great announcement: Verse 37: ... *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.* <sup>38</sup> *Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'* <sup>39</sup> *Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

Now our Lord made some bold claims during this feast of the tabernacles. The crowd was astonished that He could speak so boldly and get away with it, but it wasn't long before the religious authorities decided to step in to kill the murmuring of the crowd and to arrest Him. But they can't and the only voice that is raised, in defence of Jesus is

Nicodemus. The person who came to Jesus, by night, to tell Jesus, that at last He could see the truth about Him. To whom Jesus had said that the only reason you can see the truth about me, is because a spiritual miracle has taken place in your mind. That man starts to speak up for Christ. And the chapter ends with that person who is often described as a secret disciple, making it plain that He is a disciple.

It's a wonderful chapter of 53 verses. There are a number of important things to learn from it. We will explore 4 of these, starting today and finishing off next week.

- People may have vary varying views about Christ. Extremely so. Look at verse 5: *<sup>5</sup> For not even his brothers believed in him.* Jesus had at least 4 brothers. They're named in the New Testament: (half brothers of course because He didn't have Joseph for His father) He had at least two sisters. Imagine, in those times and places they lived in small houses, with very confined sleeping arrangements. Very close family life, sharing food and family responsibilities. Perhaps the brothers – Jesus included – had the same occupation, as carpenters in the 'family' business. They were close. The bible tells us that as Jesus grew up in the family: He was 'full of grace and truth'. A lying word never falling from His lips. Not once did His communion with God ever break. So he was as well known by the members of His family as could ever be the case. Yet they didn't believe who He said He was! All they said to Him in this case. "If you're going to get anywhere, you've got to get yourself known. You've got to do some wonderful things that will amaze the people." They had no clue about who He was and about why He had come or where He was going to go. They just didn't believe He was anything else than some form of religious teacher. Nothing more than that.

Look at verse 12: *<sup>12</sup> And there was much muttering about him among the people. While some said, "He is a good man",* (how many times have you heard that? "What do you think about Jesus" – "Oh He's a good man!" They get that far and they don't get any further. That's all they think!) *others said, "No, he is leading the people astray."*

Verse 20: *You have a demon!* They said. And verse 25: *"Is not this the man whom they seek to kill?"* But in verse 26 they suspect that perhaps He might be the Christ. And then from verse 27 they debate whether He might be who He says He is.

But verse 31, some people are convinced that He is the Old Testament Messiah, the Christ who was promised. Verse 40: Others are absolutely sure that He is The Prophet. You notice that Prophets is spelt with a capital 'P'. Moses had said a prophet would come like himself – only greater. So it had become a technical term to refer to the Messiah when He came. And they were sure. Alternatively in verse 41 people are 'inclined' to believe, but are still doubting – raising questions about earthy origins.

Verses 47-49 The Pharisees think that the idea that He could be anybody special, is utter and entire rubbish. They think these people are just being taken in, because they are so ignorant. "What do they know?" They write off the



whole idea of Jesus Christ being anything special as ludicrous. Then there is Nicodemus who makes it plain (by implication, but plain none-the-less) that he believed Jesus to be genuine and to be therefore whom He says He is.

If there are all those widely varying views about Christ, when He is before them in the flesh, don't be surprised if there are widely differing views today.

Sometimes, especially to a young person, this is a source of grief. When others speak in unflattering or inadequate way about Jesus, they may think, "Why can't they see it and how can there be so many differing views, when it's as clear as crystal to me?" It's always been like that! Don't be surprised. If you read through the history books: nobody has been able to ignore the Person of Jesus Christ. Virtually every person of influence in the world has at some time to say something about Him. They couldn't go throughout life and remain silent about Him. Although the things they actually said have been widely different. And for you, sometimes the Devil raises the thought in your mind: "that perhaps it's you that's wrong. How can it be so clear to you and not many others?"

But don't we sway. It's never been any different. Even when He was there before them. People could just not agree on who He was. And it will always be like that.

So the first point we make about this very useful chapter is that people will have very varying views about Christ.

- Secondly. In answer to that question: "Why don't they see it." we should note: You might have had the opportunity to talk about the Gospel. You thought your words were plain, clear and simple. You explain that Christianity is a reasonable faith and show that there are good grounds for believing it. None the less you show that one must ultimately accept what God says on no other basis than God says so. It was all so plain to you and you felt at ease as you spoke about it. You felt that God was giving you words to say, so you were certain that the person would be convinced. But at the end of the conversation the person says, "Well I just don't see it."

Why not? Why don't they see it?

In the situation at Jerusalem, where there were widely differing views. Jesus considered it necessary to give the warning of verse 24. <sup>24</sup> *Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgement.*"

Our Lord considered it necessary to give that warning, because that's the mistake that ordinary men and women fall into by nature. Constantly. All the time! They take it for granted that because they see things in a certain way, that must be the way it is.

"The way I see it," says the human mind, "is the way it is." They never make allowances for the fact that all of us by nature are sinners. Our minds are spoiled. Our affections are spoiled. Our intellect is spoiled. Our power to chose

is spoiled. Everything about us is spoiled by sin. Nothing works, properly, truthfully or correctly. The human heart is filled with a native arrogance: "I see it that way and that must be the way it is!" So Jesus says, "Judge not." Don't make your mind up according to the appearance of a thing, but get down behind the appearance. Find what the truth really is. *Right judgement.*

Several times in this chapter You see them falling into this mistake. Verse 19-23: They thought to themselves, "We keep the Law," They were quite satisfied that they were law keeping people. But they had murderous thoughts against Christ. Jesus says, "You don't keep the Law at all. Why do you seek to kill me?" Yet they were convinced that they were alright if they measured themselves to the Jewish Law. They thought to themselves like this: "That Jesus, He's a Law breaker. That earlier time in Jerusalem, He made a man well on the Sabbath Day! That's wrong!"

Jesus points out the inconsistency of that: "You know that circumcision is demanded by the Old Testament Law and if the eighth day on which it's supposed to take place happens on a Sabbath Day, you go ahead with the ceremony even though it is the Sabbath. If you can do that on the Sabbath, there can't be anything wrong with making a man whole on the Sabbath." But no!. The way they saw it. To them is the way it is.

[2399]

**Pray that we are spiritually enlightened, come then to Christ alone and be the saints gathered here today! Amen.**

Continued next week.