

I do not know of any song that really portrays the Gospel of John better than the one Jared sang this morning. If you are visiting here today, that was Jared's mother who passed away this week. The song, "How Great Thou Art," is particularly fitting because in the Gospel of John, the Lord Jesus Christ is portrayed as the Son of God.

I. Introduction: Christ in the Books of the Bible

What we have been doing here, just so you understand where we are if you are visiting today, is we have been coming through the books of the Bible on Sunday morning. We have been talking about each book, starting in the Old Testament, and discussing how Christ is portrayed in each book of the Bible. Our goal here, and we are right on schedule with it, and I have talked about it many, many times over the last couple of years, is to build a core base of leaders who truly understand the aspect of the ministry of this church. If Jesus tarries His coming, we want to ensure that this church goes on after my leadership days are over, and that this church is just about completely run by the young men and young ladies who are learning as they do in the ministry. That is our goal. We do not want to just teach them the ministry without giving them the Bible.

Our greatest commodity here is not a marvelous facility building. I would not trade it for anything in the world, but we do not have all of the bells and whistles. We have the greatest single thing that God ever gave to man, and that is this book, the Word of God. We never want anything to take the place or take center stage in this church or our lives more than this book. What we lack in frills here, we make up for in the greatest book this world has ever seen. We believe it is the Word of God. The Bible says:

1 Thessalonians 2:13

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

We believe that. We have been coming through the Bible book by book, talking about how Christ is portrayed in each book of the Bible.

II. John's Gospel: The Son of God and Salvation

Now we are in John, and last week we got through six chapters, I think. We know now that in the Gospel of John, He is portrayed as the Son of God. It lays out His deity. We saw last week why John was written, and I gave you the key verse in John 20:31, where it says:

John 20:31

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

I showed you how there are two great books in your Bible that really deal with salvation in a personal sense. John really is the preparation for salvation, and Romans then is the road that leads to salvation. When you put those two books together, it is a great combination. The reason for that, we saw this last week in Exodus 12, and then I showed you in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 5:7, that the Bible says that Christ is our Passover Lamb.

1 Corinthians 5:7

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

I showed you that the book of John covers the last three years of Christ's ministry, His public walk on this earth as He ministered those three years. It is built around four Passovers that mark the start of His ministry in John 2 and end with Him being the final Passover Lamb in John 19. We left off last week, as I said, we finished John 6, which started our third year of His life, which will bring us up to His crucifixion as we continue on today.

We saw in John 6 how He is portrayed as the Bread of Life. Within this book, almost every chapter shows you a complete composite of salvation. We saw last week that He is the Bread of Life, likened to the manna in Exodus 16. Just as in the Old Testament, they had to digest and take in the manna for it to provide any nourishment for them, we must take Jesus Christ into our hearts internally to become saved, to become His child.

A great truth, and I laid this out for you last week, is that the book of John, in its stories—and there are a number of stories in it—they all deal with salvation and how God has given us that great salvation. Almost every story will picture some different aspect of somebody who needs Christ. We saw it, did we not?

- In John 3, Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. Jesus told him, "Ye must be born again."
- In John 4, the incredible story of the woman at the well, and how she came to that well every day to get water because she was thirsty. That pictured your life and my life going back to the things of the world that can never satisfy. So we always have to come back to it. But when she met Jesus at that well, He gave her a different water. He gave her everlasting life. And after that, she never came back to that well again.
- Then we saw in John 5, the man who had the infirmity for thirty-eight years. We saw how all of that pictures an unsaved man.

III. Opposition from Religious Leaders (John 7)

Today we are going to pick it up in John 7, and we hopefully will finish the book of John today. In John 7, we kind of shift gears a little bit, and we see another aspect of Jesus' ministry. The Bible is always a book that lays out all the different aspects. It will never show you what is going on up front without showing you what is going on behind the scenes. This is a great behind-the-scenes chapter of how the devil will undermine the work of God.

The Bible says in Ephesians 6, it talks about the fact that:

Ephesians 6:12

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

When you get into the ministry, when you decide that you are going to be what God wants you to be—I am not talking about pastoring a church, though you will experience it in that particular scenario also—no, no, when you decide that you are going to give your life to the Lord, you are going to get into a battle. That battle many times is going to be something that appears to be one thing on the outside, but it is really something else behind the scenes. The devil is always going to be at work to try to destroy whatever you try to do. Basically, life for a Christian, life for any church, and certainly life for a pastor, is moving forward to do the work of God, and then the devil trying to come in and to stop that or destroy that or sidetrack that great work, whatever God is trying to do.

There is an old saying in life, and it is a true saying. Most of you have probably heard it; it kind of goes like this: "The more things change, the more they all stay the same." Nowhere is that more true than the opposition that Christ faced from the scribes and the Pharisees and what you will face when you get into the ministry. I tell you stories like this and take the time because someday you will run this ministry. If Jesus does not come, I am not going to be around forever. If Jesus does not come, you are going to have to be the ones who step up, take this work, and carry it on. You are the insurance policy of this church. This is why we spend the time teaching you the Bible. This is why we recognize the fact that you have to do ministry. You have to be the ones who pick up the mantle, so to speak, and carry the things out, and you better learn to do it now.

There is another axiom in the Bible that is taught back in the Old Testament about Jacob's well, and the story goes on back there. Without getting into the whole story, the principle that comes out of it is simply this: Never wait until you run out of water before you dig the well. That is true of any ministry in any church. Do not wait until we have a need here in leadership before you start training leadership. That is so true in the aspect of the work of the Lord. So nowhere is that opposition Christ faced from the scribes and the Pharisees does it picture what you and I will get into.

Let me take just a second and explain the idea of the scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees, because it helps us give us a context here. The scribes in the Old Testament were legitimate people. In fact, when you study the Old Testament, the scribes had to be part of the priest class. The scribes in the Old Testament, they were the custodians of the Bible. Every book in the Old Testament was written by a scribe. When they copied those books over, it had to be done by a scribe. A scribe had to be a priest. In the Old Testament, the scribes had the custodianship of the Bible.

As time goes on, and we have studied this, we know that the nation of Israel goes into captivity in 606 BC. When that captivity unfolds, a lot of things begin to change. The nation of Israel had already been a long way from God, and they were struggling in their relationship. That is why they went into captivity in the first place. But again, the devil behind the scenes was working

overtime to destroy the nation of God, the nation of Israel. So during that interim period between when the Old Testament closes and the New Testament opens, the devil raises up two more groups within that religious system that really became the source of problems for the nation of Israel. That will be the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

The scribes had corrupted themselves, and they had gotten into deep apostasy, and they were a long way from what God wanted them to be. Then the devil added the Pharisees and the Sadducees. You do not find the Sadducees and the Pharisees anywhere in the Old Testament. They were never ordained as leaders in the nation of Israel. The Sadducees and the Pharisees came about because of Israel's corruption and turning from God, and so they established another religious authority that ran the religious side of the nation of Israel that God never intended it to run. With that understanding, it is pretty easy to see why when Jesus showed up, who was the real deal, and the people who were not the real deal were in charge, where the opposition came in. You need to know things like that because these stories have great truths in them that will help you when you get into the ministry.

Remember now that the scribes were totally corrupt. The Pharisees and the Sadducees had risen up and taken over the nation of Israel, and basically they had made an alliance with the Roman Empire. Basically, "you scratch my back, I will scratch yours." "We will keep the little people in line as long as you give us favors." It was a totally corrupt system. When Jesus Christ showed up, He challenged that system. He showed up bringing them the truth. He showed up bringing them the absolute Word of God, and He was trying to reinstate God's plan to the nation of Israel by His teachings, by what He said, and by what He did.

We have already studied it, have we not, that when Christ showed up, He brings all the Old Testament credentials with Him that the Jews were looking for. Immediately, the common ordinary people, the people like you and me, they immediately recognize who He is. They immediately make the connection with what He is doing with what the Old Testament said. Ah, it was the scribes and the Pharisees that had a problem with it. We are about to look now at some things in John that will show you not only what was going on behind the scenes here, but let me tell you something, ladies and gentlemen. The scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees did not die out when Jesus died. They are around today, and they will undermine the work of God and try to destroy the work of God today just like they did back then. Like I said earlier, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Here is the real issue, and the real issue was the fact that the authority and the doctrine by which Christ taught the Word of God and ministered the Word of God. You see it unfolding itself all through the Gospels. In Mark 11:28, the scribes and the Pharisees, they demand, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?" I think one of my favorite passages dealing with the scribes and the Pharisees is found in Mark 1:22, where it says, and the people, He was preaching, Jesus was preaching, and the Bible says the people:

Mark 1:22

And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

You see, when Jesus came, He had something that He wanted to teach. That is doctrine. Doctrine means to teach. But it was not just that He had something to teach. He was authoritative in what He was teaching because His authority came from God. The scribes and the Pharisees, they were not from God. The scribes had corrupted themselves. The Pharisees and the Sadducees were not even part of God's program. Therefore, they had no authority. So when He shows up on the scene speaking the doctrine and teaching with authority, and the people are gravitated to Him, it poses a problem.

In many Baptist churches over the years, I have seen this to be true. The pastor will be a weak guy, very insecure. He will be somebody that is intimidated by people greatly. So what he will do in his ministry is he always likes to keep the little guy down. I have been in churches before where the pastor was pretty much a deadhead and the church was pretty much, and I always hated to be in these scenarios. They would have me in to preach, and I usually got a one-shot deal out of them. This is why. I mean, now I have been standing there, and this is nothing to me. It is just because I was preaching the book and they were not getting the book. But I would be standing there after I preached, and a bunch of people got saved and got their lives right. They are standing there going out to eat with a pastor, and people would come. Somebody would come up and say, "You know what?" And me and the pastor were just fine, right up to the point that somebody would come up and say, "Well, that was the greatest message I ever heard tonight. Boy, I will tell you what, we need more preaching like that." And then they would look at the pastor and say, "Why do not you preach like that?" Bad situation to be in. Bad situation to be in. I hate those scenarios because automatically you have a problem.

There are pastors today who are not good teachers. They are not good preachers. They gave up growing a long time ago. They would be paranoid with some of the men that we have in our church who can teach and preach the Bible. They would be paranoid with some of you ladies. You would be a threat to them, simply because of the fact that you do such a good job with what you have. You do a good job with what you have. I am not intimidated by anybody, and I certainly have no inferiority complex. I look at it the other way. I look at it, if you have been around here ten years, maybe twenty years, and you do not know the Bible better than me and preach better than me, something is wrong with you. My goal is to make you better than me. And I am not very, it is an easy task because I am not that good. But my job is to help you get better, not get worse. I do not want to keep you down, but that is what the scribes and the Pharisees did. Scribes and the Pharisees made sure that the people never got on their level. Like most pastors do. Most pastors, they want you to serve them, but they will never serve you. They live up here and you live down here. And once in a while on Sunday morning, they will come out in the pulpit and survey their kingdom and then go back into their little world.

But Christianity is a warfare, is it not? I am not a general. I am a front-line combat CEO of a company. Captains and lieutenants and field grade officers, they are in the combat with the troops. They stay in the trenches, they stay with them. They are not in the rear with the gear. But that is the way it is in most churches, and it can never work. I am telling you right now, guys,

you have to be that place. You can never get to the point where the scribes and the Pharisees were because it is never going to work.

In John 18:19, when Christ came before the high priest, they asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine. The whole issue was the fact that they were illegitimate. They were not the men that God had chosen to run the nation of Israel. And the one guy that was, the scribes, they are completely corrupted and became part of the system. So when Jesus shows up, He does not come down to some great religious leader, does He? Have you ever noticed how when you go out to Bible college or you get in a realm of spiritual people, they start using words like "eschatology," "Herman and Newbecks," they start talking about all the "soteriology," and all of those great words? I have always wondered, when you go to a place to learn the Bible, why do people talk like Jesus never talked? That always bothered me. Did you ever see in the great chapter in John, we will get to it in a little bit, when it was the greatest chapter on the Holy Spirit of God, did you ever see Jesus talking to His disciples, "Now I am going to talk to you guys about soteriology"? Why would you spend thirty, forty thousand dollars to go to a place to learn to talk like nobody in the Bible ever talked? Those things bother me.

When Jesus came, He did not come down as some religious leader. He came down as a common ordinary man. He dressed like the common ordinary man. He did not portray Himself any other way. He was the Son of Man. He was the Son of God, but you do not see Him putting on some great religious facade. And He did not go to the great rich people, did He? He did not go to all the great feasts and all the great parties and who desire the feasts and the epaulets. He went to the common people just like me and you who struggle every day with things in our lives. That is why they did not like Him.

Now when you come to John 7:14-17, again, here is the problem. We will bring it back here in this chapter.

John 7:14-17

14 Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

Immediately, immediately when He starts to preach to the people, He connects with the people. Every time. It was not the common ordinary man who missed the first coming of the Lord. It was the scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. They were at odds with Him, and they were behind the scenes in His ministry trying to destroy it every step of the way. You will face the same kind of opposition. Immediately the common people connect with Him, but the Pharisees do not like it.

It says in John 7:31 that many people believed on Him that this was the Christ. John 7:32 says the Pharisees heard what the people said such things, and they did not like it. In John 7:46, things

never change. They said, "Never a man spake like this." "We heard Him." He says great things because He has authority and He teaches us. John 7:47-48, the Pharisees say, "Are you deceived? Do you see any of us believing on Him?" Then this is so typical in John 7:52-53. They say to the common people, "Look in the book, look in the scriptures. Why are you believing on this guy? And there is nowhere in the Bible that the Bible ever says that a prophet will ever come from Galilee." Really? Really? Really.

This is another problem that the scribes and the Pharisees have. They do not know very much about the Bible. They spend all the time with the great twenty-five-dollar words. They just never get down in the book. When the scribes and the Pharisees came to the people, and many times they will just lie to you, but when the scribes and the Pharisees came and said, "Well, look and see, there has never been a prophet from Galilee." That is not true. 2 Kings 14:25 says, Jonah, Jonah, Jonah came from Gath-hepher. That is north Galilee. And just by a wild coincidence, it is Jonah who is the sign of Christ and the resurrection. No, there is a prophet coming from Galilee. There is a prophet from... In fact, the Bible makes reference to Jonah in Christ.

You see, the issue here will always be the issue: you having a book that is the final authority in your life. You having a book that you do not have to depend on any man, anybody telling you what to believe about that Bible. Or you may have to have some people help you to grasp it. But everybody in the Bible has to have that. Your goal in your life has to become the place in your life where you do not need anybody to tell you what God wants you to know about your relationship with Him because you have a working knowledge of the Scriptures that you can get into that book and figure it out for yourself. Because God has given you the absolute infallible Word of God, a final authority, and all you have to do is go to the book and you will get your answers. The issue here is you are going to begin to see as we develop it through this book, that it was not about anything other than a final authority.

You cannot have two final authorities. You can have two authorities. But you can only have one final authority. I mean, you can have your husband and wife, and she can say what she wants to say and he can say what he wants to say, and that usually causes a lot of problems, and you can have two authorities sometimes, but you can only have one final authority. The final authority is where the buck stops. Where do you go to get defined for you what God wants you to do? You see, Jesus was coming to them, and we already know that He is the Word of God. Jesus was coming to them and giving them His Word. What the scribes and the Pharisees were upset about is up to that point, they had been their final authority. The people got what they believed from them, and they were not even of God. So you begin to see how this thing begins to play itself out, and you need to learn these lessons.

IV. The Woman Taken in Adultery (John 8)

I will show you another aspect. Come over to the next chapter, John 8. Here is another one. Here is the great study of the woman taken in adultery. Here we will see that this is another ruse by the scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees. It is a complete setup against Christ, and another next thing you need to learn is people will set you up in the ministry. Imagine somebody coming to the Lord Jesus Christ and purposely trying to set Him up. Let us read the text here, John 8:1-9.

John 8:1-9

1 Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

Now may I just stop here and show you something else when they finally go out? You notice how the Bible shows you how problems always start? When they left, the eldest left first. Look at it down here. It says, in John 8:9, "When they heard it, being convicted in their heart, going out by one, beginning at the eldest, even to the last." You know what that tells you? That tells you that problems will always start with the, in your family. The older kids will teach the younger kids. You have an older son who will not do what is right or a daughter who will not do what is right. You have two or three kids in the family that are younger than that. You better drop the hammer on the older one or you are going to get that one go, the next one is going to go, and the next one is going to go. That is the principle. It shows you that problems never start with young Christians. Not only ever in my ministry, never. All the years I have been in the ministry, and some of you guys that have pastored, you know what I am talking about. They do not start with the younger Christians. It will start with the older Christians who quit growing, who get satisfied, who get their nose bent out of joint about something, and that is where the system, it all comes down that way. It shows you that this thing started with the elders, the eldest, and went down to the youngest. It is an incredible concept.

Then He goes on, John 8:10-11.

John 8:10-11

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Now, let us analyze this here a minute and learn some things from it. John 8:3-5, they come to Him and say, "We caught this woman in the very act, and Moses said she is to be killed." That would be Leviticus 20:10 if you want to put that in your Bible. John 8:6, we have already looked at this, they said this tempting Him. He says nothing to them but stoops down and writes something on the ground. Now I always thought that this was interesting, and probably what He wrote is Deuteronomy 22:22 and maybe Leviticus 20:10. You do not know for sure, but whatever He wrote, He wrote something out of the Bible. I will show you how you know that in a moment. But in Deuteronomy 22:22, that verse talks about the fact that when you catch somebody in adultery, that you bring both the man and the woman. Now in this case, they have trapped themselves in their own word. They said that they caught this woman in the very act. Well, how did the guy escape if they caught him in the very act? It is a setup from the beginning. I do not know what for sure what He writes, but I guarantee you that He probably wrote these two verses down here, at least one of them.

I will tell you why that is. Look at John 8:6. "This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger." See that thing? Now if you would for just a moment, and I think it is worth the time to do this, come back to Exodus 31. Look at something here. I know you have it turned back into the Old Testament, but I think this will be worth it for you.

Exodus 31:18

And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

Wherever you find a finger of God in the Bible, it is always going to be the Word of God. Just that simple. So when the Bible takes the time to tell you that He stooped down and wrote something with His finger, it could have said He just wrote something. It could have said He had a stick and He wrote something. It could have said He had a magic marker and He wrote something. It tells you that He wrote it with His finger; whatever He wrote was the Word of God.

Now let me show you something else. You know why He never speaks to them? This is a great principle. This is why I believe that He wrote probably these two verses, if not something else, but probably these two. But whatever He wrote, it was the Word of God. But you know why He did not speak to them? He did not speak to them because He is the Word and they have rejected Him. He does not speak to them because they are asking Him something that is already written in the Bible. And because they rejected Him and He is the Word, He will not speak to them. So He writes it on the ground, but you will get nothing from God when you ask Him for something if you have rejected Him when it is already written in the Bible. This is why some people do not get answers to their problems. They have some issue in their life and they go to God with it and they ask God to answer them and they get mad at God because God does not answer them. The reason why God does not answer them is because God is not going to answer you because He already wrote it in your Bible. I do not want you to get your idea of God. God wrote you that

book so there are lots of things that you could save time asking Him about that you could just go in there and find out what He said. But we are too lazy to do that, you see. We are in the email world. We are in the text world. We are in the, just send off a message, do not bother talking and finding any communication with it.

I am telling you. The reason why He did not answer them and He turned around and He took His finger and wrote something out of the Bible on that ground is because they had already rejected Him and He is the Word of God. So they get nothing from Him. He will not speak to them because what they are asking has already been written in the book. Many times the reason why God will not speak to you and me, and we get our nose bent out of joint about it, is because what you are asking is already in that book. Many times we do not want to hear it. We do not want what the book says. We are pulling on God's shirt tail to get it our way. And God just simply does not work that way. Great principle. Great principle. You want God's answer? It is in the book. You reject the book. You do not get the answer. That book you have got in your lap was written by the finger of God.

Now I might as well tell you this. The modern scribes and the Pharisees today, the Bible scholars, they tell you that John 8:1-11 should not be in your Bible. If you have got any other Bible other than the King James Bible, there will probably be a footnote down at the bottom someplace. I have even seen some Bibles that left out the whole passage. There will be a little footnote down there that John 8:1-11 should not be in your Bible, that it picks it up at John 8:12 and then goes through John 8:59 at the end of the chapter. Now maybe since I have explained the scribes and the Pharisees and I have showed you their motives and I have showed you these passages, maybe you could better understand where the scribes and the Pharisees and the Bible scholars today would not want that to be in there. It is kind of a finger-pointing deal.

But now watch this. Let me show you how God, this book is the mind of Christ. When you get to the point that you reject the Word of God, when you get to the point that you just start attacking this book and you start taking this book apart and taking out what you want, leaving in what you want, when you start messing with this mind of God, God starts messing with you. He makes the biggest fool out of you ever saw in your life. I was in a situation one time where in a Bible study and a pastor, somebody asked a question and I was just a guest there. Somebody asked a question and they asked a question out of this passage, and the guy simply said, "Well, you know what, in most of the modern translations today, we do not necessarily believe that that passage should be in your Bible." And you know what, and so everybody, and I got sitting there watching around, I am thinking to myself, "Well, you rat, I am not going to let you get away with that." I said, "You have got about fifty people here today to come to learn the Bible and you are going to tell them now in my presence that that should not be in their Bible? When that Bible is God's book?" I said, "You know what, we are going to find out how much you know about the Bible." And I raised my hand. And he said, "Yes." And I said, "Well, it was interesting, you said John 8:1-11 should not be in your Bible." I said, "Can I ask you a question?" He says, "Absolutely." I said, "Well, you look at John 8:12, and John 8:12 says, 'Then spake Jesus again.'" And I asked him, I said, "Well, if the first eleven verses should not be in, and then John 8:12 says Jesus spoke again, what did He say the first time?" He had never seen that. He had never seen that you take out the

first eleven verses where Jesus spoke the first time, and then John 8:12 says, "Then Jesus spoke a second time," and you just told me the first time should not be there? You have got a problem with that. You should have cut out the next verse too. How do you speak again in John 8:12, if John 8:1-11, where He spoke the first time, should not be there? It just does not make any sense. But you are going to find that they are always trying to destroy what He is doing.

V. The Man Born Blind (John 9): Tragedy and Spiritual Sight

Now look at John 9. We will see another one. This is a great story. This is a story of the man born blind. This is a great study to show you about the great tragedies we all face in life. Most people have a misconception about Christianity being saved. The Bible never promised that you would not have tragedies in life. We think that once we get saved, all of your problems are solved. Too many pastors make that statement, and it may be true in the eternal sense. Once you get saved, you are eternally separated from this world, and you do not have any problems as far as eternity is concerned, but you have still got your feet down on planet earth, you have got to live through some things. The Bible says that all things work together for good, because you have got another crowd out there that says all the good things are of God, and all the bad things are of the devil. That is not true either. This chapter helps you see some great things, but then it also shows you how the scribes and the Pharisees are always nipping at His heels. Let me read it for you.

John 9:1-11

1 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

9 Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

This is a great story. Of course, there are a number of things we want to see here. John 9:2 says, the disciples see this blind man and they asked the Lord, "Who did sin? This man that was born blind, this man or his parents?" It always never ceases to amaze me how we, even if we are saved as human beings, we always look at a tragedy in life that befalls somebody else. We always think that it is because of sin in our life. Maybe sometimes it is. I mean, that happens too. But this is the other side of the story here. In John 9:3, neither one caused this problem, but God allowed it for God's honor and glory that the works of God might be manifest.

The key point here is, you know what? This is true of all of us. We really do not pay attention to God until we have some tragedy in our life for the most part. You see it in this country. This country does not give a flip about God until there is some natural disaster. The two rag heads fly two planes into the World Trade Center, and then everybody prays. I mean, you know what? We do not think of anything. And then a tsunami hits some place and everybody is on TV praying. Some great earthquake. We did not give two flips about this place before it happened. Some earthquakes, some natural mudslide, whatever takes place, some hurricane, some great natural disaster befalls some place. Before that point, nobody cared about nothing. But suddenly, now that there is a disaster at hand, "Oh God, help us." That is the way we are. That is human nature. You have got to overcome that. You can overcome that in time, but it is not the easiest thing in the world to do because it is only in tragedy. I mean, when something happens and some great tragedy befalls us, then we turn to God. Sometimes God allows those tragedies to come into our lives simply that we will look to God because God wants to have our—you know what? I do not know what tragedy you are going to go through if you are saved. I cannot imagine anything that you will go through in life that you will not come out exactly the way God wants it to come out.

You know what the real problem is in our tragedy in life? We do not necessarily rest in the fact that the way God wants it to end is okay with us. We have got our own agendas. So we look at tragedies in life and we do not—very few times do we look at something that has befallen us and simply say, "Well God, you know what? You get the honor and glory out of this any way you want. I know that You do things like this because somebody out there needs to find You and needs to see You." It is an incredible thing, but we do not do that. Every funeral I ever preach, every funeral I have ever preached, I have had some kind of—God used it in some way. I preached Alice McKinney's funeral here, what, last year, two years ago, something like that, three years ago? Out of that funeral, you know, Alice McKinney's funeral, which she was a great dear friend of ours. Out of that funeral, April and Josh called me on the phone and said, "We heard your sermon that day. We want to come to your church." Been here ever since. Ever since. Angel was her daughter. Angel is someone who has come to the plate of granddaughter, I guess it is. Daughter, yeah, okay. It is like you are younger than you are. I do not know what. I think of a Penny Hansinger who is ninety, and you look so young. We got her through there. Why? Because God takes things like that and uses them for His honor and glory.

You know what? We are all going to die someday. Nobody is going to live forever. You ought to get satisfied in the fact that the last—I preached Laura's funeral last week, and I told the people

there, "You know what? God started to work in her life and wanted to carry that on in Philippians 1:6, until the day of Jesus Christ." Notice it did not say until the day of her death. It said until the day of Jesus Christ when Christ comes back because, Lord, that day, as she gave her life and her body all of her life to serve God, that last sermon was about her being the object lesson that death is a reality. I gave the invitation. I guarantee you, I do not know the results. I guarantee you, I—people got—I promise you somebody got saved.

I had the weirdest funeral one time years and years and years ago. Probably nobody even remembers this little gal. In fact, her name kind of eludes me this morning, but she was the sweetest little kid. Got three or four brain tumors. She finally died when she was about twenty years old. She was the sweetest little kid. Loved the Lord. I went to see her before she died. She said, "Bob, please, please, would you preach my funeral because my mom is not saved?" And I said, "Honey, I will preach your funeral." And I preached—it was down south someplace in Missouri. We drove down there. I will tell you what. I preached that thing like I have never preached a funeral in my life. There was a—I would just get down there at the end and, you know, you do not give invitations to funerals. I mean, I guess you can, but, you know, it is not like everybody had bowed, everybody had closed, and come on for you. It is not the point. I mean, you preach the gospel and you get the gospel out, and I am down there, and I get up there and I just preach my heart out, boy, and everything in the world. I am up there and I am saying, I am fighting because my mind is saying, "Just close this thing out. You gave the gospel." And the Holy Spirit of God is saying, "You need to give an invitation." I said, "I am not going to give an invitation here." I said, "But you know how God sometimes, when you are indecisive, God just makes the decision for you?" My wife was there. It is not a false story. I am sitting there and I said to the people, I said, "Folks, I said, I have such a desire," just like this, "to give an invitation." And at that moment, a lady sitting over here jumped up and got on the organ and started playing "Just As I Am." Now, that is all the sign I needed at that point. We had four or five people saved and her mother got saved. And then afterwards, the poor lady came up and she was trembling. She says, "Old preacher," she says, "I am so sorry." She says, "I am so sorry." I said, she says, "I just do not know what to tell you. I ruined everything. I am so sorry. I did not know what made me jump up and get over there and start playing on that organ." She says, "I just got so moved. I do not know what happened." I said, "Honey, it is okay. It is all right. It is okay." Sometimes God allows tragedies in our lives because we do not pay attention to Him any other way. That is a sad state of affairs. But this is a great story. So sometimes God allows things to come into our lives to get the attention of people that they will listen.

He tells this guy, he says, and this is a great part of the story. Down here in John 9:6-7, He says, "Now you go down and wash in that pool down in Siloam." The Bible says in John 9:6, and here are all the components, how it all fits in here. John 9:6 says that He made clay. That is a picture of Christ's humanity at the first coming of Christ, is it not? Clay in the Bible is always a picture of humanity. The Bible says the man was blind. Well, that is a picture historically of the nation of Israel. They are spiritually blinded, but inspirationally it is a picture of an unsaved man. It can also be a picture according to Revelation 3:17-18 of the Laodicean church who is spiritually blind. So it is a picture of somebody, saved, lost, whatever, who is spiritually blind. Yet the thing here, the only way he will ever see is to do exactly what Jesus says to do.

When you start coming through the Bible and look at these things, it is wild. One time back in the Old Testament, the guy by the name of Naaman, I gave him a message called "How an Army Captain Got Saved." Old Naaman, he was a captain of the Lord's host, and he was a leper. He wanted to get clean, and Elisha, he meets Elisha, and Elisha says, "You want to get clean? You want to baptize seven times, dip yourself seven times in Jordan." Now, Jordan is the dirtiest river on the planet. He had a tough time with that. He said, "Well, why cannot I go to one of these other great rivers, where all the people are? Why do I have to go to the dirtiest river?" The answer is simply this: When you come to Christ and you have got a problem and you want Christ to fix it, you just do it the way He tells you to do it. You have to come to the end of self if you quit telling Him what you are going to do.

Now this guy is blind. He is a picture of an unsaved man. He is blind. He is also a picture of some of God's people who are saved and not in fellowship with God and spiritually blind. The only way you are going to fix that blindness is simply do what He tells you to do and quit giving excuses why you are not doing it. That is the only way, the only way he was going to see. He says, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam." That is found in Isaiah 8:6-7 for you deep thinkers. The pool of Siloam means "sent one." Here this pool is a picture of Christ. In other words, what He is basically saying here, in other words, "You want to see what God sees? You want to get your eyesight back? Then you do what the One that God sent you, the Sent One, told you to do and you will get your eyesight back." You want to learn that Bible? You want the spiritual scales to come off your eyes as a Christian because you cannot get the book and you cannot get it? Then you just simply get in that book and do what God told you to do with it and you will get it. You are here this morning and you are lost without Christ and you cannot see spiritual things because you are not saved? Hey, look, just do what the Sent One told you to do and you will see. You will see.

His neighbors come around, do they not, in John 9:8-11. They are saying, "Whoa, this guy was blind." Somebody else said, "No, that is not him. He just looked alike." Nobody said, "No, that is him." And he says, "How did you get your eyesight?" Oh, I love this. No theology here. No great things here. He just simply says what I say in my testimony and every saved person would say this morning in their testimony when they come out of the darkness into the light, "I once was blind, but now I see." He simply says, "A man that is called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me to wash in the pool of Siloam. Now I see."

John 9:13-24, scribes and Pharisees staying far behind. No, no, no, no, no, they clobber him. They batter him with a great theological question. They are after him. Oh, they come down there and they say, "Who did he say that he was? What did he claim?" And John 9:19-20, they get his parents involved. They are enraged. They are incensed. They are just having a cat fit. They are bombarding him, and I love this. You talk about the innocence. Nothing shows you the difference between the spiritual Pharisees and Christianity than just the basic concept of a servant of Christ. This little boy, they are clobbering. "Who was he? What did he say? What did he teach you? Where did he say he was from? Who did he say he was?" The guy looks and he says in John 9:25, "Look guys, I do not know any of this stuff. All I know once I was blind and now I see." He says, "I am not getting into all this stuff. I just know He did something for me. You guys have

had it for thirty-five years. I was blind and now I see. Go pound some sand someplace. I am saved, man." Oh, what a great story. What a great story. The scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees, they always missed the obvious. And now to saved people.

There is a great principle in Matthew 7:20. Do you ever want to know in life what is God's and what is not God's? What is of God and what is not of God? I mean, we all have that question in life. Matthew 7:20 really answers that question because He says in Matthew 7:20:

Matthew 7:20

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

You see, they could deny who Jesus was, which they did. They could deny His miracles, and they did. They could deny that He was the Son of God, and they did. They could deny what He taught in His authority and His doctrine, and they did. But at the end of the day, they could not deny the fruit that God brought through Him that they were not producing.

Matthew 7:17-18

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

See how simple that is? In 1967 and 1968, I learned a great lesson. I was a young guy then, and I was in the army as a matter of fact, 1968, end of 1968, 1969, 1970. I learned a great truth. Back then, you young kids will not remember this. Some of you older guys remember this. How many remember the hippie movement? Nobody knows hippies anymore. Hippies are like brontosaurus in Central Park. They are hard to find. When we grew up in our days, there was such a thing called hippies. Hippies were the... I mean, if we point to her mom, she is not a hippie. Point to your mom, I am not going to take that from you. Slap him, go ahead, we will take time out, hit him with that something. There you go. She is not a hippie. There you go.

Now, hippies were... How can I describe them, Roy? I mean, you have to help me here, guys. Free spirit. Free spirit, that is... They never bathed, so they were probably free unclean spirits. I bathed every day. Oh, you were a hippie back then? I do not know. I had hair halfway down my back. Is that right? I will tell you what. Woo! I am happy for that. So you were a flower power child, huh? Strawberry fields forever. And I am sure you turn around in your yellow submarine and all. Anyway, they had one thing they lived for: against any kind of established authority. I was in the Army then, and I was stationed at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. When I was in the Army, they were burning down everything. It all started on the colleges because that is where it all starts. They were anti-establishment. They were against the war in Vietnam. They wanted to bring down this country. Free love was in the air, drugs everywhere, long hair, dirty clothes. In other words, whatever society was, they took the opposite turn to it. It was totally against it.

It was then at the tragedy, most of you do not even know this, of Kent State University where the Ohio National Guard was protecting them from burning down the dormitories. I forget a whole band of college people going to throw in rocks at the National Guard and all of those things. They moved, I mean, they were getting pelted. Back then, the National Guard, they really gave

them bullets. They just give you whatever now. They had real bullets back then. They kind of like cut their last stand. They got to a little knoll there in Kent State University. People were coming after them and they did not know what to do. They think, I am not going to say they panicked, but I mean, they did what they needed to do. They opened fire and killed five of them. Well, that just really reached the whole place.

Now, I was at Fort Devens at that particular point in time, and they were holding demonstrations outside the fort. They were going to storm the fort. They did not know it at the time or maybe they did, but Fort Devens was the home base at that point with the 10th Special Forces. So I am standing up there watching this whole thing go on, and there are 3,000 people out there at the front gate, and they are just, and the guards are all lined up with their bayonets out like this, and they are going to come right through those things. Well, the commanding general, he was a tough old bird. He had 600 Green Berets up behind the thing with nightsticks. They were, let me tell you something, 3,600 was plenty to handle them with these guys. These guys were snake eaters, and these guys had all been to Vietnam. They had no love for any of it, and these guys would kill you and tear off your head and eat cornflakes out of your skull. I am not kidding you. These guys, boy, they were ready to go. And those kids, those hippies broke in that front gate, boy, and when they came through that thing, the guard just kind of rolled back and they thought, "We got it made." They came around that corner, and boy, they were waiting for them. It was, you think Babe Ruth hit some home runs, you ought to see this guy, man, they beat the fire out of them.

Anyway, they wanted to bring down this country for what it stood for, established authority. I was just a young guy back then, and they were burning down the building, the college campuses, rioting. It was a war zone. I watched this anti-establishment movement burn everything to the ground. But I noticed they wanted to tear everything down that was established by authority, but they never built anything. They had no plan to build anything. Their whole plan was just to destroy with no plan to rebuild. I looked at that years later after I got into the Bible, and I saw that and I said, the truth is when you and I rebel against God's authority in our lives in any way, then we, like 2 Peter 2:19-22 in the church of God, we become experts at destruction. All our lives do then is tear down, but it never builds anything. The Bible says by their fruits, you shall know them. That is one of the great ways illustrated by the scribes and the Pharisees. They wanted to tear down what Jesus was doing. There are many times here the Bible says they wanted to take Him and kill Him, but they could not because He was so popular with the people. So they tried to undermine Him behind. Here is a little guy that says it all. No theological concepts, no nothing. They start bombarding him and he says, "Gee, you know what guys, I do not know anything about that. All I know for sure is this: I was once blind and now I see." That is God. God's program always builds. It edifies. It never destroys and tears down. The Bible says by their fruits, you shall know them.

VI. Christ as the Good Shepherd (John 10)

In John 10, what a great story this is. This is a study of Christ as the Good Shepherd. John 10:14, and you want to mark this verse, it says:

John 10:14

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

The great picture here is of a shepherd and his sheep. Now I am going to give you a little key to the Bible today. It will probably be one of the greatest keys you ever get. Many of you already know this. One of the greatest studies you will ever take in the Bible is the study of animals. All animals represent something in the Bible.

Job 12:7-9

7 But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:

8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

9 Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?

You know what He is saying? He is saying that in the Bible, God put everything in there to show you something. Animals in the Bible represent different things that you and I can learn from. An unsaved man in the Bible is likened to a dog. An unsaved woman is likened to a pig. The Bible says in the book of 2 Peter that just as a dog returned to his own vomit, that is what unsaved men do. You will go out night after night, day after day doing the same thing that makes you sick as a dog or ruins your life, but you just keep going back to them. You are going to find that, and also an ass in the Bible is a picture of an unsaved man. An ass in the Bible is also a picture of the nation of Israel. Eagles in the Bible are a picture of God and Christians. Doves in the Bible are a picture of the Holy Spirit of God. Pomeranian, bittering, birds of prey, owls, blackbirds like ravens and all of those, those are pictured demonic, unclean spirits in the Bible. You are going to find that all of those things represent something that really initiate incredible studies through the Bible.

Well, sheep in the Bible represent God's people. So what you have here is a great study on you and I as sheep and Christ as the shepherd. I spent a lot of time out in Montana years ago preaching out there at churches, and I got to spend some great times on some ranches. I am talking about ranches. I am talking about ranches that are half a million acres. I mean, when they go out to check the North 40, they are talking about a three-day ride to even get there. It is incredible stuff. I got to talk to a lot of those old boys, and I even went out with them, and we just had some great conversations. By that time in my life, I pretty much understood the Bible, and I would take advantage of some of these guys. I asked this old sheep farmer one time, I said, "You know what? How long have you been taking care of sheep?" And he said, "All nigh on to forty-some years, I guess." And I said, "Well, you know what, Norman, I know you have got cattle on this side and you have got, back in the old days, there were great wars between the cattle guys and the sheep guys because they did not like the sheep because they ate all the grass." And he said, "Yeah, that is the way it used to be in the old days. We are smarter than that now. What we do now is we graze the cattle first, and they only eat the grass down about that much, and then after they eat it, we take the sheep over and let them eat what is left." I learned a lot of stuff. He was the same man. He comes to the revival every night. I do not remember his name. He was a good old boy. We would be out there on the old buckboard, and he would go out, we

would feed the sheep and feed the cattle, and he would get out there, and he let me get in the back and we would feed the cattle, and I would kick the bales of hay off, and he would make a big old circle around there. Then we would go over and take care of the sheep, and it was an incredible thing.

I was talking to him, and he said, "Well, we are sure glad that you come out and preach to us. There is good preaching. We need good preaching out here." I said, "Well, can I ask you some questions? Tell me about sheep." I said, "I do not care anything." He said, "Well, I will tell you one thing, sheep are the dumbest animals you ever met in your life." I said, "Amen." He said, "What did you say?" I said, "No, nothing. You are doing it." What he gave me in a description of sheep, I fully understand why Christ portrayed Himself as a good shepherd because it is exactly the way we are.

First of all, he told me that sheep, because they are the dumbest animals on the planet, they are totally dependent on a shepherd. He said, "You know what? I said, how many sheep do you eat?" We were killing coyotes the day before, and coyotes all over the place. I said, "How many sheep do you lose?" He said, "Ah, we do not lose many. You lose sheep in one of four ways." I said, "Really?" He says, "Yeah." He says:

1. The first thing, sheep are very curious. He says, sheep are always going where they should not go. I said, "Amen." He said, "What do you say?" I said, "Oh, nothing, nothing. Just keep on going." I said, "That is incredible."
2. He says, another thing is, they get lost because they are never satisfied where they are at. They are always looking for greener pastures. I said, "That is pretty good."
3. He says, and I will tell you something else. He says, what gets spooked real easy. That is why we try to keep them all bunched together. He says, because wild animals will scare them. Now, when they get scared by wild animals, they seem to scatter sometimes and then they pick them off. So a lot of times, the coyotes will work in packs and they will come down and they will make noises as a diversion, and the sheep will run the other way and then they will split them up and they will grab the young one.

I said, "Wow." If I came down through those things, I thought to myself, "Wow, that is exactly the same thing that we are." We get into trouble because of our curiosity that we go places we should not go. We get into problems as Christians because we are not content with what we have and we think the grass is greener on the other side. But where do you see the water bill? Scared by a wild animal. You know the Bible says, "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world," and "perfect love casteth out fear."

My greatest example is this: years ago, I got to spend quite a bit of time in Africa, South Africa, but my favorite was in mid-Africa, Kenya, places like that. One night, we were in South Africa, we were up into the bush there going into the tribes, and they decided, the missionary decided to take us for a weekend, we were off, so we said, "I am going to take you to a place you are really going to, this is going to be great." So right in the middle of deepest, darkest Africa, there was this big resort, and it had nice places to stay and people went there. It had nice restaurants, it had everything. Everything was all the modern conveniences, but it was completely fenced in. It took

a three-hour trip to get there, and they locked you in, and at night, it had high gates around it. You could walk over to the gates and look down at the river going through, and there were 9,000 crocodiles, some of them were as big as Volkswagens, all down through there. You would go to sleep at night and you would hear the hyenas out there and you would hear the lions roaring and you would hear all those things out there, and it was the most incredible experience in my life. But the good thing about it was they were right outside the fence, but they could never get in. I thought to myself years later, "You know what, that is exactly the way it is for us as Christians. There are all kinds of wild animals out there, but you have been locked in. They cannot get at you. They cannot hurt you." But just like those sheep get scattered when the coyotes or the wolves or the cougars or whatever come after them, they get scattered because they get afraid. God's people get scared.

4. Then he told me, "Yeah, and he says you have got to watch the sick sheep." And I said, "Really, tell me about those." "Yeah, when a sheep gets sick, they just want to get off by themselves and will not follow the shepherd anymore." And I said, "Wow, that is pretty good."

The thing that amazed me, and I hear it all the time, and I think things through. I am not the brightest bulb in the box, but I think things through to some degree. I went back after that and I took a study in the Bible because I have always heard that as a pastor that my job is to be a shepherd and you are the flock. I have heard that all my life. But you realize when I went back after that encounter with the sheep farm and the cattle farm and all that stuff, I went back and studied out, you know, that is not true. The only one ever referenced as a shepherd is Christ. Paul makes absolutely no reference in any way, shape or form as a pastor being a shepherd of the sheep. That puzzled me, and I thought about that and then I thought back the story and I thought to myself, "Oh man, I got it. Christ is the shepherd, we are all the sheep." But when God makes you a pastor, there was another animal in that equation out there that was the most phenomenal thing I ever saw in my life. It was the sheepdogs. Sheepdogs are the most amazing animals I have ever seen in my life. I could watch them work for hours. And I thought to myself, "That is the Bible picture." You see, in the Bible, Gentiles are likened to dogs. So I am not a shepherd, He is the shepherd. You are the sheep. I am just a sheepdog.

I watched how they work, and so I thought to myself, I am putting my own analogy together here. I mean, He is the great shepherd, I am with Him. He does a sheepdog, I want to find out. I asked the guy, I said, "Tell me," and he had four sheepdogs and they were absolutely incredible. And I said, "Where did you get those sheepdogs?" I said, "Who trained them?" He said, "You do not train them dogs. Them dogs are born with the understanding and they are raised up with their moms and their dads and they just become, they become just like the moms and the dads." I said, "Okay, we have got something going here, let us talk about this." I said, "Tell me about sheepdogs." And he says:

- First of all, he says, their job is the sheep and they never lose sight of the sheep no matter where they go.
- He said, you notice they bark a lot. I said, "Yeah." He says, but the sheep always listen.
- He said, those dogs do what I cannot do. I just sit on my horse and let them do the work.

- He said, no, old dog, they will just keep herding them sheep, they will get them to go wherever they need to go.
- He says, you know what? Sometimes you get stubborn sheep. And he said, you know what them dogs do? And I said, "Yeah, I saw what they do." He said, you know what they will do? Those sheep will not get over there, they want to go the wrong way and that dog will bark at them, they will not respect the bark, they will not get back in line with the bark. That dog would go over there and nip at his heels and chase that sheep back in. He said, "Yeah, he nips at his heels, but they never bite him."

I thought to myself, "Well, that is my job right there." That is my job. My job is to never lose sight of the sheep. My job is to bark a lot. Why do you not listen? My job is to do what the shepherd cannot do because He is up in heaven, He has given me to do. And sometimes when you get stubborn sheep, you have got to nip at your heels, but you never bite them.

Then the last thing, and I thought this was probably the greatest thing of the whole thing. He said, "Yeah," and I figured this on my own. Every year they take those sheep in to shear the wool. You see, the sheep grow the wool, and at a point in time, they sacrifice their wool to the shepherd of the sheep. Romans 12:1-2 says that you and I are going to be a living sacrifice, and we are going to give what we have to our great shepherd.

Romans 12:1-2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Well, John 10 is a great chapter.

VII. The Raising of Lazarus (John 11-12): Israel's Restoration

Then we get into John 11 and 12, and this is the raising of Lazarus. I will tell you going in here that Lazarus is a great character study in the Bible. Character studies are great to study. You can study animals, you can study individuals, you can study women, you can study men, you can study children, you can study just about anything you want. But in the study of John 11 and 12 with the raising of Lazarus here, what you have is a picture of the nation of Israel and them being restored and coming back from the dead. In the Old Testament, this will be Ezekiel 36, 37, 38, and 39. Israel is restored within those passages.

Remember a couple of weeks ago, I told you about the eleventh hour deal and how the time frame, and I put it on the board up here, and I showed you the twelfth hour and then the eleventh hour, how it fits up in that. We are there in John 11:9.

John 11:9

Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

This is the picture of Israel's restoration. Lazarus is a type of the nation of Israel, and he is dead. You notice there are only two times that Jesus weeps in the Bible, only two. The only two times Jesus weeps in the Bible is here, where it says "Jesus wept," which is the shortest verse in the Bible.

John 11:35

Jesus wept.

And then the other one is in Luke 19:41. In Luke 19:41, He weeps over Jerusalem, and here He weeps over Lazarus' death, who is a picture of the nation of Israel. Jerusalem. So you want to mark those two things in your Bible. Lazarus is dead. That is a picture of the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel. I do not even have time to go in to show you the day system here, that two days, third day, fifth day, it is incredible. All lines up to what the Bible, we do not have time to get into that today.

But then you have Mary and Martha. Mary and Martha will be the two types of attitudes that come up in the Bible. Mary and Martha will be the two types of attitudes that Christians have concerning Israel and its restoration. Now, Martha, she is a picture of the brand of Christianity that follows the amillennial crowd, or the postmillennial crowd. Down there in John 11:24-25, she talks about the resurrection of the last day, but she misses the resurrection of the nation of Israel completely. She has a belief in a general resurrection, but nothing specific, continuing the nation of Israel. Non-concept of the Bible, Israel, God, church, and the body of Christ, she did not have that at all. You are always going to find that Martha is always trying to tell Jesus what to do. She thinks she knows more about it than He does. Always trying to correct Him. Martha, in John 11:39, Jesus said, "Take away the stone." She says, "Oh, no, no, no, no, do not take away the stone. Do you not know he has been in there four days and he stinks?" Always trying to stop what He is doing. Always thinks that she knows better than He knows.

Luke 10:38-42 is a great study here, and adds to it in another story connected with it.

Luke 10:38-42

38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

She is always, always, always concerned about what everybody else is doing. Martha is a great picture of somebody who served, but she never learns how to minister. She is somebody, but she

is busy running around, but she is never building anything. She is a picture of somebody who always wants others to see what she is doing. She is never satisfied. It was not enough that Jesus was watching what she was doing. She wanted everybody else to see what she was doing.

In John 12, we have an introduction to Mary. Mary, on the other hand, is a great picture of what your life and my life should be. She believes everything about the Bible. We do not find her busy running around, do we, trying to tell the Lord what to do? No, no, no, no. The first time we find her, she simply, as it says down here in John 11:39, she sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His word. That is where we ought to be. John 12:3, she is at the feet of Jesus.

Then I love about the fact when you get into John 12:3, she does what you and I should be doing that Martha does not do. She makes the sacrifice. In this sacrifice, it is a great thing. I think it is a great picture.

- First of all, she takes the oil, and she anoints His feet. Now, we know the Bible, the oil is the type of the Holy Spirit of God, and I have taught you many, many times, like in Song of Solomon, that feet will always be a picture of the coming of Christ. So she has got all the components together here.
- The second thing I want you to know is that she takes that oil and she puts it on His feet. The Bible says that it cost very much. It was very costly. I heard one preacher a number of years ago, and it may or may not be true, but it is a great illustration. Even if it is not true, it is probably kind of true. He said that back then it would have cost her a whole year's wages to buy this ointment. He put it into a concept in his sermon, which I thought was very good, that comes right back to us, because he said that she spent a year of her life and her money to make Him smell good for just a moment of time. It is a very good concept.
- The third thing I want you to know is she became one with the smell. The Bible says the odor filled the house. We have talked about it in the Song of Solomon, we have talked about it many, many times, how all of the things that we have in a relationship with Christ is likened to perfume, sweet smelling spices. You see, it is a great picture here of what your life and my life should be. Our relationship with Christ ought to be a sweet savour in the nostrils of God. It ought to smell like the finest perfume that anybody could ever have, mixing it all together with all the different components of a relationship having different smells. And then coming to the point where the way we smell fills our house.

I told you before, I go to the gym a couple of times a week, and I love them to death, no problem. I am not just not a criticism, but you have the ladies there that are in their sixties and their seventies that they buy their perfume someplace. I do not know where even to tell you. You can tell. She is seventy. My problem is this, I do not care what kind of perfume you buy, it is the god-awfullest stuff you ever smell in your life. There are two or three of them, I think they buy a big bottle and share it. Oh, it is terrible. I do not care what you wear, but when you sweat on the machines, I get on the machine after you get on and I smell your perfume all the rest of my day. It is not something like "Scent from Heaven" or "Taboo" or "Holstein" or it is bad stuff. "Holstein," whatever it is. It just gets the god-awfullest stuff I ever smell in my life, and I will go around the rest of the day. Your clothes smell like it, it gets into your body, it is terrible. You have got to disinfect before you can do anything else the rest of the day. If you go to work some day

and you get around other women or whatever and their perfume, some of the perfume, I mean, you know what? If they could take that and work it into an angle where it would mask the scent of deers, they could make a lot of money off of it because it sticks on you forever. You go home and your wife says, "Who have you been around today?" Then you have got to go through the explanation. You have been there, Zach, have you?

Anyway, my point is this. You go through life with the smell of the Holy Spirit of God and the ministry and God all over you and become one with that. Everybody in the world is going to want to know who you have been around. Because that smell is going to carry with it the actions, the attitude, the love that you have for Christ. Just like she sat there at His feet and heard His word and then she got involved by taking her hair and the oil and it became one with what? The smell became one with Him, became one with her and the odor filled the house. Wherever you go, you will have that smell of the Lord Jesus Christ that is pleasing unto God. You will go through life with the smell of the Holy Spirit, that ointment on you, and people will want to know who you have been around. Greatest aspect.

VIII. The Upper Room Discourses (John 13-17)

As we move through these last chapters here, John 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17, these all take place now. We are coming down to the end here, getting ready for the last, we are in the third year, coming down to the last Passover here at His crucifixion. These chapters take place in the upper room at the Last Supper.

- In John 13:1-5, He washes the disciples' feet. I would mark these in here, kind of break down your chapters.
- We have the revealing of Judas to the twelve in John 13:21-26. Notice they all miss what He is saying except John in John 13:23-25, and this is where he lays his head on the breast of Jesus and hears the heartbeat of God.
- John 14 is the great promise of the restoration of the nation of Israel, and that is a great chapter, a great chapter in itself.
- John 15, we see Christ portrayed as the true vine and Israel as the branch. We talked about that the other night in Romans 9 and 11. We talk about the fact that Israel's lack of fruit bearing, and we talked about how all that works. A great verse in John 15:3, for you and for me, it says:

John 15:3

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

- That is a great verse to keep you clean. John 15:16, there is a great verse that goes around with your fruit bearing like we have talked about where He says, "I have ordained you that you bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain." And you are to bear fruit, and we already talked about that by the fruits you shall know.
- John 16 is a great tribulation chapter, John 16:16-20. You find a phrase here just to throw this out. We can develop this on a Thursday night sometime, a little phrase "a little while," seven times for each year of the tribulation period and the second coming.

- We find in John 16:20-21, a woman in travail and she is delivered, that is a picture of Israel with the second coming, Revelation 12 and 13.
- John 16 is the great chapter in the Bible on the Holy Spirit of God. I do not know if you know it or not, but in that chapter, and we will not go through them today, that would also be a good Thursday night question, you will find the seven things the Holy Spirit of God does for you, or does. Seven things that is the job of the Holy Spirit of God.
- John 17, we find Christ praying for the disciples, which is commonly called the Lord's Prayer. There is a great link in John 17:12, Judas connected to the Antichrist where he is called the son of perdition. Only found three times in the Bible: John 17:12, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, and Revelation 17:11. Put it all together and you get the picture of what is happening.

IX. The Crucifixion (John 18-19)

John 18, you have the final hours. The Lord is crucified.

- John 18:3, betrayed by Judas.
- John 18:12, Caiaphas and Annas, the high priest, goes before them.
- John 18:15-27, Peter denies Him, you have that story.
- John 18:28, He goes before Pontius Pilate.
- John 18:38, Pilate asks a great question in the Bible, and I love this. "What is truth?" And he had the truth standing right in front of him. "Thy word is truth." John answered in John 17, he did not even figure it out. Can you imagine standing at the great white throne judgment facing God as an unsaved man, Pontius Pilate, when he asked the question, "What is truth?" And the truth was standing right in front of him, and then he took that truth and washed his hands over it and delivered it to be crucified. Oh boy. He says, "I find no fault in him," and he lets him turn him over to the Jews.

Then in John 19, we have the crucifixion of Christ.

- John 19:1, Pilate has Him scourged.
- John 19:2, that is where He gets His crown of thorns, like we saw in Judges 9:39.
- John 19:3, they mock Him, call Him "Hail, King of the Jews." They hit Him in the face and beat Him.
- John 19:17-37 is His crucifixion.
- John 19:23, they cast lots and part His garment.
- In John 19:26, He gives His mother to John. That is very significant.
- John 19:28-30, He said, "I thirst."
- John 19:34-35, that is where He gets a spear in His side and the water and the blood comes out. We talked about that when we first started John, back there in 1 John.
- Then in John 19:38, Joseph of Arimathea, after He is dead, begs His body and puts Him in his own sepulchre, in his own tomb.

X. Resurrection and the Final Authority of Scripture (John 20-21)

That will bring us into John 20. John 20 deals with the resurrection of Christ. You know, you have got to get this down. I think this is important. There are five aspects to the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from five different windows, or five different aspects. I think you need to know what they are. Five different ways that you look at it.

5. The first way we will talk about is how God looked at it. God looked at the crucifixion as a propitiation for our sins and the atonement that fixes the enmity that was between God and man. That is how God saw the crucifixion.
6. Christ saw the crucifixion as the fulfillment of the Old Testament law. Thereby He replaces the law by His body because He fulfills the law. Therefore, the law goes away and He becomes the New Testament.
7. Then how the devil looked at it. The devil looked at it as his last real chance. The devil thought for sure that he was going to win at the crucifixion of Christ. There is a lot more going on behind the scenes than I have showed you those Old Testament passages that shows you what is really coming. The devil is literally bringing hell to Him on the cross to get Him to quit. The devil wanted to kill the Lord Jesus Christ and he got Him killed. Then because the devil had the keys of death and hell, he won because no man had ever come back from the dead on his own power. So when He is in death, the devil thinks he has won. Of course, that was his last chance. Of course, that did not work out very well because Revelation 1:18 says when He came out of that tomb and He rose from the dead:

Revelation 1:18

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

That is where the devil was defeated. From that point on, the devil deep down inside knows he cannot win. Now it is an arrogance, prideful attitude, much like many of God's people, that he is going to harden his heart and do what he is going to do thinking he is going to get around God when actually it was all finished at the cross. When Christ came out of that tomb waving the keys of death and hell, the devil was out of business. He just thinks he is still going somewhere. He is not. One place he is going to: the lake of fire.

8. The world saw the death and the crucifixion of Christ simply as a religious martyr, a rebel, a revolutionary, a cult leader that tried to change the world with radical ideas.
9. The fifth one is how you and I should look at it, the child of God. We should see Jesus Christ and His death on a cross as our only hope. A loving God became man to pay my sin debt that we all owe and could never pay. As the old song in our hymnal says, "Blessed Redeemer, blessed Redeemer." And He died for you and for me.

Then John 21, and I want to leave you with this, closes out the book. A couple of weeks ago I told you that there were two great verses to help you understand the Bible. The first one I gave you was in Luke, was it not? Luke 24:45, where it simply says:

Luke 24:45

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

I told you at that point that if you ever learn the Bible, I can give you all the tools. I can lay out everything in that Bible that there is. But the teacher, the great teacher of the Bible will be the Holy Spirit of God. This is why your education or your IQ or the degrees you have after your name have nothing to do with learning the Bible. Our world is so backwards. We think that the higher education that you have, that you get a PhD, an MA, or a doctor's degree, or whatever in theology, that that really means something with God. It means absolutely nothing because it never was. It never was. It never had to do with how much you knew or your education or your IQ or your vocation. It all had to do with your relationship with the Holy Spirit of God. You can have the greatest education the world can ever give you. You can have every degree behind your name that there is to have. If the Holy Spirit of God does not open up your heart and open up the Scriptures to you, you are going to get nothing. That is not dependent on your IQ. It is dependent on your attitude of heart toward a book.

It is the next verse that I am going to give you in the last chapter of John, John 21, that probably is the single greatest verse that illuminated my heart and my life and my mind to the Word of God. If there is one single verse that changed my understanding, my desires, my attitude, and everything toward the book, it was these two verses. The first one told me that it was my relationship and my intimacy with the Holy Spirit of God, that God was going to open up my understanding, and that only came through my walk with Him. The second one was about the book itself, and it developed my attitude toward this book. It is why I take the stand that I take, and it is why I believe what I believe and the teach that I teach. It stands for my authority and my doctrine of what I believe and what I teach. It is found in John 21:25, down at the end of the chapter, and it simply says this:

John 21:25

*And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.
Amen.*

That is a tremendous verse. That verse tells me that I do not have everything that Jesus did. We do not have everything that Jesus said. I am sure Paul wrote more books than just the seven that he wrote. I am sure that there are many other things, as the verse says, that Jesus did that never got recorded in this book. Because if it would have, the world itself could not contain all the things that He did.

Now, that brings it to a very defining point for me, because if I believe that this book is the absolute perfect Word of God, and I believe that this is God's revelation to man, and if I believe that this book that I am holding my hand today is the absolute essence of God's mind and everything that God wants me to have, and there is not one word, there is not one mistake, there is not one thing out of order, there is not one thing that is just the way that God does not want it to be. If I can come to that place in my mind, and this is what revolutionized my mind about the Bible. You see, there was a time in my life when I thought the key of getting the Bible was studying the Bible and reading the Bible. That is when in my younger years, so I launched, followed my own father in the Lord. He read the Bible through once every thirty-three days, so I

started to read the Bible through once every thirty-three days. Did it for three years. You have got to do sixty chapters a day to get through that Bible in thirty-three days. At the end of my three years, I was in worse shape spiritually and knew less about the Bible than I did before. I thought that speed reading would do it, so I took a speed reading course, got to the place that I could read 600 words a minute. Boy, I could get through that Bible, and I could read books about the Bible, and I thought that was the key. Then I came to that that was not the key.

You see, my life is a process and a journey of making mistakes just like you make mistakes, and I had to learn my way, fumble my way along the way. Just like you do. The difference between me and many of you is I learned from my mistakes. You will not, you are not willing to learn from yours. So you make the same mistakes over and over again. I have been guilty of that in my life, but I will tell you, I made up my mind years and years ago, I would not be guilty that when I come to this book. When God showed me something, to the best of my ability I was going to do what God wanted me to do. Then one day God gave me that verse right out of that, right out of heaven, boy, it parachuted down in my backyard. I could not believe it. He simply said this, "Bob, it is not how many times you go through the Bible. The reality of it is how many times the Bible goes through you. You cannot speed read the Bible, Bob, and you cannot, do not worry about reading it thirty-three times a day, because I want you to come to the conclusion that of all the things, if it would have been written down that the world itself could not contain it all, then that simply means, Bob, that I hand-picked. Out of everything else I did and said, I hand-picked what I wanted you to have and put it in the book. So every word, every phrase, every letter, every chapter, every punctuation mark, every italicized word, everything in it, I hand-picked and put it in there. Out of everything else I said, I took what I wanted you to have and put it in that book."

When I got that, I never looked at the Bible the same way ever again. It is God's book. Everything in it, He hand-picked for me. My greatest sorrow today is He did not do that for you. No, He did not. He did it for me. No, no, do not you tell me that. He did it for me. No, no, no, He is not going to do it for you. Not you. You are a character. He is not going to give you nothing. You have not got squat. He did not write that to you. You are from the planet Cola. He is not going to give you anything. Now, truth of the matter is, you can make that same claim to you. That same claim, it is your book. He wrote it to you. When He put everything in there, He gave it to you. It is your love letter from God to you, hand-picked out of everything else that He did.

You know what it does? It drives the scribes and the Pharisees crazy. Because you sit here today in this little podunk building with a bunch of little podunk people who would put all of our IQs together. We could not reach the moon. We have an absolute final authority. The absolute infallible Word of God. The thing that will guide you and give you everything in life according to faith and practice. Those two verses changed my life about the Bible. I never looked at the Bible ever again the same way. That is why I teach it to you the way I teach it. That is why I give it to you the way that I give it to you. That is why I will never be a good shepherd, but I will be the best sheepdog I can ever be. It is just simply the fact that that is what God has called us to do. Let us pray. Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. Now, Lord, we do love you. Now, Lord...