

KINGDOM SPIRIT



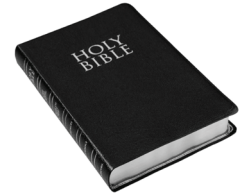
P O Box 279, Pleasant View, CO 81331

Phone 970-562-4874

e-mail ksm@fone.net

“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 909

PAUL'S EPISTLES TO THE CHURCHES

The Bible is divided into two Testaments, but I feel few people really understand why and what the real difference is between them. The book of Hebrews provides us this very important information. There are differing views as to who authored this book. I believe that Paul is generally credited with authorship of this very important book, probably due to the way it closes. The deepness of its doctrines limits authors to either Paul or Christ in my mind, but for purposes of our study, we will consider Paul to be the author.

As the name implies, it is addressed to the Hebrew, or Israelite people. Because this people, by virtue of God's sovereign choice (certainly not for anything they had done to deserve it or earn it), had a job to do as God's servant people, beyond that of any other nation, or people; this book deals with their special relationship to God and how they were to deal with it.

Very briefly, let us review our story to this point so we have everything in proper perspective. We have seen that God created the earth and all that is in it. The story centered around one man, Adam, whom God created and later his wife, Eve, whom God also created, using one of Adam's ribs from which to start. As this family grew, over several hundred years, the vast majority became very wicked causing God to destroy them all in a flood, except for one man, Noah, and his family. Noah's three sons began the job of repopulating the then known world and later a descendent of

one of the sons, Shem, was told by God to move to a new land. This man, Abraham, was obedient to God and did as God instructed him. Ultimately, though Abraham and his wife, Sarah, were childless, God made some very important unconditional promises to Abraham and his descendents. God then provided Abraham a son, Isaac, through a miracle birth and assured him that the promises had passed to him. Isaac then had twin sons, Jacob and Esau, and though Esau was born first and entitled to these promises, he sold the birthright to Jacob, thus Jacob became the inheritor of the promises. These promises included Abraham's descendents becoming a great nation, then many nations; rulers (kings) coming from them; great blessing from God and being a blessing to the earth and the nations of it; protection by God; the land of the mid-east; a promise of great numbers of people; possessing the gates of their enemies and probably most important of all, God would be their God.

Jacob, whose name was changed by God to Israel, then began the fulfillment of these promises, as he had twelve sons. While certainly the fulfillment of these promises began taking place, not always did things go well for Jacob-Israel and his seed. They ended up in bondage in Egypt, to be released and brought back by God to the land they were promised, through a man named Moses.

In the process of bringing this people through the wilderness to the Canaan land they had left several hundred years before while Jacob was still alive, God organized them into a nation and made a covenant with them that **“IF”** they would obey Him, He would make them **“a peculi-**

ar treasure unto me above all people”, “and ye shall become a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” (Ex. 19:5-6)

It is very important that we understand that this covenant was conditional. It was conditioned on obedience to God, and basically it promised what God had already promised to Abraham, and his seed, unconditionally. God gave Moses a series of laws by which this people were to govern themselves consisting of Commandments, Statutes, Judgments and Ordinances. These were the laws, the obedience to which, the promises of the covenant were conditioned on.

As we studied further, we saw that the children of Israel, though they had promised obedience, not only did not obey, but dreamed up other gods to worship and other laws of their own. Finally, God allowed them to have a king. King David and his son, Solomon, brought Israel, with God’s help, to their most glorious time. During this time, God made some unconditional promises to David, promising to establish David’s throne for ever.

However, following the death of Solomon, the kingdom was divided, as per God’s intent, and the scepter (throne) stayed with the southern kingdom consisting of Judah, Benjamin and part of the tribe of Levi. The birthright, however, stayed with the northern kingdom, which was made up of all the rest of Israel. Ultimately, because of their wickedness, Israel (Northern Kingdom) was removed from the land and carried away captive into the land of Assyria. Though God, through the prophets, indicated He was disowning (divorcing) Israel (Northern Kingdom), He still promised He would not forget them, but would ultimately restore them. This originally meant they would no longer share in the promises to Abraham, nor were they any longer under the covenant God made with Israel as they came out of Egypt. I’m not sure we realize the impact of this action by God. Though God promised He would re-gather them, we do not have Biblical record of this happening. We have to rely on the word of the prophets.

Judah (Southern Kingdom), in the meantime, remained in the land for a period, but finally

(again because of her wickedness) was taken captive into Babylon from which a remnant returned to Jerusalem seventy years later.

While in Babylon, Daniel, one of the young men taken captive by the Babylonians, worked his way into the very heart of the government of Babylon. God gave him understanding as to how, what is known as the Babylonian Succession of Empires, would rule the world for a time allowed by God, but that ultimately God’s kingdom (Israel) would destroy this succession of empires and God would rule all the earth in righteousness.

At the historical time of the New Testament, this was basically the situation with Rome, the fourth empire in the Babylonian succession, in power. Christ was born to a virgin in Bethlehem and when He was about thirty years old, He began His ministry proclaiming the “Gospel of the Kingdom.” Part of this gospel included the assertion that He would redeem Israel. Understanding God’s law, we understand that He bought them back out of servitude. The price of that redemption was His own life as He was crucified on the cross. But not only did this death on the cross serve to redeem Israel, God used this redemptive act to provide the acceptable sacrifice for forgiveness of all sin, again in accordance with His law. Several other things were accomplished by Christ’s death, burial and resurrection that we won’t discuss in this review.

Following Christ’s resurrection and ascension, we see the apostles begin to spread out from Jerusalem and see that many of the people they were going to were Israelites of the Northern Kingdom, now migrating westward from the land of their captivity as foretold by the prophets. In our King James Bible, these migrating Israelites are often called “gentiles.” Paul, an apostle chosen by Christ after His ascension, is especially noted for his missionary journeys. Paul traveled extensively into Asia and Europe and the “church” or “ecclesia”, “the called out ones,” grew in number daily. As these “gentiles” received the gospel, they, for the most part, responded in great numbers and became the backbone of the Christian church.

It is primarily to these people that the book of Hebrews is written and the instruction it holds was not only to help them with their job that God had for them, but also dealt with their personal relationship with Christ.

The book begins, **“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds: Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”** (Heb. 1:1-4)

Several scriptures are quoted testifying to the greatness and importance of Christ. Then in verse 1 of chapt. 2, he says **“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at anytime we should let them slip.”** This needs to be bold faced and underlined for emphasis in our minds. He goes on to question how we can escape the just penalty of our transgression and disobedience if we neglect the salvation that Jesus taught, and that has since been confirmed by those who heard Him in person. But not only was it confirmed by these, God also confirmed it in signs, wonders, various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was made a little lower than the angels, i.e. as a man so that He might suffer death, that He might be on a level on which we could relate. Heb. 2:16 says, **“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels: but he took on him the seed of Abraham.”**

Paul told us in Rom. 5:12, **“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”** The words **“for that”** should have been translated **“in which”** or **“in whom,”** i.e. it is because we die that we sin. This is usually taught to mean that we die because we sin, but I believe if one studies this carefully, we would see that we die because Adam sinned and that we now sin because of our fear of death.

This is confirmed in Heb. 2:14-15 where we are told that Jesus conquered death that He might deliver us all from the life time bondage, which is our fear of death. Then in verse 18, we read, **“For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.”** Jesus then was made a man that He might face the temptation of sin because of the fact that He too would die, like us, because of the sin of Adam, so that He could then aid or succor us in our temptation.

But though He was made man, we are assured in verses 6-8 that God has put the whole world in subjection to Him. Though this process of subjection is not yet complete, Jesus, through His suffering as man, is now complete, or perfect, as the captain, or author, of our salvation.

Paul is taking us to a higher level of understanding as he builds that structure of understanding by continuing in Heb. 3 to point out that Jesus is more worthy of honor than Moses, in that Jesus is the builder of the house in which Moses was but a faithful servant. He points out that we, the Israelite people, are that house, **“if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”** (Heb. 3:6) He admonishes us not to have an evil heart of unbelief, as those of the children of Israel had, in the wilderness, when they refused to go into the land of Canaan because of the presence of giants in the land. God swore to those, who had refused to go in, that they would not enter into His rest then, because of their unbelief.

I don't think we understand today what could have happened had the Israelite people believed and gone into God's rest. But the rest that could have been then was never again attained, even though the descendents of these people finally entered the land forty years later. But the rest that God is talking about is still to be entered into. Only then will we fully understand what could have been, had Israel believed there in the wilderness. Heb. 4:9 says, **“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.”** Vs. 11 then says, **“Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”**

If we look back at God's law in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, we find that part of that law, contained primarily in the Ordinances, was a requirement that a high priest (Aaron being the first) descended from Aaron was to always act as mediator between man and God. In Heb. 4:14, we are reminded of the law in that if we are to enter into the rest of God, which is being in the presence of God, we still need that high priest, but Paul tells us, **"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."** He continues in vs. 15, **"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."**

If we are astute in our Scriptures, the question would come to our minds: How can Jesus be our high priest since he is of the tribe of Judah, not that of Levi, and more specifically not a descendent of Aaron? Chapter 5 begins to explain how this happened. Paul explains that every high priest taken from among men is ordained to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He has to have compassion on the ignorant and those going astray because he has the same weakness. Because of this, when he offered a sin sacrifice for the people, he first had to offer a sin sacrifice for himself. He also points out that the honor of the office of priesthood is not one taken by man himself, but one which is appointed by God.

He points out that Christ did not glorify Himself to become a high priest, but that God said unto him in Psa. 2:7, **"Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee."** Then in Psa. 110:4, we're told, **"The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."** So it is God who chose Christ to be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Who is Melchizedek? and What happened to the order of Aaron? These are questions that Paul then sets out to answer, as the understanding of the difference between the new covenant and the first (or old) covenant, the New Testament and the Old testament, is conditioned on our understanding the answers to these questions. We will look

at those answers next issue. In the meantime, in addition to the book of Hebrews, please also read Gen. 14 in preparation. **JRL**

REPENTANCE

To a great number of people, if or when they hear someone expound on the need to repent, it is someone else that this applies to, not them. Before we find ourselves guilty of this kind of thinking, let's discuss this subject a little.

What might be a surprise to many is the word "repent" does not mean the same thing in the Old Testament that it does in the New Testament. So for starters, let's consult Dr. Strong in his concordance as to meanings of the words translated "repent." There are two Hebrew words translated "repent" in the Old Testament and two Greek words translated repent in the New Testament. First, let's look at the Hebrew words.

#5162 - *nacham* - a primary root; properly *to sigh*, i.e. *breathe strongly*, by implication *to be sorry*, i.e. (in a favorable sense) *to pity, console* or (reflexively) *rue*; or (unfavorably) *to avenge* (oneself).

This is the most commonly used word and we find it in verses such as Gen. 6:6, **"And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."** (sighed or was sorry); Judges 2:18, **"And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groaning by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them."** (moved to pity by the LORD); and II Samuel 24:16, **"And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand."** (took pity or relented).

#7725 - *shub* - a primary root, *to turn back* (hence, away) transitive or intransitive, literally or figuratively (not necessarily with the intent of *return* to the starting point); generally *to retreat*.

This word is only used three times in the O.T. Ezekiel 14:6 says, **“Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.”** (turn away from).

We find a number of scriptures in which we are told the LORD repented. Our usual thinking, based on the N.T. thinking is that this means that God changed His mind. Remember Malachi 3:6, **For I am the LORD, I change not.** If He changes not, then He can’t change His mind. So we have to consider these definitions.

In the New Testament, the Greek word used most is *metanoeo*. It is # 3340 in Strong’s Concordance. *Metanoeo* is defined as: *to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider (morally - feel compunction).*

We find it in verses like Matt. 3:2 where John the Baptist is saying, **“Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”**; Luke 17:3 where Christ is speaking, **“Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.”** or Acts 3:19 where Peter is preaching, **“Repent ye therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”**

The Greek word *metamellomai* appears three times in the N.T. and is #3338 in Strong’s Concordance. It is defined as *to care afterwards, i.e. regret*. We find it twice in II Cor. 7:8, **“For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.”** We also find it in Heb. 7:21 where Paul is quoting Psa. 110:4, **“The Lord sware and will not repent, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.”**

I would like to deal primarily with the Greek word *metanoeo* in this article.

When our Lord first began His ministry, repentance was part of His main theme. Matt. 4:17 tells us, **“From that time (speaking of the beginning of His ministry) Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”** This remained the theme of

the apostles as well. Following Pentecost when the apostles received the Holy Spirit and began their ministry, Peter in his first sermon said in Acts 2:38, **“Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”** In the book of Revelation, the word “repent” or “repented” appears seven times in just chapters 2 and 3 alone where Jesus is instructing John about the seven churches. So I believe we can conclude that it is a very important component in a Christian’s life.

Let’s play with the hypothetical for a little bit. Let’s suppose that a person has repented, i.e. has turned from his or her worldly ways and determined to follow Christ. Once that person has repented, he or she should not have to repent again, right? Theoretically the answer is yes. In fact Jesus indicates there are those who are not in need of repentance. In Luke 15, we find the parable of the man having one hundred sheep, one of which went astray. Jesus says the man would leave the ninety-nine to search for the one which went astray. He says it is likewise with God. Verse 7 tells us, **“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”**

However, this does not mean that once a person has repented, he never needs to repent again. Keep in mind something the apostle Paul tells us in Romans 7:14-15, **For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not: but what I hate, that I do.”** I believe all of us can relate to this. Our problem is that we (I am assuming that most of you are like me in this) let pride get between us and confessing that we are like what Paul describes here. We refuse to admit, even to ourselves, that we do something wrong. Unfortunately, many other people have bought into the doctrine that the law (of God) has been done away with and have consciously or unconsciously subscribed to the thought that **“where there is not law there is no sin.”** This is truly unfortunate. It displays an ignorance of God’s law as well as an

ignorance of the application of the law as taught in virtually all of the epistles. However this is another subject that detracts from our subject of study.

Something that Jesus taught the disciples is relevant to our study here. In Luke 17:3-4, which we have partially quoted already, He says that if a person trespasses against us seven times in a day, yet seven times in a day turns and says that he or she repents, we are to forgive him or her seven times in a day. The same principle applies in our relationship with our Lord. The apostle John tells us in I John 1:9, **“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** The problem is that we have to confess or repent. We must not let pride, or anything else, keep us from repenting when ever we sin. If we have not sinned, there is no need of repentance, but who of us can honestly claim that distinction, no matter how long we have been a Christian, or how strong we are in our faith.

Repentance is not just a personal thing. Nations need to repent as well, especially was and is this true of Israel. I suggest reading Deuteronomy 28. God first gives a list of blessings Israel will receive if they are obedient to God. Then He gives a list of curses that will come upon Israel if they are disobedient. If the curses were put in modern terminology, I believe we would all be surprised at how many of the curses are upon us now. Though we have not gone into captivity to another land, there is no question but that we are in captivity within our own land and the curses are becoming increasingly severe, such as storms, floods, disease, drought, economics, etc. Deut. 30:1-3 gives us the solution. **“And shall return unto the LORD thy God,”** is basically the same as “repent” as we have been looking at it in the New Testament.

So, how does a nation repent? Ultimately, our leadership has to repent, both personally and for the nation. But, this has to begin with each one of us. We must first repent and turn ourselves totally to our Lord and as Deut. 30:2 says, **“obey his voice.”** Then we need to pray that God will grant repentance. Acts 5:31 says, speaking of

Christ, **“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”** That our Father would grant a repentance across our land needs to be a part of our daily prayer as we ask for forgiveness, not only for ourselves but for our nation as well. JRL

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

(Read John 6:1-3) The sea of Galilee is about 13 miles long and as wide as 7 miles. It lies 695 ft below sea level. The Jordan River runs through it thus keeping the water “sweet” unlike the Dead Sea. Its fisheries were famous throughout the Roman Empire. Due to its location in the Jordan valley and being surrounded by hills it was subject to atmospheric draughts and sudden storms.

(Read John 6:4-13) John mentions that Passover time was at hand as this has significance as to the meaning of what takes place next. We’ll see this significance when we get to Jesus’ discussion of this 4th sign. A penny was the same value as the Roman denarii, which was a normal day’s wages. So Philip is saying that 200 denarii’s worth of bread would not be enough for each to only have a little. Jesus doesn’t explain this 4th sign until after the 5th sign had taken place, but keep in mind that Jesus instructed them to pick up everything that was left and that they picked up 12 baskets full.

(Read John 6:14-15) This had to be a confusing time to the people. Finally, after seeing this miracle of feeding 5000 men (there were probably an equal number or more of women and children as well) many of the men realized that Jesus was truly the Messiah or the Prophet prophesied by Moses in Deut. 18:18. Realizing this meant that He should be king if He were to deliver them from the Romans as they expected, they set out to take Him by force and make Him king. However, Jesus perceived what they were about to do and slipped away from them and went up the mountain by Himself. Everything that happens here has significance that we want to discuss as soon as we look at the 5th sign that Jesus performed.

(Read John 6:16-21) A furlong is 202 yards, so the disciples had rowed about 2.75 to 3.5 miles when they saw Jesus coming to them walking on the sea. This would have put them about to the middle of

the sea. We're told that when they saw this, they were afraid. I suspect that is putting it mildly. But notice that walking on the water is just part of the miracle. As soon as they had taken Jesus into the ship, they were immediately at Capernaum.

(Read John 6:22-27) We need to think back to verses 14-15 for a moment. To understand what it was that made the men believe that Jesus was "that Prophet", we need to understand a tradition that was being taught. A quote from the Midrash (according to my College Dictionary = 1. an early Jewish interpretation of or commentary on a Biblical text. 2. [cap.] a collection of such interpretations or commentaries.) says, "The former Redeemer (Moses) caused manna to descend for them; in like manner shall our latter Redeemer (Messiah) cause manna to come down, as it is written: 'There shall be a handful of corn in the earth' (Psa. 72:16)." Apparently, when the men who were part of the 5000 who were fed saw the miracle of feeding the 5000 on 5 loaves and 2 fish, they believed this interpretation to have come to pass and that Jesus was the Messiah. When they found Jesus at Capernaum, they asked Him when He came to Capernaum, since they had not seen Him go nor were there any boats for Him to go on after the disciples left in theirs. His answer is directly to the point, though they had not got that far in their questions yet. He said, **"Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."** He knew where they were going with their questioning and knew that because they had seen the miracle of the feeding of the 5000, and because of the Midrash teaching, considered Him to be "that Prophet," so He says it was because of this that they wanted to make Him king, not because of the other miracles He had done. Then He followed this part of His answer with verse 27, **"Labour not for the meat (food) which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting (aionois=age lasting) life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."**

(Read John 6:28-33) Apparently thinking this meant something that they had to do, they asked what they needed to do to **"work the works of God"**? Jesus' answer was that believing on Him was the work of God. Then they wanted a sign to prove that He was truly the Messiah, offering the example that Moses gave the Israelites manna from heaven while they were in the desert during the exodus. Jesus is talking about one thing, and they, not understanding, are talking about another. Jesus is talking about the true bread,

Himself, while they are still thinking of physical food. So Jesus told them in verse 32, that Moses did not give them the true bread, but His Father gives them the true bread, **"he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."**

(Read John 6:34-40) The Greek word translated "evermore" in verse 34 is "*pantote*" and means always, or at all time. The crowd is still thinking of some kind of physical food. But Jesus surprises them with His answer in verse 35. **"I am the bread of life"** is a figure of speech known as a Metaphor. A Metaphor is a declaration that one thing is (or represents) another. John records 7 (spiritual perfection) such Metaphors in this Gospel: I am the Bread of Life (here in chapter 6); the Light of the world (8:12; 9:5); the Door of the sheep (10:7, 9); the Good Shepherd (10:11, 14); the Resurrection and the Life (11:25); the true and living Way (14:6); the true Vine (15:1, 5).

Now we have a reason for the feeding of the 5000, Jesus used that miracle, or sign, as a demonstration to emphasize metaphorically that He is the Bread of Life, or the True Life Giver. The fact that Jesus instructed His disciples to pick up everything that was left over is part of the demonstration as well. In verse 39 Jesus says, **"And this is the Father's will Which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."** Of all that the Father gives Him, nothing, or no one is to be lost, all will be gathered up. Going back to verse 35, the English translation of the King James and other translations does not do justice to the emphasis that is placed on the words "never" as never hunger and never thirst. In the Greek these statements are very emphatic saying "in no wise at any time!"

These people have asked for a sign that Jesus is the Messiah after seeing and participating in the feeding of the 5000 and seeing other miracles that Jesus has done. Jesus tells them that in addition to this they have seen Him and they still don't believe. To throw even more confusion to them, He says that He came down from heaven to do the will of the Father and all that come to Him He will in no wise cast out. The term **"at the last day"**, according to Dr. Bullinger, "was used idiomatically for 'the age to come.'" Again everlasting life means age lasting life.

(Read John 6:41-47) The Jews cannot grasp the spiritual meaning of what Jesus is saying to them. They seem only to be able to think materially. That He said, **"I am the bread which came down from heaven."** really bothered them both from the stand-

point that He claimed to be “bread” and that He came down from heaven. To them He was the son of Joseph and Mary, whom they all knew, so how could He come down from heaven?

Jesus doesn't stop to try to get them to thinking spiritually, but He answers them as if they understood spiritually. But His answer is interesting and throws in another element that probably added to their confusion as well as confusion for many today. **“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:”** indicates that God is sovereign, has a plan, and chooses who He wants to do what. The word “draw” is from the Greek “*helkuo*” and according to Strong's Concordance means “to *drag* (lit. or fig.)” He confirms this in verse 45. Quoting from Isa. 54:13, He says that they shall all be taught of God, and every man that hath heard and learned from the Father comes unto Jesus. In Isa. 54:13, Isaiah is speaking to Israel and tells them **“And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.”** Here in John, Jesus is saying this will happen even though no man hath seen the Father with the exception of Himself. But who ever believes in Jesus will have age lasting life.

(Read John 6:48-51) Jesus repeats the Metaphor that He is the bread of life and then continues to elaborate on it. However, the Jews cannot get it. **“My flesh”** is a figure of speech meaning “Myself” thus telling these Jews that the bread was Himself that He would give for the life of the world. This last phrase in verse 51 is not in most of the original texts but does explain what Jesus is saying a little better, though until His crucifixion and resurrection, it would be something very difficult to understand, especially to anyone who could not think spiritually. (Read John 6:52-59) Jesus doesn't make it any easier for them but only elaborates Metaphorically on the same subject finally telling them that whosoever eats of Him shall live for the age. This should not have been that difficult for them to understand as “eating” to the Jews, as with us,

included the meaning of “enjoyment”. Because of its common use in this sense, it would not have been unusual for Jesus to be using this as a means to teach, but the Jews simply refused to understand.

By this time, many of His disciples had become confused and admittedly did not understand what He was teaching. (Read John 6:60-65) In effect, Jesus is saying, does this cause you to stumble? If you should behold the Son of man ascending up where He was before, will ye be offended then? He then explained that He was speaking spiritual things. It is the Spirit that gives life, life in the age and beyond. The flesh profiteth nothing, i.e. it is not the physical bread that we eat that we should be concerned about, but rather the spiritual bread that He offered in Himself that should be our concern. His words were Spirit and they are the Life we want to be concerned with. However, still some of disciples really did not believe, the most notable being Judas Iscariot. Jesus, acknowledging that there were some, even among His disciples that did not believe, repeated that none could come unto Him except the Father give them unto Him, or draw them to Him.

(Read John 6:66-71) Many of the disciples, though not any of the twelve, stopped following Jesus after this. When the twelve were asked if they too would go away, Peter's answer is classic, **“Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”** Jesus acknowledges that He had chosen them, but that one would ultimately betray Him.

If we keep in mind the feeding of the 5000 as we consider this lesson, I believe it will help our understanding. We'll look at chapter 7 next week with the 5th sign, the walking on water, in mind. JRL

You may be disappointed if you fail, but you are doomed if you do not try.