

“First Impressions”

(John 1:35-51)

October 9, 2011

Order of Worship for October 9, 2011

Pre-service Song

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship: and Prayer

Songs of Worship:

“Come, Now is the Time for Worship”

Overhead

“O Worship the King”

Song # 104

“Prince of Peace”

Overhead

“Glorify Thy Name”

Song # 9

Offering and Offertory

Special Music:

Message:

“First Impressions” (John 1:26-34 & 35-51)
by Pastor Bronson

Closing Song:

“Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us”

Song # 688

Parting Word of Grace

Sunday Evening in the Word
Hebrews 13, Preparing for the Coming Kingdom
5:30 to 7:00
The Henneker Music Building

"The Prayer Closet"

October 9, 2011

"Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving."

(Colossians 4:2a)

This week let us be united in praying that:

1. **Vance and Carol Johnson: Evangelical Theological college of the Philippines:** God will protect the school, students and faculty through the typhoon season; the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace will be clear in the hearts of the churches and the school; the Spirit will bring many to conviction of sin for repentance and faith in Christ
2. **President Obama:** the Spirit will work a discerning mind in him to distinguish between true and false, good and evil, and the prudent rather than the foolish; the Lord will turn his heart to pursue and establish the righteousness of the kingdom in our nation.
3. **Board of Elders:** they will have unity of mind and spirit in overseeing and developing the ministries of the congregation; they will be united in prayer to seek the Lord's direction; they will have the Spirit's wisdom in responding to the needs of individuals both inside and outside the church for spiritual direction and personal well-being
4. **Military or Public Service Personnel of the Week: Army SPC Rebecca M. Wagenaar** (sister of Pam Cervantes): that her back heal, the injury from the accident 2 years ago still cuase3s her daily paina dn the military still hasn't decided how to proceed in regards to her back pain
5. **Young Adult of the Week: Aaron Bowen at Butte College** (son of Dr. Randy and Ruth Bowen): that his shoulder continue to strengthen and heal so that he can go back to volunteer fire fighting; that he can decide between paramedic and police work at school.

Before we turn to John I, I want you to turn there, but before we bring our attention there, I want to say a few things about grace, not a person, but God’s action. Grace, as I think most of us know, is the unmerited or unearned favor of God. Our God is gracious. I imagine that most of us, if we are reflective and honest, can look back over this week and recognize times and places and ways in which God dealt with us not as we should have been according to what we did or didn’t do, but out of the abundance of His kindness, His patience, His goodness, His mercy, and we just say thank-you Lord for Your goodness to us. Because God is wise and because God is powerful, and because we know that God delights to love His children and therefore to bless them, sometimes we have a difficulty keeping the distinction clear between grace and magic. How can that be? A lot of us think of magic as the sort of stuff the Kinnemont family does. But there is a deeper strain of magic. Here is a perfect example: have you ever done this? I hope you haven’t, but I’m suspicious that you have! When I listen to some play the piano like [Tara Wixom did] I say to God, “God, let me play the piano like that! Let me walk over to my piano at home, let me sit down, let me push the peddle, [and touch the keys and make lovely music!] Well, why wouldn’t He? He is powerful, He is good, and I would desire to praise Him. But He doesn’t! But we wish He did! That illustration, of course, is light and trivial, but there are other illustrations that are not.

What is it about magic and what is it about grace that holds them in distinction. Let’s think about magic for a moment. Magical power is seen as getting what we want without going through normal and normally rather difficult and possibly even painful channels. You wave the wand, you speak the incantation, you drink the potion and whatever it is, zappo! Magic, you see, is not dependent on the moral character of the one using it. That’s part of why it is magic. Magic does not hinge upon character. Magic is access to power. Magic works for whoever knows the secrets of its operation. Magic serves the purpose of the user: that’s what makes it so attractive. Magic greatly increases our power.

Now I want you to stop you for one moment and look at that list and change the word to “technology”, or, if you will, “science”. There is a last statement [on this issue]. Notoriously magical power is very likely to corrupt the character rather than to correct bad character, and leads sooner or later to self-destruction as the one with magic tends to lose track of the nature and limits of reality. You need to know – and for those of you who are not acquainted with this, before the Lord called me to be a pastor, my area of study was the connection between early modern science and Christianity. The reality of the fact is that modern science came out of the study of magic. We are today in the grip of a magical approach to the use of science and technology which replaces character with power, and leads progressively to a loss of the sense of reality and corrupts the human soul.

What about grace? Grace is not initially or primarily dependent on the moral character of the one who receives it. True? Better be! All I just said is that grace is grace. Grace, God’s grace, does not come to me based on how good I am. That is a good thing, or nobody I know would be getting any grace. However, grace is wholly dependent on the character of the One who gives it. God’s grace is the power of God working to bless those who have faith in Him. Grace as a matter of fact works in us as much as it does for us. Grace is primarily designed to enable us to know God’s will and to do it. That is what grace is about. Grace is the action of God to bring us salvation, that is, well-being, rescuing us from the controlling power of sin and the judgment of death which is sin’s final manifestation, separating us from the life and light of God. The objective or the goal of grace is to change us from distorted or broken humans to healed or whole humans, fulfilling the image and likeness of God. God accomplishes this by capturing our hearts with his love and faithfulness and our minds with his truth working with us to transform us. That is grace. Our tendency to confuse grace with magic shows up in our lack of clarity and understanding about the dynamics of prayer, the walk of faith and the ways of God’s care for us as His children. This confusion is seen when people try to use God’s grace for personal ends, while remaining both ignorant of and indifferent to the purposes of God and the character of God as revealed in Christ. What I have just said to you should help any of us when we approach the word of God, and approach our God, to understand why sometimes the experience of grace is troublesome. Because, you see, whereas magic empowers me, grace causes me to bow before the power of God. And, oh my, what a difference that is!

Now let's turn to John 1. As I mentioned, the passage is 35-51 and then by the grace of God 3:22-30 if we get there! The title is “First Impressions”. I will come back to this, but I want to mention this just now: how many had a clear, strong impression of Steve Jobs before he died? I did. I want us to think about that at the end of the message. First I want to read this passage. Begin with me at verse 35 of chapter 1.

“The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God!’ the two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, ‘What are you seeking?’ and they said to him, ‘‘Rabbi’ (which means Teacher), ‘where are you staying?’ He said to them, ‘Come and you will see.’ So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, ‘So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas’ (which means Peter).

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, ‘Follow me.’ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’ Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.’ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!’ Nathanael said to him, ‘How do you know me?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.’ Nathanael answered him, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!’ Jesus answered him, ‘Because I said to you, ‘‘I saw you under the fig tree,’’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.’ And he said to him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.’”

“First Impressions”: John’s Gospel presents some challenging contrasts with other Gospels if you are familiar with them. There is an immense difficulty that arises almost at once when you read through the opening chapters. By the time you get done reading the first chapter of John’s Gospel it looks as if the disciples already know that Jesus is the Son of God, He is the Messiah, He is the Lamb of God: it’s all done, they’ve got it! Often times I have heard this passage preached exactly that way. But if you go and look at the other Gospels, you quickly realize the disciples didn’t have a clue. They were entirely confused about who Jesus was. It was not until the middle of Matthew – in fact if you go and look at Matthew 16:16-17 – where you read this. This comes out of the mouth of Peter and Jesus. Remember what we just heard from John 1. Listen to this little exchange in Matthew 16. *“Simon Peter replied [to Jesus’s question, “who do you say I am?”], ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.’ And Jesus answered him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.’”* But we wonder, don’t we: you hear that, that is about one and a half years into the ministry of Jesus and suddenly Peter’s got it. And yet in John 1:40-41 Peter’s brother Andrew already knew it all. *“One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah (which means Christ).’”* So...

To understand this we need to read what John says correctly. For that purpose let us take up again John’s words beginning with verse 25 of chapter 1. Here are the representatives probably from the Pharisees who come and they ask John the Baptist, “What are you up to, what are you doing?” This is what they said,

“Why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?’ John answered them, ‘I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.’ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.’ And John bore witness: ‘I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to

baptize with water said to me, “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.” And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

What we learn here is something about the first impressions that John the Baptist had of Jesus when he met him. What we learn is that even though rendered probably uncommonly perceptive John the Baptist being fully indwelt by the Holy Spirit still John the Baptist had to wait for a special revelation from the Spirit in order to know who Jesus really was. Did you hear what he said? You see, John did not accurately understand who Jesus was before he baptized Him. When he did, he needed a direct revelation. Hear it again.

“The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, “After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.’ And John bore witness: ‘I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.” And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

John was emphatic: “I did not know him.” What did he not know and what did he know? If we look to Matthew [3]:13-17 is the account of the baptism of Jesus. This is what we read:

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him, and behold, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

If you are like me, when you read Matthew 3:13-17, you read those verses and you assume that John’s hesitation to baptize Jesus is because he says, “Jesus, you are the Messiah, you are the Son of God; I shouldn’t be baptizing you, you should be baptizing me!” That is how I usually read it. But the problem is that that can’t be true, because according to John’s own testimony he does not know Jesus is the Son of God until after he baptizes him. So, we say to ourselves, how do I understand what John’s words are? Well, John was filled with the Holy Spirit. He probably knew a few things about his cousin Jesus. He probably intuitively recognized in this man a man of remarkable goodness, remarkable knowledge of the Word of God, remarkable consistency in the integrity of his walk, and he probably said, “Look, as between you and me, brother, you are the one who ought to be baptizing! I do not begin to compare in the quality and the depth of my piety and my love for God like you do!”

But beyond just that, if we attend to what we are told in Matthew 3:17 and John 1:44 is that what John did not know before [baptizing him] was that Jesus was divine. This is what had to penetrate his understanding. It was not what the Jews expected. For them the Messiah was a chosen man. He was not divine. This is what John did not know and could not possibly have guessed. It required the Spirit’s revealing the truth to him. The Son of God was divine! Now, you must know that in the Old Testament and at places in the New Testament the term “Son of God” does not necessarily refer to a divine being, but rather to a member of the covenant. The essence of salvation is knowing who Jesus really is and believing in him as he really is. The testimony or the witness of John is that even in Jesus presence, and perhaps, as I mentioned, having received reports about his preaching, John still did not know who Jesus really was. What this tells us is that it is the Spirit who opens our eyes and awakens our understanding to know and to believe.

What we begin to recognize is that it is not enough to simply hear and assent or agree to correct words. John declared to those around him that Jesus was the Son of God. We know what that meant; they did not know what it meant. The title itself was used by Daniel referring to the One who God would send to restore Israel to pre-eminence amongst the people and nations of the world. If you turn to Daniel 7:13-14 you will read about this remarkable man. *“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion,*

which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.” To us this is perfectly obvious who that is. That is Jesus. That is the divine Son of God. That is the Savior. That is the Lord of lords, the King of kings who establishes the unending reign of God upon the face of the earth. We know that. But they didn’t. Nor did they expect that the Messiah would be divine. For them this was a typical example of prophetic exaggeration. We read it today [in the call to worship.] How many have seen trees clapping? Oh, doesn’t happen! And so they interpreted this as being a reference to some heir of David. Were they right? They were right. But they were only half right. The important thing about being half right is that you are also half wrong. When you operate on half wrong you can sometimes end in very dangerous places. And indeed, dangers have accompanied the gospel from its very beginning.

In one sense we might say this is just an historical problem: Jesus has not yet been crucified and resurrected. There is, however, more to the matter. Turn with me to John 16:8-10. This is a part of the “Upper Room Discourse”, the body of teaching that Jesus gave to his disciples on the night in which he was betrayed, was arrested and goes off to mock trials and crucifixion. At this point he is preparing his men for what is going to happen after he is gone. This is what he says: *“When the Spirit comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”* A couple of conclusion and observations: anyone can teach or educate others about this and that about God and Christ and being saved. Anybody can do that. But it is only the Holy Spirit that brings conviction to the heart so as to prepare a person for salvation, for the edification of the soul with spiritual truth: only the Holy Spirit.

If we go back to John 1:35-51 we read of the first disciples. That is where we started. They have heard John’s witness: John has said, *“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”* John has said, *“This is the Son of God.”* Now I want you to notice that when, in v. 38, the disciples – at this point it is just Simon – he meets Jesus and what does he say to Jesus? *“Rabbi!”* Rabbi? If I am walking up to someone and I am persuaded this is the Son of God, the Messiah who has come, divinely ordained, the Ruler of all Time, the Lamb of God who is going to take away the sin of the world and I walk up and say, “Hi teacher”, there is just a disproportion, there is something way out of balance here. Of course, he didn’t think He was divine; he couldn’t think He was divine. The Jews were taught from the cradle that there is no such connection; no human being is ever divine. No body mixes up God and humanity. Peter and Andrew were still far from understanding who Jesus was.

Let us go on to verses 43-51. Here we encounter Philip and Nathanael.

“The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, ‘Follow me.’ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’ Nathanael said to him, ‘Can any good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.’ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, ‘behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit; Nathanael said to him, ‘How did you know me?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.’ [I am now going to edit: And Nathanael thought, ‘Amazing! That is amazing. O my goodness, how could he possibly have seen me? You are the Son of God!’ And Jesus says,] ‘Because I said to you, “I saw you under the fig tree,” do you believe? [Then you must note very carefully what Jesus goes on to say:] “You will see greater things than these.’ And he said to him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

Reading these verse as those who know Jesus as the Son of the Father [sent] to save the lost by means of His freely given death for the sins of humanity and who by this means also is exalted as the King of kings and Lord of lords, we are irresistibly drawn to the conclusion that this is just what the disciples believed about Jesus as well. But they could not. Again, it is important to realize no Jew expected the Messiah to be anything more than a man, surely a man of the family and lineage of David, but only man. When Philip says to Nathanael that he thinks Jesus is the Prophet of whom Moses wrote, there is no thought of Jesus being the One who through His death and resurrection would provide salvation from God’s judgment on sin for those who would believe. This is not to minimize Philip’s

excitement. Philip is extremely excited. Long ago God promise through Moses that He would provide another prophet like Moses. How many of you know that Moses was not a perfect man? Right! So, another one like Moses! What was unique about Moses? Moses talked face to face to God. That is exciting I think. He talked face to face with God. That is exciting. His face glowed; it was remarkable. Was he excited that the prophet’s promise was coming? Sure he was excited, but he was not excited because it was the Son of God. This is what we think, because we know, but he didn’t know.

Same is true for Nathanael. In fact as my reading interpretation [implied], I think it is a reasonable understanding of the little dialogue which John records with Jesus that Jesus is actually poking a bit of fun at Nathanael. After all there is no reason to suppose that Jesus hadn’t seen Nathanael under the fig tree by perfectly natural [means]. And He is sending a warning: Nathanael is perhaps somewhat too ready to believe remarkable things, and that readiness is very dangerous in a world that has deceivers and false teachers in it. Can’t you and I identify with that? Can’t you and I bring to mind long lists of very dramatic, very exciting, very dynamic teachers who lead people straight to the pit of hell? O yes, we can.

Go back again and look at verse 51 of chapter 1. Do you recognize whom Jesus is referring to there? When He says, “Truly, truly I say to you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the son of man,” do you recognize that? You should, that is a reference to Jacob and Jacob’s ladder. If you were wise, you would go immediately in your scriptures right back to Genesis and say to yourself “I want to be absolutely certain that I know what Jesus is referring to so I can understand why that allusion is so relevant to what is being said at that moment to Nathanael. How did Jesus describe Nathanael when he saw him? “A man without deceit.” What does the name “Jacob” mean? “Deceiver” What I think you and I have been presented here by God is the opportunity to recognize that God in His grace does not deal with us according to our moral qualities, but He deals with us out of the generosity of His loving heart. He is quite willing to reveal Himself to Nathanael, a man with no deceit, but he will also reveal Himself to Jacob, a man who was indeed a deceiver. So perhaps there are some in this room who hesitate to enter into the presence of God or to seek His face or to expect His blessing, because you are “too corrupt.” You are wrong [to think so]. God doesn’t bless us because we are so good we deserve His blessings. God blesses the deceivers. Here He alludes to the remarkable grace of God; Jesus alludes to this fact, that He comes to Jacob and makes him know who God is. He will do the same for you. There is a message here which is essential for us to fix in our hearts.

Turn with me to chapter 3:22-30. What we have had introduced in the first chapter is driven home in these verses. This is what we read:

“After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing. John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized (for John had not yet been put in prison).”

We do not exactly how much later this was, but it was a while. Jesus has launched his preaching ministry and people had begun to follow after Jesus. Like John, Jesus calls people to prepare for the coming of the kingdom. This call includes moral reform and a ritual of baptism as a form of purification. That is why the question of purification comes up in v. 25. What was of concern is not obvious from the question itself. Notice:

“Now a discussion arose between some of John’s disciples and a Jew over purification. And they came to John and said to him, ‘Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him.’ John answered, ‘A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, “I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.”’ The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease.”

Almost always in the gospels the name “Jew” refers to the Pharisees, Jesus’ greatest opponents, so it is likely in their question here – why is he baptizing? – there was ill will. Perhaps they were seeking to sow discord between John and Jesus, to plant a spirit of competition, distrust or even jealousy. Why do I name competition, distrust or

jealousy? Because they are so common. Human beings are constantly ripping each other to shreds based upon those three passions in the corrupted heart. Notice John’s response: *“A person can receive nothing, not even one thing, unless it is given from heaven.”* Which is to say, by God. John’s statement draws our attention to God. That is what John does. John is a witness. Are we confused, unsure, unknowing? Do we struggle to understand the Word, to understand the preacher, to understand how God is dealing with us? A man can receive nothing unless it is given from heaven. “What should I do?” Seek heaven. Pray. Pray. Pray. We are a hasty people. We expect God to answer quickly or too bad for God. But if we rush on before He has answered, guess what: we don’t know anything. “But John, I know all the right words!” So? “I can give you a solid scriptural defense for everything I’ve done.” So? Our first appeal must be to God that He would instruct us. All knowledge is from God. We need to set the teaching of men aside. We must lay hold of the promise of grace. What does God say? “Call on Me, and I will answer.” “But I’ve been waiting for four hours!” Or two weeks? Or four years? “I have things to do!” Go do them, but don’t stop praying, don’t stop seeking the Lord’s face, don’t stop waiting so that He will give you instructions that you desire.

There is an application. The first thing that we need to ask and discover about any person is whether or not they seek God and seek God’s truth. For if you are dealing with a person who does not seek God and God’s truth, then they don’t know anything. There is a second thing. The second thing we must do is we must discover whether or not a person loves and honors God more than him or her self. Do you notice that about John? “I am not the bridegroom; I am the friend. And as the friend of the bridegroom, my greatest joy is to hear the bridegroom’s voice and then to see the bride come to the bridegroom. That is my joy!” So we need to ask whether or not the person whose ministry you have responded to is a ministry that takes its greatest joy in the words of Jesus and delights to see people come and follow Jesus, not the ministry.

I was very impressed with Steve Jobs: creative genius, business genius. Then I read a little bit of biography. Maybe some of you did too. He robbed one of his earliest partners, cheated him. He was a tyrant, tongue-lashed his workers. Nice guy! Genius. Not for nothing, perhaps, decided that they would not carry any form of Christian ministry. Did you know that? You should. First impressions. They are very dangerous. We need to pray, and ask the Lord to give us wisdom.

Let us pray together: gracious Father in heaven, help us. It is not easy for us to pray. We like to be in charge. It is not easy for us to pray, because we are always in a hurry. It is not easy for us to pray, because in fact, Father, it is not easy for us to listen. Help us, we pray, in Jesus name. Amen.

Questions for Understanding and Application:

1. How would explain to someone the seeming similarities and the real difference between grace and magic? (see Acts 8:39; John 6:5-14 and 15; 16-21)
2. What is the difference between wanting magical power and wanting grace?
3. Have you or anyone you know ever tried to use God’s grace for personal goals?
4. What is necessary for a person to be saved, or, what is the difference between education of the mind and edification of the spirit?
5. What are some examples of deficient or misleading understanding of such titles as “Messiah”, “son of God”, “Savior” and the like?
6. What was the major difficulty for John the Baptist and the first of Jesus disciples knowing and believing the truth about Jesus? Is this a major difficulty for people today?
7. What is the practical response to the scriptural truth that it is only God who can enable a sinner to know and believe the truth?
8. What two things are most essential to discover about a person who seeks to be a preacher or teacher of spiritual truth?
9. What are some examples of false preachers/teachers and who are some genuine examples?