

# G R A C E

Reformed Baptist Church

Soli   ◇   Deo   ◇   Gloria

## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

### Sermon Notes

#### *Jesus' Words to His Disciples*

John 6:59-65

June 12, 2005

- This section takes place during the Passover one year prior to the Passover of the Crucifixion.

#### Verse 59

- This passage is significant because it reveals the openness and boldness with which Jesus spoke the Truth concerning Himself as the Son of Man throughout public places, such as synagogues and the temple
  - Matthew 13:54
  - Mark 1:21; 6:2
  - Luke 4:15; 6:6
- **Jesus had a very public ministry...just as each believer in Him should as well.**
- Jesus mentions this truth when questioned by the high priest [actually, the former high priest and father-in-law of the current high priest, Caiaphas] Annas at the beginning of His trial
  - John 18:19-21
- It appears that some first century synagogues possibly allowed the exchange / debate that we see in this section.

#### Verse 60

- The term, here, “disciples” is NOT the same as “The Twelve”
- In this context, a “disciple” is NOT necessarily a Christian
- A Christian is someone chosen and drawn by the Father, given to and preserved by the Son, quicken / born-again and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

- In short, a Christian is one saved by grace through [genuine] faith.
- However, a “disciple” is “someone who is at that point following Jesus, either literally by joining the group that pursued him from place to place, or metaphorically in regarding him as the authoritative teacher.”
  - In the same way that there are different types of faith [Read John 2:23-25], there are different types of disciples
  - Today, many people throughout the world refer to themselves as “Christians” [2.1 billion, to be exact – 1/3 of the world’s total population]; yet, not all are truly believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The “disciples” here state, “This is a **difficult** statement; who can listen to it?”
  - The Greek word, here, for **difficult** is *skel(ay)ros*, σκι ἡρός [also in Matthew 25:24; Acts 26:14; James 3:4; Jude 15]
    - *Skelayros* does NOT mean “hard or difficult to understand”; rather, it means “harsh” or “offensive.”
- Given the context of this chapter, there were several reasons why the words of Jesus offended the “disciples”:
  1. They cared more about their physical needs being met [physical bread/food, physical messiah/king, self-serving miracles, etc.] than their spiritual needs [John 6:15, 34]
  2. Jesus claimed superiority to Moses [6:32-35]
  3. As the “Son of Man” Jesus claimed a ‘heavenly origin and heavenly glory’, stating that He “came down from heaven” [John 6:42, 53-56]
  4. Jesus emphasized the sovereignty of God [and the inability of man] in the work of salvation [“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day”] [John 6:44]
  5. Jesus implied that eternal life was contingent upon His actions [specifically, His obedience to the Father in His death on the cross] [John 6:51]
  6. Jesus stated that He had the authority and ability to preserve all that the Father had given Him until the last day. [John 6:44]

7. Taken literally, Jesus' words concerning eating His flesh and drinking His blood clearly violated Old Testament Law forbidding such practices [John 6:53-56]

- John Calvin stated, "It is dreadful and monstrous that so kind and friendly an invitation of Christ should have alienated the minds of many, especially those who had earlier been on His side and were even His close disciples. But this example is put before us as a mirror to see how great is the world's depravity and ingratitude, which heaps up material to stumble over even on the smooth way of life, that it may not come to Christ."

### What does the disciples' reaction reveal about the nature of the *true* Gospel?

- Martin Luther stated, "If our gospel were received in peace, it wouldn't be the true gospel."
- Read **Matthew 10:34-36**
- Read **Luke 18:18-27** [The Rich Young Ruler]

### Verse 61

- Notice the supernatural knowledge of Jesus in this Verse...He knew their hearts, and He knew they were grumbling at His words.
- Again, just like the Galilean Jews in Verse 41, and just like the Jews in the wilderness following the Exodus, the "disciples" grumble at the words of Jesus
- The verb, here, for "stumble" is the Greek word *skandalizo*, skandal i zw, where we get our word "scandalize."
- Although Jesus never sought to intentionally offend anyone [Matthew 17:27], he fully understood that the truth concerning Himself would offend and become a stumbling block to the unbelieving world [Read Psalm 118:22, "The stone which the builders rejected / Has become the chief corner stone"].
- The Apostles Peter and Paul also drew on this Old Testament reference in their Epistles:
  - Paul [Romans 9:33      Isaiah 8:14; 28:16]
  - Peter [1 Peter 2:4-8      Psalm 118:22]

### Verse 62

- Jesus now asks the "disciples" what their reaction would be if they witnessed the Son of Man *ascending to where He was before?*

- This statement from Jesus could be read in two ways:
  - The ascending of Jesus, the Son of Man, will make the offense of the disciples greater
  - The ascending of Jesus will remove [or to some degree lessen] the offense of the disciples
- It is significant to note, however, that this passage is speaking of **THE CRUCIFIXION**.
- The “ascending” Jesus is speaking of is the physical “lifting up” [see John 3:14-15] of Him on the Cross.
- Therefore, **1 Corinthians 1:23** sheds light on how Jesus’ words should be read: “but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,”
  - In other words, the ascending of Jesus **will make the offense of the disciples greater – for it is a stumbling block [to the Jews]!**
- Read Deuteronomy 21:23
- “If Jesus is the ‘one who came from heaven’, how shall he return? The Synoptists [Matthew, Mark, and Luke] think of the crucifixion and the exaltation as temporally discrete steps; John makes it clear that Jesus’ return to the glory he had with the Father before the world began is accomplished by being ‘lifted up’ on the cross. It is this exaltation that draws people to him...The moment of Jesus’ greatest degradation and shame is the moment of his glorification, the path of his return to the glory he had with the Father before the world began.”
 

D.A. Carson
- “It is part of John’s aim to show that Jesus showed forth his glory not *in spite of* his earthly humiliations, but precisely *because of* those humiliations. Supremely is this the case with the cross. To the outward eye this was the uttermost in degradation, the death of a criminal. To the eye of faith it was, and is, the supreme glory.”
 

Leon Morris
- Past Jewish leaders [before the time of Christ] were believed to have ascended into heaven [i.e. Elijah, and possibly Enoch]; however, **ONLY Jesus first descended** [See John 1:51; 6:27, 53], before ascending ***to where He was before***. Such a claim emphasizes:
  1. His pre-existence
  2. His superiority to the Old Testament saints [especially, Elijah]

### Verse 63

- Read **John 3:6-8**
- Jesus states that “the flesh profits nothing”; however, this must be read in light of the previous clause: “It is the Spirit who gives life...”
  - The word *flesh* must be seen in contrast to *spirit*

- In other words, [as the Amplified Bible states], “the flesh conveys no benefit whatever [there is no profit in it].”
- Charles Spurgeon once stated, “What is meant by ‘the flesh’ here? ...In this passage it means that which is outward and sensuous and appeals to the eye, or the ear, or to other powers of man’s bodily nature. There was much of this in the Jewish faith-but whenever the worshippers rested in it and did not reach to its *spiritual* teaching-it profited them nothing. Paul uses the same term when, speaking to the Judaizing Galatians, he asks them, ‘Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?’ Which we understand to mean, having begun by God’s Holy Spirit with a spiritual love to God, a spiritual faith in Jesus and a spiritual life within, do you mean, now, to be made perfect by external ordinances, resting and abiding in them as though they had a power to bless? External ceremonial religion is well and aptly set forth here as ‘flesh.’”
- This was a great blow for the Jews to whom Jesus was speaking. This is because, a “good” Jewish man or woman placed great emphasis on those aspects of the law that were visible and “fleshy” in nature (i.e. Circumcision and the Sabbath)
- Read **Romans 2:28-29**
  - In the Old Testament, one of the primary roles of the Spirit of God [XWR, *ruwach*, translated as *Spirit, wind, or breath*] is the **giving of life** [Genesis 1:2; 2:7; Ezekiel 37:1-14]
  - We see this truth also, as it relates to the **new birth / new life** in Christ, in the New Testament [John 3:6-8; 6:63]
  - Also, in both the Old and New Testaments, life is given by the Spirit **through His Word** [Genesis 1:3; 1 Peter 1:23]
  - Moses states in **Deuteronomy 8:3** [and Jesus reiterates in Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4] that “man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.”
  - Finally, Jesus’ words are consistent with the very nature of who God is...He is Spirit, NOT flesh [like man] (John 4:24).
  - **Jesus, then, states, “the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”**
    - This stands in contrast to the Jewish belief that life is found *in the actual words* of Scripture (John 5:39)
    - This is fully consistent with other parts of Scripture, which state that the Spirit “remains” or “abides” on Jesus (John 1:32) and that the Father gives the Son the Spirit without measure (John 3:34).

- “For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure.”  
John 3:34
- Many see here a reference to Jeremiah 15:16, “Your words were found and I ate them, / And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; / For I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.”
- As Andreas Kostenberger states, “Both Old Testament and New Testament view God’s word as fully efficacious (Isaiah 55:11; Jeremiah 23:29; Hebrews 4:12).”

#### Verse 64

- Jesus acknowledges that some **of you** will not believe.
- Jesus knew this “from the beginning”
  - This could mean (a) from the beginning *absolutely* (i.e. John 1:1) – eternity past, or (b) from the beginning of His ministry
- Jesus also knew that Judas would betray Him

#### Verse 65

- Jesus now reiterates the necessity of divine initiative on behalf of the Father (in drawing men to the Son)
- This is a reiteration of John 6:44.
- It must be noted, again, that the Father’s “drawing” is the Father’s “teaching”
  - “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.” Ezekiel 36:25-27
  - “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people...” Jeremiah 31:33-34
- **In the effectual “drawing” of the Father, it is not as though He violates the will of man, but rather, He changes man’s will...because our will is a direct result of our \_\_\_\_\_. So, with a change of \_\_\_\_\_ comes a change of \_\_\_\_\_.**