

Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church

Pastor: Elder Will Martin

www.macedoniapbc.org

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And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

— John 8:32

Doth This Offend You?

Elder Coy Thomas

THE GOSPEL THAT WE PREACH IS TRULY GOOD NEWS TO THOSE WHO EXPECT ONLY BAD NEWS. It is a simple, easy to understand message. The gospel provides comfort, encouragement, and strength to those who need it the most. Most of all, it motivates us to serve the Lord and one another in love and humility. Why then would a disciple of the Lord, Jesus Christ, be offended at such a gospel message?

In reading about the ministry of Jesus Christ recorded by John, we find a variety of people who both see and hear the words of our Lord. John the Baptist was anxiously awaiting the arrival of Jesus Christ. He had a deep expectation of seeing the one who would redeem Israel. When he finally laid eyes upon Jesus, he exclaimed, “*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*”

Upon hearing the news that the Messiah had arrived, Nathanael was very skeptical. He asked Philip, his brother, “*Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?*” To overcome this doubt and skepticism, Philip urged Nathanael to “*Come and see!*”

Obviously, for these disciples, seeing is believing. The first step for the faithful disciples was to actually see him and acknowledge that this man is the promised Messiah. However, it became very difficult to believe the things He taught them. We find that the miracles He performed reinforced His teaching. Once these chosen disciples saw the miracles, they truly started listening to the doctrine that He taught them.

- “*This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.*” (John 2:11).

A Pharisee named Nicodemus had heard some stories and rumors. Perhaps he even witnessed a miracle of healing performed by Jesus. Out of fear of reprisal, Nicodemus approached Jesus under cover of night. He did not address Jesus as Lord or Christ, but rather as Rabbi (teacher). Nicodemus was only willing to go so far in admitting that this was the Messiah. Nicodemus acknowledged that “*no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*” It is one thing to say God is with Jesus, but a far different thing to state that Jesus is God.

At the end of John, chapter 3, John the Baptist made a clear distinction between his ministry and the ministry of Jesus Christ. The ministry of Christ is far superior. John pointed out that his ministry was earthly, but the ministry of Jesus Christ came directly from heaven and its throne room. Therefore, what Jesus Christ says is an eyewitness account of the things in heaven. Simply believing what Jesus Christ says is a great encouragement. By believing what Jesus Christ tells us, we have set a seal, or mark, upon ourselves that “*God is true.*”

- “*He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.*” (John 3:33).

What about the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well? As the conversation progressed, she realized that Jesus was no ordinary man. He engaged her in conversation and drank from her waterpot. Both actions were highly unusual for a Jewish man and a Samaritan woman. However, it was the things that He said that got her attention. She forgot all about the waterpot and went into the city to tell people, “*Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?*”

Soon after this encounter at Jacob’s well, the disciples began to worry that Jesus had not eaten in some time. They begged him, saying, “*Master, eat.*” Jesus gave a very profound response.

- *Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.* (John 4:34)

Here we have a definition of the word “meat” as used in this fashion. It means to perform an assigned task or tasks in accordance with the will of God. Note that Jesus Christ does not specifically call out his assigned task, but he does emphatically state that the work will be finished.

As Jesus preached and taught the people of Sychar, the city in Samaria, people began to grow in their belief. At first, many of the Samaritans of the city believed him because of the woman’s testimony, “*He told me all that ever I did.*” However, over the two day period, they began to believe on their own accord. They sealed to themselves that “God is true.”

- *And many more believed because of his own word; 42) And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. (John 4:41-42)*

The Truth Regarding Christ

In chapter 5 of John’s record, we find yet another encounter that Jesus makes with a specific individual. “*And a certain man was there [at the pool of Bethesda], which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.*” This man was described as impotent. This literally means “without any power or ability.” In contrast, we describe our God as being omnipotent, meaning, “with universal power or ability.”

What a great contrast! Jesus Christ, the omnipotent, comes to meet a man that has been impotent for a very long time. Jesus looked upon him and asked a very direct question, “*Wilt thou be made whole?*” The impotent man answered him, “*Sir, I have no man...*” Hmmm. This impotent man needs far more than a mere man – he needs the power of the living God to heal him and make him whole. How much potency does it take to heal a man of such an infirmity? How much potency does Jesus Christ possess?

Jesus commanded the man to “*Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.*” The man did just as Jesus had commanded. However, this was all done on the Sabbath day. The Jewish leadership of the day took exception to this man carrying his bed on the Sabbath. Of course, there was no actual law from God against such action. Keep in mind that Jesus Christ was upon Mt. Sinai delivering The Law to Moses just as surely as he was standing at the pool of Bethesda that day. God did not break his own law. The Jews accusing this man and Jesus Christ of breaking the O.T. law had actually perverted the Law of Moses. They had extended its application well beyond any boundaries established by Moses.

Jesus answered the objections of the Jewish leaders by focusing on the task or work he came to perform:

- “*But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*” (John 5:17).

Yes, we know that your meat (work) is to do your Father’s will. Yes, your Father has been working throughout history up to this moment, and now it is your turn. But, what exactly is this work that you must perform?

First of all, Jesus Christ tells the disciples and those Jews around him that he has authority from God. The authority and his direct relationship to God, as a Son, imply several things (see John 5:19-23):

1. Jesus does what he sees the Father do, in harmony.
2. God has already shown Jesus all the required tasks.
3. The Son, Jesus Christ, has been vested with the power of life.
4. All judgment is committed to Jesus Christ.
5. Jesus Christ is worthy of the same honor given to God.

After this authority and its implications are laid out, we find two pivotal statements made by Jesus Christ. These two statements set the tone of his ministry going forward.

- “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.*” (John 5:25).

In the first statement, Jesus declares that he currently has and will continue to have the power to give life simply by the sound of his voice. We find this power is unique to God and God alone. In the beginning, God created the heaven, the earth, and entire universe by the power of his voice. He spoke, and

it was so! Likewise, Jesus Christ can speak to dead people, and they will hear him! Generally, dead people do not hear anything. What kind of dead people are we describing? In this verse, the people have no spiritual life; they are said to be dead in trespasses and sins as in Ephesians 2:1, “*And you hath he quickened [created life], who were dead in trespasses and sins.*” This distinction is borne out in the second statement made by Jesus.

- “*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29) And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*” (John 5:28-29).

In this statement, Jesus makes a clear difference by stating that these people are “in the graves.” Also, notice the absence of the phrase “and now is” that appeared in the first statement. Obviously, the resurrection from the graves is a future, single event that Jesus Christ will accomplish. Interestingly enough, he will use his voice, again, to impart that life-giving power. The parallels between a bodily resurrection by the power of his voice and a spiritual birth by the same power and method are undeniable.

But, most theologians of modern day Christianity maintain it is the preaching of the gospel that people must hear in order to obtain spiritual life. The vast majority of the Christian world upholds this method. For example, are we not all directed to preach “the word” to every creature under heaven so that all have an opportunity for eternal life?

Unfortunately, Jesus Christ disagrees with this theology. He claims the task of speaking to dead people (spiritual or physical) as solely his own. In fact, he unequivocally states that the preaching of the Bible does not contain the key to eternal life.

- “*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*” (John 5:39)

The Bible tells us about Jesus Christ, but it does not give eternal life. Furthermore, it boldly declares that the man, Jesus Christ, has sole power and authority to give eternal life to whom he will (see John 5:21). It is not a function of the church, the preacher, or the missionary evangelist.

This certainly “flies in the face” of almost all that is called Christian in our day. In fact, how can almost one billion people in our world who make some personal claim to Christianity all be wrong and Jesus Christ be right? Is there some worldwide deception going on?

No, there is no worldwide deception other than the normal, routine deception that Satan invokes on those that are unprepared for his attacks. It is more accurately a case of unbelief. Due to our fundamental human nature, we cannot fathom the concept that we do not have even the smallest amount of control to determine our eternal destiny. This totally cuts out all the middlemen. To believe that Jesus Christ alone imparts eternal life to whom he wants, when he wants, and where he wants brings peace to some, but becomes a stumbling block to many (Rom 9:33).

The Manna from Heaven

The idea that large multitudes of people can believe in God, believe in Jesus, believe that Jesus is the Christ, but not believe what Jesus says is not new. The common people who actually saw and heard Jesus Christ are no different than the Christians of today. Many people of that day saw Jesus Christ in person and were eyewitnesses to the miracles that he performed. They may have even heard the testimony of his faithful disciples who knew he was the promised Messiah. But, when it came to believing the things that Jesus told the multitudes, it could be very difficult to embrace in light of their religious teachings. Many of these people had been taught the Jewish religion from their youth up; similarly, many Christians today have known “the basics” from the time they were a child. The multitudes of Christians today are really no different than the multitudes of Jewish people from that day.

John, chapter 6, gives an account of this unbelief. A great multitude of people began following Jesus Christ around because of the miracles that they had witnessed.

- “*And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.*” (John 6:2)

As the Jewish feast of the Passover was upon them, Jesus and his disciples found a few thousand people who needed to be fed. Jesus asked his disciples, “*Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?*” Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, told Jesus about a young boy that had five barley loaves and two small fishes. So Jesus commanded that the men sit down by company, in orderly ranks of hundreds and fifties (see Mark 6:39-40). The men numbered about five thousand. Once you add in the women and children, the number was probably quite a bit larger.

Jesus gave thanks over the five loaves and two fishes, and distributed to the disciples to feed the people. The record in John tells us that everyone ate until they were filled and the disciples took up twelve baskets of “leftovers.” This was a grand miracle. All the people there were actual participants in the miracle. They even pronounced Jesus as “*that prophet that should come into the world.*”

Was that the work that Jesus came into the world to finish? Did he come to feed multitudes of people fishes and bread? Did he come to be a prophet of God for the people? Let us recall a couple of definitions that we developed earlier:

1. **Seal** – to believe everything that Jesus Christ says such that you can truly claim, “God is true.”
2. **Meat** – to perform a task or set of tasks assigned by God; your vocation, profession, or purpose.

These two things show up again in John 6. After Jesus departs from the multitude and his disciples take a small ship over the Sea of Galilee, we read of the “walking on water” miracle. The next day, the multitudes also boarded ships to cross the sea to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

- “*And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?*” (John 6:25)

Rabbi? Prophet? Is that all that He is? It is clear that Jesus needs to give these people a little instruction about who he really, really is. Perhaps modern Christians need the exact same instruction. This is where it starts getting sticky.

- “*Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. 27) Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.*” (John 6:26-27)

Ok, so what is the meat that we should desire? Or, by using our definition, what has God assigned us to do?

- “*Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*” (John 6:29)

So, if we believe what Jesus Christ tells us, we accomplish both things? Our assigned task is to believe what Jesus tells us and this puts the seal on us that “God is true.” You ask: It can’t be that simple? You may even refuse to believe it. You may even refuse to believe anything that Jesus Christ says that seems to contradict what you have learned from your childhood up.

This is not just the response of the Jews who followed Jesus across a sea, but it is also our response as modern day Christians. The Jews even quoted a scripture to point out that there is more to our God than what Jesus Christ is claiming. They cited Psalms 78, verse 24, “*He gave them bread from heaven to eat.*”

The implication from this verse they referenced is the detailed manner in which God dealt with their forefathers in the desert. The Psalm recounts how that God brought them out of Egypt using many signs and miracles. Then, God did a great miracle by parting the Dead Sea. He then provided a cloud by day and fire by night to lead them. God provided water out of a rock to feed them and their flocks. Over and over, God proved himself to the Israelites of old by miracle after miracle. These people were requiring that Jesus Christ do the same. He must validate himself and his claims in a similar fashion. Right?

Note to self: when quoting scripture to the man who wrote it, Jesus Christ, don’t choose passages that have the main theme of unbelief, tempting God, and provoking the anger of God (see Psalm 78:17, 21-22, 32, 40-41, 56-58).

The modern day Christian has a tendency to do the exact same thing as these Jews. When faced with a doctrine or teaching that we do not want to believe, we find a single verse to quote. This verse seems to make our point, but without putting it into context, we would be walking way out on a limb.

What is the difference between what the multitude was thinking and what Jesus Christ was thinking? The manna that God provided in the wilderness was identical to the miracle of the fishes and loaves that Jesus Christ performed on the other side of the sea. Both miracles provided natural food to satisfy the hunger of our stomachs. However, the next day both sets of people were hungry again. God had to rain down manna from heaven every day, except on Saturday (the Sabbath). The people had to be fed everyday. This action had to be repeated daily for it to sustain the people. Jesus' meat (work) is not to come down from heaven to perform a miracle of feeding us natural food each day. That is most assuredly, not his primary focus. Instead, Jesus is like the manna from the O.T., but he only needs to come down one time.

If Jesus comes down from heaven one time, finishes his assigned task, then are the effects eternal? Absolutely! He does not need to bodily step out of heaven every day, just to come turn water into wine for a wedding feast because we ran out! No, his meat (work) is far, far greater than putting natural food in our stomachs.

Recall that the miracle of the loaves and fishes was in connection with the feast of the Passover. If we consider all of the O.T. elements regarding the Passover, then we can see how they symbolize the true Passover, Jesus Christ.

- *“For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.” (1 Corinthians 5:7b)*

The Passover was kept with a lamb that was slain, the sprinkling of blood, and unleavened bread. The Israelites were to keep this feast year after year in commemoration of the Egyptian exodus. But, what if Jesus Christ was assigned to be the very last Passover forever? What if he became the true Passover lamb that was slain? What if he became the true sprinkling of blood on the doorposts and mantle of our very souls? What if he became the true unleavened bread? Would we need to keep the Passover commemoration anymore?

No, but Jesus did leave us with a service that commemorates his body and his blood. We call it The Lord's Supper or a Communion Service. After the last Passover was kept by Jesus Christ and his inner circle of disciples, he selected elements from the Passover table to institute The Lord's Supper. He selected the unleavened bread to represent his body that was to be broken for us. He chose the wine as a symbol of his blood that was to be offered to God as redemption. With this in mind, we can look at the controversial message that Jesus Christ delivered to the multitude of Jews.

I AM

Jesus launched into this discourse by making a very forthright statement

- *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. 36) But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. (John 6:35-36)*

I think the statement, “*I am the bread of life*” is grammatically equivalent to Exodus 3:14 when God told Moses, “I AM THAT I AM.” Not only did Jesus Christ equate himself to be the God that spoke to Moses from a burning bush, but also he added information that was not previously known.

Remember, Jesus has already told them the manna that came down from heaven in Moses' day was not the true bread. Instead, God has given the true bread from heaven in the form of Jesus Christ. And, this bread will only come down one time. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the true bread of life that came down from heaven, one time.

In verse 36, Jesus points out that these Jews were no different than the Israelites of Moses' day. They both saw great miracles and experienced great promises spoken by God. However, both groups of people did not believe what God told them. This group did not believe what Jesus Christ told them.

- *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38) For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. (John 6:37-38)*

Notice that this is a declarative statement. Jesus is boldly declaring that he will get all of the people that God told him to get! Throughout the N.T., they are referred to as “my sheep”, “his sheep”, or “his people.” These people were given to Jesus Christ by the Heavenly Father. Although Jesus does not expressly tell us how all these people will come to him, he does tell us it is a fact that they will. Furthermore, he will not cast out any of those people that “come to me.” He will achieve this action because God told him to do it.

Recall that Jesus Christ already stunned the religious leaders by stating that He alone had the power to speak and give life (John 5:25, 28). This life is both spiritual, as in the new birth, and eternal, as in the resurrection of our bodies from the grave.

- *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. 40) And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:39-40)*

Clearly, the meat (work) that Jesus is sent to perform involves giving spiritual life by his voice—all that the Father giveth me shall come to me. It also involves capitalizing on that spiritual life by calling people out of the grave “*at the last day.*”

Do you get the impression that Jesus Christ is fixated on the idea of raising up some people at the last day? It is interesting to notice that this phrase appears a total of four times in John 6. Perhaps that is the main point. Perhaps the work assigned to Jesus Christ is required by God so that Jesus can do something that he wants to do ... “*raise him up at the last day.*” But how will all these people under consideration “come to” Jesus?

- *Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44) No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:43-44)*

A prerequisite that Jesus must meet in order to “raise him up at the last day” is that all these people must be given spiritual life at some point between conception and death. They must be “born again” as Nicodemus learned. If this condition is not met by Jesus, then he cannot raise them up at the last day. Let us be very clear: these are requirements placed by God upon Jesus Christ, not us.

Why? Because only Jesus Christ has the power and authority to grant eternal life. He does this using his voice – it is not our voice, the preacher’s voice, or any other man’s voice.

This simple truth is that Jesus Christ alone calls his people out of death in trespasses and sins and into a life in Christ. Jesus is telling us point blank in these verses that our eternal life is accomplished solely by him. The Father gave him a group of people—a very large group—that will be drawn by God to Jesus Christ. These people are simultaneously born again by the voice of Jesus Christ. In doing this, Jesus Christ has met all the prerequisites for raising these people up at the last day!

This method used by Jesus Christ to give eternal life is 100% effective in all cases. It is not dependent upon other men or even angels. It does not require a certain degree of understanding or knowledge. It is equally effective in Abraham’s time as it is in our time. It cannot be hindered by wicked men or Satan. It is consistent from the beginning of time until the end of time.

- *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. (John 3:8)*

Doth This Offend You?

This teaching by Jesus Christ does not sit well with most people. The people who heard this murmured quite a lot. This means they grumbled with great dissatisfaction. Modern Christians are equally dissatisfied with these statements by Jesus.

- *Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? (John 6:60)*

The stark realization that you are not in control can be earth-shattering. Can it really be true that we had absolutely no vote in our eternal destiny? Again, the most common answer throughout the ages is, I do

not believe that! As the disciples of Jesus' day protested, "*This is an hard saying.*" In fact, this Bible truth can be quite offensive to our pride and personal self-will.

- *When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? (John 6:61)*

Do the words of Jesus Christ offend you? Are you so dissatisfied with this doctrine that you refuse to believe what Jesus Christ tells you? If so, you can do what many of the disciples did in that day.

- *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. (John 6:66)*

Even some disciples among my brethren, the Primitive Baptists, have become offended at the words of Jesus Christ. They have decided to turn back and walk no more with him. It is almost unfathomable that once very strong followers of Jesus Christ have now become dissatisfied with the teachings of Jesus.

Unfortunately, those that are offended and dissatisfied want others around them to be offended and dissatisfied as well. Their murmuring and grumbling has overthrown the faith of some and made shipwreck the faith of others.

The only consolation is to go back to the words of Jesus Christ. Are my brethren who have turned away lost forever? Jesus tells me that they were given to him by the Father and they will be gathered to him. Even if they become offended at His words, "*I will in no wise cast out.*" Later on in chapter 10, we learn that "no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." In other words, they can't just leave of their own accord either. This is why our eternal destiny is sure and steadfast ... it is entirely dependent on the power and work (meat) of Jesus Christ alone. If we do not believe that, then we do not seal to ourselves that "*God is true.*"

Here is the real question to God's people:

- "*Will ye also go away?*" (John 6:67b)
- "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*" (2 Timothy 4:3).

I pray that the message of God's Sovereign Grace, which Jesus taught in John 6 and Brother Coy defended in this article, touch my soul at 88 just as it does at 28. I love this message. I love the relationship that I have kindled with my Lord through understanding what he did for me. I love the kinship in Christ that I have created with people of like precious faith who rejoice in the Lord alway. I love the Church that the Lord constituted that has CONTINUED to preach this message and defend the faith as it was once delivered unto these very saints in John 6.

It must have grieved the Apostle Peter to see the Lord's disciples walk no longer with him. There may be those who I love dearly that turn away and walk no longer with Jesus Christ. But, just like Peter, I must stay. I have nowhere else to go. These words are "...the words of eternal life." (John 6:68)

In His Love,



Elder Will Martin

Macedonia Church Announcements:

1. Brother Ernie Bryson, a licentiate from Moriah Primitive Baptist Church will be preaching the morning services on Sunday, June 28th. Please pray for the meeting and Brother Ernie's ministry.
2. Friday, July 10th and Saturday, July 11th: Macedonia will host her bi-annual meeting. Our scheduled speakers are Elder Lonnie Mozingo Jr. and Elder Hugh Sanders. There will be services on Friday night at 7:00, Saturday morning at 10:30 and Saturday afternoon at 2:00. Lunch will be served between services on Saturday. Please come and be with us if you can and call (678) 410-0109 if you have any questions concerning the meeting.

Announcements from Sister Churches:

1. Lexington Primitive Baptist Church in Lexington, KY will be having their 50th anniversary meeting June 25th through June 28th. Elder Joe Holder from Riverside, CA is scheduled to be with them. For more information about the meeting, please contact Elder Michael Gowens at michael.gowens@insightbb.com or at (859) 223-2326.
2. We were blessed to have several visitors on Sunday, May 17th from the Pensacola, FL area. These fine folks were in town for a wedding and we are thankful they came to worship with us at Macedonia. Elder Jim Sanders asked me to invite those who would be in the Pensacola, FL area on vacation to come and worship with them. Brother Jim's phone number is (251)942-1446.

Photos:



I was thankful to attend the Amite Association meeting at the end of April. The Lord richly blessed the worship services and the time of fellowship with Elder Lonnie Mozingo Jr.