

PTB #24: Preaching thru the Bible in one year: The Final of 4 on the Wisdom of God, Jesus as Steppingstone or Stumbling Block.

GIST: Can you image, Jesus can be either a steppingstone or a stumbling block. Bet you never thought of how in certain lives of the majority Jesus becomes a stumbling block to certain kinds of religion, primarily the kind of religion that is all outward and nothing or little inward.



INTRODUCTION: Friends of Jesus: 12 Scriptures of "Reasonable Service"

"Reasonable Service"

Understood is predicated on A New Remnant of Jews and Gentiles. In other words in the bottom analysis of Romans 11 and before is concluded in Christian Faith as a Living Sacrifice. Right up front in the wisdom of God to separate the sheep from the

goats, a vocal appearance of faith from real believers and real friends of Jesus can be evident as you in your mind in the words of Jesus, "do not look on outward appearance, but judge righteous judgment", the suggestion is to listen one of many of their own personal opinions and then listen to what is said as another person calmly quotes Scripture.

1. Friends of Jesus. (John 15)

How to be a "Friend of Jesus" is primarily presented by Jesus Himself in John 15; but do not be deceived there are not many real "Friends of Jesus" today in spite of all the churches, denominations, and those who often name the name of Christ. If it is true, and it is, that the world will know the real disciples of Jesus by the love of the New Commandment which they see; then the opposite if also true, since the world is confused today who are the real disciples, then there are not many real "Friends of Jesus". It is a shame to start the key chapter, or message of this book, on such a negative note; however, if we do not cast aside the superficialities and appearances of discipleship that plague our churches, denominations, and television then there is little hope that we can pass from the sentimentalities of "What A Friend We Have in Jesus"--by the way one of my favorite songs--to real Friendship with Jesus. It is no easy challenge. In the previous chapters you have seen something of the requirements that you must meet, none of them easy: (1) the challenge to become a clean disciple

that has indeed been chosen as well as called, a clean disciple through the washing of regeneration of the one baptism; (2) the challenge to remain clean through the teachings of Jesus, old and new; (3) at the very core of the teachings of Jesus and a New Commandment is to love other disciples as Jesus love the first 11 Apostles; (4) then as Jesus stressed in John 15 is the practical, daily learning of "How to Work {and walk} with the Holy Spirit" if I might borrow the name of a book written by Dr. R.A. Torrey.

How to Work and Walk with the Holy Spirit!

This brief presentation on the Holy Spirit, primarily from John 15, will center around three aspects of this famous member of the Godhead: (1) the work assigned to the Holy Spirit by God the Father; (2) the ways Jesus explained to work with the Holy Spirit; and (3) the ways Jesus and His Apostles explained to walk with the Holy Spirit.

The Work assigned to the Holy Spirit by God the Father.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit in great power and presence is as significant a historical event to Christians as is the Coming of Jesus to live and die and be resurrected and ascended as Christ. In fact, Jesus said it was more significant in that Christians would be better off with the Spirit than they had been with the personal and physical presence of Jesus Himself.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you." (John 17:7)

There is so much in John 14-16 about the Holy Spirit in the words and teachings of Jesus in those 3 chapters.

(1). In John 14:16,17 Jesus uses a more friendly doctrinal name for the Holy Spirit, much more friendly than the word "Holy Ghost" of the King James Version and whom the Mormons believe only they receive while the rest of the world receives the Holy Spirit **{we are grateful for their contributions}**, the word is HELPER. He, the Holy Spirit, is the one who goes along besides us in life to help and run the race with us. He is the Comforter, the other of the same kind Comforter, if you please and if we pull on some of the Greek language as Ralph Herrings points out so well in his book GOD BEING MY HELPER.

(2). He, the Helper, abides with Christians forever (John 14:15). Fortunately as the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from the earth according to II Thessalonians, he is not withdrawn from the inward lives of clean Christians. **{Some have gone so far astray with their straining at a gnat for consistency with the Scofield Notes as to claim that the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit of II Thessalonians is a rapture of the church before the end times, each one is unsound doctrine.}**

(3). Jesus calls Him "the Spirit of truth" that the world can not receive nor know Him. Even as later in John 14 {John 14:22} Jesus will explain how He and the Father can manifest themselves to Christians and not to the world, now He explains how Christians

can receive the Holy Spirit but not the world. You see here the close relationship between how the Father and the Son as well as the Holy Spirit dwell in Christians simultaneously. In other words it is the one and the same! "but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you", Jesus said in John 14:17b.

(3). Jesus repeats the name of the Helper as the Holy Spirit when He tells that "the Father will send Him in the name of Jesus. (John 14:26).

(4). It is very appropriate that "the Spirit of truth" is also He "who will teach you all things" (John 14:26). **{You know I would feel a lot better if current Bible teachers would say instead of "God told me" or something similar, if they would say consistent with Scriptures and Jesus that the Holy Spirit taught me, thus avoiding the curses of Corinthians and Revelation that rest upon them where they think that "the Word of God either came out of them or came to them only", or where they seek to add to the revelations already given by God in the Bible.} You would have to say that the "all" things would be synonymous with the "faith once for all delivered to the saints", the book of 66 books that we call the Bible having completed all the faith and all the revelations for all time!**

(5). The Holy Spirit has another big job and that is to remind Apostles, and even disciples, of all the teachings of Jesus. You would have to say that this is "all" the teachings and commandments of Jesus, old and new. The Holy Spirit does this for us also, reminding us of the teachings of Jesus, the Apostles, and Prophets as recorded in the Bible; however not as He did for the Apostles and Prophets, where they through the Holy Spirit received once for all the revelations of the Bible. **{"Holy men of God spoke as they were moved or breathed on by the Holy Spirit."}**

(6). Even as we come to know the Godhead of the Bible as The Father is the "originating cause", God our Lord Jesus Christ is the "mediating cause", and God the Holy Spirit is the "effective cause" {you see it in Creation where God started it, Christ mediated it, and the Holy Spirit breathed on the face of the deep to effect it; you also see how it works in reverse in prayer; and you see salvation where God thought it, Christ bought it, and the Holy Spirit wrought it, also in revelations of the Bible}, even so you see the constant cleansing process, which comes with Abiding, where God takes away unfruitful branches and prunes fruitful branches as although coming from the Father and through the Son as the effecting work on the Spirit down here where we live!

(7). By the way although you may think in the context of John 14-16 that Jesus is often rambling, or off on diversions, when you see often mentions of the oneness of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, these are instead reminders by Jesus Himself as how the three are one and how in oneness they work together for us! {"Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me" (John 14:11), and etc. in the context of John 14-16.} It is fundamental to the whole understanding of salvation, of the work of the Holy Spirit, of all that Jesus taught and did to understand that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are One. About even salvation, the Bible states that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself", and surely you know the work of the Holy Spirit is creating the one baptism of salvation in your life!

(8). While there is a lot of discussion from Jesus on the Father and the world of John 15:18-25 where the world will hate Christians as the world hated Jesus and the Father, Jesus comes quickly in John 15:25 of what the Helper is doing in all this hate as a testifier with the disciples to Jesus.

“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father {one place the Father sends the Spirit of truth, another place Jesus sends Him from the Father, but once again one and the same}, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.” (John 15:26,27)

(9). By the way in this day and time when so many ignore Christ and the Bible in the name of “there are so many divisions and interpretations, who can know the truth”, it is important to have convictions on the possibilities of knowing truth even as Jesus said He was “the way, the truth, and the life”, also taught that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth; and recognize that the real problem of the world and worldly, unclean Christians is an absence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Brutal but true: “the world can not receive the things of the Spirit of God because they are foolishness unto them, neither can they know them because they are spiritually discerned”; and I would have to doubt based on these obvious teachings of Jesus and of the Bible, by the way in the book, the book of John about which they claim so little was actually from Jesus denied so often by the scholars of the Jesus Seminar, that there is a clean disciple among them! Hey if I have to side with the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus as contrasted to so-called Bible scholars who have heaped themselves up in colleges and seminaries throughout the world, every time I will side with Jesus! **{If you have at least reached college age, where the quest is so often for truth, then you also need to face up to these realities; and perhaps in high school as you begin your challenges between faith and the scientific method. We will discuss in the last two chapters the difference between science as the “scientific method” as it is often practiced by scientists or science teacher, in the social sciences or the physical and behavioral.}**

(10). Of course the main point of John 15:26 is that it is the work of the Holy Spirit “to testify of Jesus.” This is the reason that Satan was so significantly bound when the Spirit came in great power and presence on the first day of Pentecost after the Ascension of Jesus. While Satan lies and deceives and diverts away from Jesus, the Holy Spirit with more power and presence testifies to the truth on Jesus. And the same reason that it is going to be a pretty sad world near the end of time as Satan is loosed because the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from earth; and yes, contrary to many false and convenient itching ears teachings about eschatology, Christians will still be on earth during this time!

(11). While often fundamentalists like to think that it is their personal job and calling to convict the world of sin, of judgment, and of righteousness, it is really the work and job of the Holy Spirit. (John 16:7-9). Of course we have the job to faithfully teach and preach the sound doctrine of the Bible, the Bible of Jesus, the Apostles and Prophets; and the extent to which it truly bears the fruit of clean disciples, as contrasted to goat and tares, is the extent we learn to work with the Holy Spirit.

(12). The Spirit of Truth, of course the Holy Spirit, guides all disciples into truth. Don't fret about what is true and what is not; listen to the Spirit over itching ears Bible teachers, for God has designated that He, the Spirit, will guide us into all truth! **{Of course, once again this is only the truth that has been revealed already in the Bible, and on which we need illumination and guidance, the truth which is the "all" in that it is "the faith once for all delivered to the saints.}**

(13). The Holy Spirit like Jesus taught about Himself did not speak on His own authority or with His own teachings, but only what the Father told Him is what He repeated, even so the Spirit of Truth: (a) what He hears in heaven is what He speaks; (b) He will tell you eschatological things to come--this is uniquely for the Apostles in the sense of revelations about "last things", although the Spirit as mentioned earlier does illuminate and guide us on things to come based only on what has been revealed; (c) The Spirit of Truth glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, or in other words He spreads the influence of Christ, or builds up the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in the world and among believers; (d) The Spirit takes of what God has given to Jesus as "mine" and declares to clean disciples.

Friends Know what the Master is Doing!

At the very heart and gist of John 14-17 where we learn how to accept the challenge to be "Friends of Jesus" is the foundation in knowing what Jesus was doing on earth. God sent Him to accomplish certain things on earth, and many of those things were accomplished, especially on the teachings, before the crucifixion and resurrection. **{Of course those teachings were also about the message and meaning of these events to follow.}**

"I have glorified You on the earth", {Jesus prayed in John 17 in the real Lord's Prayer, and} "I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." (John 17:4)

What was the completed work that the Father gave to the Son to do on earth! As the Lord's Prayer of John 17 continues, we have one of the best summaries of THE WORK OF JESUS ON EARTH ACCORDING TO JESUS! Look briefly at John 17:6-8.

- Jesus manifested the name of the Father to the men **{believers}** that God selected for Jesus out of the world. (17:6a)
- These men first belonged to God; the Father in turn gave them to the Son; and all twelve of them except one kept the Word of God. (17:6b)
- These select men "know" that all things **{a favorite word of Jesus and John in the Gospel is His works}** which the Father has given Jesus to do came from the Father. As we would accept the challenge of Jesus to be called a "Friend", we must know this also--the works of Jesus came from God the Father. (17:7)
- The Father gave to Jesus a certain number of "words" to pass on to disciples.

"For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them..." (John 17:8a)

Likewise a "Friend" today would also need to know this same discrete amount of words, and how can you possibly get that without prayerful under the leadership reading and

devotional study of the Bible. Don't miss out on a single word that God gave Jesus to pass on to disciples. Live in the words and Word; revel in it; mediate on it day and night; study it and study it intensely.

- If you have "received" these words like the 11 Apostles, then you will "KNOW": (a) "and have known surely that I came forth from You", and (b) "they have believed that You sent Me." (17:8)

NOTE: Right up there at the beginning of any statement of faith we make about Jesus or the Gospel of Jesus should be these two essentials: (1) Jesus came from God the Father in heaven and eternity before; and (2) Disciples must believe that God the Father sent His Son.

- It was a settled fact in the mind of Jesus during this prayer that He was no longer in the world, it was as good as over even as the work given to do was already accomplished which would include the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension--"Now I am no longer in the world..." (17:11a)
- While Jesus was leaving this world, the disciples were still in the world; and whereas Jesus had kept them, none of them lost except the son of perdition in order to fulfill predicted Scripture; and now Jesus prays for the Father to continue through His name to keep them; and by the way this is also part of the famous Unity of Oneness that is presented often in John 14-17.

2. Reasonable Service & Self-Image as Pride of Life for the majority of the world, past and present, contrasted to a few, called in the Bible a remnant to make it known how few there are of real believers; the self image of the rest is identified as "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ, who made Himself of no reputation. Consider of no reputation, and then consider in the way of the world, a reputation respected by the world and ways of the world is the way of the majority, past and present.

Reasonable Service Scripture #1: Romans 12:1

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1,2)

The "therefore" is a conclusion from Romans 11:

"33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has become His counselor?"

35 "Or who has first given to Him

And it shall be repaid to him?"

36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

- While "majority" is a beautiful word in the American Democratic faith, it is a dirty word and practice in Christian faith; and it is difficult to hear so many so called Christians professing what they do not possess: a zeal of God but not according to the knowledge of the Bible, those who go about to establish their own righteousness through works and do not submit to the righteousness of God through faith. These Christian members of the majority seek with their influence to seduce other in some of their own misery. As Paul wrote in II Timothy "evil seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." Jesus, the words and teachings of Jesus become in their own lives a stumbling block instead of a steppingstone which they would like for others to hear and believe about their own lives. Desiring to be a leader and example for right according to the Bible, they fake themselves and others out, by being a leader of the majority of the world, those of the broad way that leads to destruction. Remnant is the favorite Bible word to describe the few in the world of any generation that really believe all the way into righteousness, and it is obvious that we need another word to describe the majority in the world, the non-remnant if you would.
- Before we can find and establish a dirty word for the majority, we need to first establish how beautiful in the sight of God are His elect or remnant. A start would be with the true story of the Prophet Elijah who after victory over the king and the prophets of Baal in turn became discouraged as they sought his life. However, God assured Elijah "that He had reserved to HIMSELF 7,000 that had not in the nation of Israel bowed down to the image of Baal.". Perhaps the good word for this minority of God for which we are seeking is GOD'S RESERVES.
- We may look to the anonyms of remnant for this bad word for those who profess and do not possess. In the words again of Paul and of the Holy Spirit in II Timothy, "they have a certain zeal of God (a certain religion if you would) but deny the power of God thereof because they just do not have what it takes inwardly. That Bible bad word is WORLD as in the world system, which is forbidden love, that has no permanence, that passes away, that is summarized as lusts, lusts, lusts – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. By far the most dangerous of those three lusts in the pride of life, because it is so close to a persons self-image.

6-9: Jesus as the Foundation Stone

I. Ways in which Jesus is the Foundation Stone.

1. The Father established this corner stone.
2. Jesus's perfection was tested on earth.
3. Jesus is precious as the beloved Son of the Father.
4. The only foundation for faith laid by the Father.
5. People are only made secure as they stand by faith on this foundation.

II. Gentiles of the new remnant will not be ashamed of their faith in the foundation stone.

1. Isaiah 1:9.

"Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." (Isaiah 1:9)

2. Romans 9:29.

"And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabbath had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah. What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." (Romans 9:29-33 and Isaiah 1:9 and Psalms 118:22 and Isaiah 8:14, and Isaiah 28:16)

3. Isaiah 49:23.

"Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shall know that I am the LORD; for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me." (Isaiah 49:22,23)

4. Romans 10:11.

"For the scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." (Romans 10:11)

III. The New Remnant of the New Foundation Stone of faith identified.

1. Isaiah 10:22,23.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness." (Isaiah 10:20-22)

2. Romans 9:27.

"As he saith also in Ossia, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto the, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. Esaias also cried concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." (Romans 9:25-27, Hosea 2:23, Hosea 1:10, and Isaiah 1:9 and Isaiah 10:22,23)

3. Isaiah 53:1.

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" (Isaiah 53:1)

WHO CAN BE SAVED AND WHO WILL BELIEVE THE REPORT OF THE GOSPEL IN ORDER TO BE SAVED? THE NEW REMNANT OF JEWS AND GENTILES!

4. Romans 10:16.

"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, all day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." (Romans 10:16-21 and Isaiah 53:1 and Psalms 19:4 and Deuteronomy 32:21 and Isaiah 65:1 Isaiah 65:2)

IV. Even as the real Captivity is spiritual, so also the real remnant of a few Gentiles and Jews is the real nation of the new earth.

1. Isaiah 52:5.

"Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people are taken away for naught? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed. Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak; behold, it is I." (Isaiah 52:5,6)

2. Romans 2:24.

"For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you (the Jews), as it is written." (Romans 2:24)

3. Isaiah 65:1.

"I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name." (Isaiah 65:1)

4. Romans 10:20,21.

"But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, all day long I have

stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.” (Romans 10:20,21 and Isaiah 65:1 and Isaiah 65:2)

V. All the Gospel implications of Jesus as the new foundation stone for the new remnant.

1. Israel as a nation has not been able to see and hear this Gospel, nor to become part of the new remnant.

2. All of “Israel”, the new remnant, is not of the nation of Israel; but all of this “Israel”, the new remnant, shall be saved.

3. The Covenant of God with this new remnant of the new nation of “Israel”, of a few Jews and Gentiles, includes that God will take away their sins. Even as this new remnant is the real Israel, so the real Captivity and Restoration is the taking away of the bondage of this sin.

4. God the Father has pre-determined and even sworn on the fact in the Old Testament that every single knee on this earth and in history shall bow to Him and confess that He alone is God.

5. It was predicted by the Prophet Isaiah that Gentiles would believe in the root of Jesse and David, Jesus the foundation stone.

6. The ones that God has spoken of in Isaiah and the rest of the Old Testament, those of the new remnant of the new nation of Israel, will see, hear, understand, and believe the Gospel of the foundation stone of Jesus.