

Gospel of John II Grace, Truth, Love

(Background & John 1)

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It's certainly good that we're going through this series in the book of John. I've just been excited about it from the point of view that it gives me the opportunity to study in the Greek and really get in and refresh and review the Greek.

It's like anything else if you don't use it on a daily basis then you lose a certain proficiency in it. This has helped me redo it. When Dr. Dorothy taught the Greek class to us—it was a special tutoring class that we had; not a regular college course—and he said that one of the reasons he really like that was because it could refresh him with his Greek. He knows Greek, Latin, German, and he studied Hebrew. So, he knows all those languages and is very, very proficient in it. I found it very exciting that way myself.

I know that when we come back from doing one part, we may very well have a review because, obviously, certain sections will be so loaded that it will be impossible to be able to get all the information in it. There's just a couple of things I wanted to review concerning the first chapter.

In part 1 we ended with John 1:16. I wanted to review concerning the Word of God that is very, very important. We'll be coming back to some of these from time-to-time.

John 6:63—the words of Christ: “It is the **Spirit that gives life...** [that's very, very important for us to understand this] **...the flesh profits nothing...**”—tie that in with:

Matthew 16:25: “For whoever desires to save his life shall lose it; but whoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.”

John 6:63: “**...the flesh profits nothing...**” I am convinced that this is why the human experience is such that we come to a point in life where we realize that, as human beings, there just isn't anything really worthwhile. I mean look at the world and all the supposed good that they do.

In reference to the problems in the world, one man said—on the radio—that he's traveled the world over and he's been in these third/fourth-world developing countries, and there is ‘no way that things will ever change, because of the hatred that is perpetuated. As long as you have a religion—such as the Muslims and others have—where that if you die by the sword, then you have your reward.’

One of the callers commented that Christians don't think like that, they turn the other cheek; but the Muslims turn the other sword! It really pointed out this Scripture: “**...the flesh profits nothing...**” Absolutely nothing! That means all the things of this physical world, all the things that we can amass, acquire, do or whatever, it *profits nothing!*

Jesus went on to say something very important: “...The words that I speak to you... [the very name of Jesus is *the Word!*] **...they are Spirit and they are Life**” (v 63).

We're going to see certain things that John emphasizes all the way through. One of the things that I want us to keep in mind, as we're studying through the book of John is why does he make certain statements? We'll see one of them. He will make a certain statement, and I think the only reason why that statement is there is because the writer is combating something that has been going on.

There's something else about the Word of Christ. All of these I could say are profound, important, whatever I need to say to make it really stick home. This is why we need to focus in on this continuously so we can really know and understand.

Luke 21:32, Jesus said: “Truly I say to you...” Greek: ‘amen lego humin’—*amen, truly, so be it*; you will see this an awful lot in the book of John. In the book of John we will see that he goes ‘amen, amen lego humin.’ He does it twice. Anytime that it is done twice, that really gives the emphasis to it.

“*...there is no way...* [not possible] ...that this generation shall pass away until all *these things* have taken place. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but **My words...** [‘logoi’—the plural form of ‘logos’] **...shall never pass away**” (vs 32-33).

How important are the words of Christ? That's a pretty substantive thing; this is as close to swearing by something as you could come to, though it's not swearing. The earth is here, heaven is here, so how important are Christ's words? *Fantastically important, brethren!* We cannot emphasize the importance of it.

I have the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, and I'll read to you what an atheist wrote

about the book of John. It's really amazing how these men will come along and just throw this out and throw that out and throw the other thing out and take to themselves to try and rearrange everything. They don't even know why he wrote the book of John. They don't understand what is in here. The reason they don't is because the words are 'Spirit and they are Life.'

Jesus said here, "...**My words shall never pass away.**" Jesus said the same thing in Mark 13:31 and Matt. 24:35^[transcriber's correction] that 'heaven and earth shall pass away, but **My words shall never pass away.**

Let's so to the Old Testament and see something very important. Sometimes, as human beings, we get to feeling that since God is not right here looking over our shoulders, somehow it doesn't make any difference what we do. But that's not the case. God doesn't have to be looking over our shoulders.

It's like a three-year-old girl that got caught for doing something really bad, and her mother was sitting down talking to her and was saying, 'Why did you do this, you knew it was bad.' The little girl said, 'Here in my bedroom God can't see me.' She thought that with the ceiling there and she couldn't see through it so God can't see her.

God doesn't need to be looking over our shoulders to tell us what to do. He doesn't behave as a man. The words of God are absolutely important.

Isaiah 5:24: "Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame burns up the chaff; their root shall be like rottenness, and their blossoms shall go up like dust because they have cast away the Law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel." If I had a Septuagint I'm sure that that would be translated 'Logos,' which is *the Word*.

If you cast away the Word of God, in a sense you're casting away Christ. If we can understand, in the word 'Logos' is embodied in everything concerning what God would say to us:

- the words of God
- Christ is the Spokesman
- the words that He inspired in the Old Testament
- the words that He inspired in the New Testament

All of those are embodied in that very statement that Christ is the Logos. Let's see how important this concept is; this is always true of God:

Isaiah 1:19: "If you are willing and

obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured *with* the sword'... [notice this statement, and Isaiah uses it quite often]: ...**for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it.**" (vs 19-20). That's how powerful the words of God are. This surely did happen. This happened to Israel; this happened to Judah. When it says, "...**for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it,**" That's very weighty to understand. All Christ has to do is *speak it* and it is so! That's how the universe is upheld: *by the word of His power!*

- Isaiah 40:5: "...for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."
- Isaiah 58:14: "...for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it."
- Jeremiah 9:12: "...to whom the mouth of the LORD has spoken..."

Isaiah 40 has to do with the prophecy of the second coming of Christ, and also right in the midst of that is the prophecy concerning John the Baptist.

Isaiah 40:3: "A voice is calling out in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together..." (vs 3-5).

If there are some devout Christians who believe in the 'secret rapture' and that Christ is coming unseen, I don't know how on earth they can read these Scriptures, Rev. 1:5, the places in Matt. 24, Luke 17; 21 about how Christ is going to come. ***Every eye shall see Him!***

"...**for the mouth of the LORD has spoken**" (v 5). With that emphasis after seeing the background of how important the Word is, that is a tremendous statement. ***Every eye shall see Him!***

We're going to find that the book of John is very, very important in the flow of the Gospels. One other thing that I didn't mention in the background in part one of this series is the sense of the feeling I get—which can probably be substantiated in history—is that one of the reasons why John was writing it this particular way—in addition to God inspiring him to do so—was that because the preponderance of the Gentile feeling against the Jews was so vehement, John wrote this to re-establish the fact that John makes the statement in John 4 that *salvation is of the Jews*.

When we get to John 4 we'll go through and study all the symbolism that is there. I think you're

going to be surprised who, in symbolism, the woman at the well really is.

John 1:16: “And **of His fullness** we have all received...” The Greek is ‘pleroo’—*to be absolutely filled*:

- the fullness of His ministry
- the fullness of what He’s going to say next

“...and grace upon grace” (v 16). We’ll have something more to say about *grace* {note sermon series: *Grace of God*} and really cover that very thoroughly.

If you receive the grace of God, which we do when we are called, is there anything greater in this life that you can receive? *There’s really nothing greater in this life you can receive than the grace of God!* That’s why it says, that we have received “...His fullness...and grace upon grace.”

Verse 17: “For the Law was given through Moses...” The Law was very important. The Law is the foundation that was given through Moses. Moses—aside from Adam—was the most important human being from the time of Adam to Moses. It skips everybody else. Moses was the foundation, under God, of the Old Testament. The Law came through Moses. Notice what it says of Christ:

“...and **the grace and the Truth** came through Jesus Christ” (v 17).

Verse 3: “...came into being...” the Greek is ‘egeneto’ and comes from the root ‘ginomai’ that means *came into being*. This is interesting how he uses this word ‘egeneto’ **that the grace and the Truth came into being through Jesus Christ!**

Grace of God:

Now, let’s look at some things in the Bible concerning the grace of God. We’ll take just a couple of these and go through it in detail when we get to another section. We’re going to find something interesting about the Gospel. The Gospel means *good news*, and there is the good news of the Kingdom of God. There is also the good news or the Gospel of the Grace of God. The Kingdom of God is yet coming; the *grace of God* is here now.

Acts 20:24: “But I myself do not take any of *these* things into account, nor do I hold my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, **to fully testify**... [witness to] ...**the Gospel of the Grace of God**. And now behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the Kingdom of God, will see my face no more” (vs 24-25).

Notice how closely tied together the good news of the *grace of God*—which he received from Jesus Christ—and the preaching of the Kingdom of God are tied together. You really can’t preach the Kingdom of God unless you preach about the *grace of Jesus Christ*.

Here, again, we have a comparison between Moses and Jesus. This is Paul speaking in the synagogue, Acts 13:38: “Therefore, be it known to you, men *and* brethren, that through this Man *the* remission of sins is preached to you... [which is part of the *grace of God*] ...And in Him everyone who believes is justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses” (vs 38-39). There again we’re contrasting Jesus Christ and Moses.

Remember, we just read that the Law came through Moses, and **the grace** and **the Truth** through Jesus Christ.

Verse 43: “Now, after the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the Jews and the proselytes who worshiped *there* followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the **grace of God**.... [now for all those who believe in Sunday-keeping]: ...And on the coming Sabbath, almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the Word of God” (vs 43-44).

Part of the grace of God involves Sabbath-keeping. If you just put the two together, simply put, part of the grace of God does involve Sabbath-keeping; as well as all of the other things concerning the *grace of God*.

We know that we are justified by grace, and in Revelation 22:21: “**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ** be with you all. Amen.” It is a good way to end the Bible— isn’t it?

It’s interesting, which we can see, go up to v 20 and it says, “...Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

In several places in the Bible we find this in the four sections of the book of Psalms, there is the Amen, Amen. When it ends a section there are two Amens. When it ends the Bible we have two Amens.

Ephesians 1:2 shows us about the grace of God and grace to us: “Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ.”

Verse 6: “To *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of **His grace** in the Beloved *Son*.” That’s why, in spite of all the difficulties and things we go through, we need to have the hope, joy, faith and things that come from God, because He has made us *accepted in Christ!* or

as *Christ!* The voice came out of heaven twice and the disciples heard it: *This is My Beloved Son—the Beloved—the only Begotten in Whom I am well pleased!* We're accepted on that level and basis, and that's fantastic.

Verse 7: "In Whom we have redemption through His blood..." In Acts 13 there were certain things that were not forgiven through Moses. You could only be justified to the temple. Here you're justified to God the Father in heaven above.

"...even the remission of sins, **according to the riches of His grace**, which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence; having made known to us the mystery of His own will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself" (vs 7-9).

The grace and the Truth came into being through Jesus Christ.

The Truth & Love:

Let's study a little bit about Truth. Study through your concordance about Truth. I think you're going to be absolutely amazed. Jesus let His disciples know the Truth of God's Word:

John 8:31: "Therefore, Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, 'If you continue... [remain and live in] ...in My Word...' Look at it very carefully, there are two definite articles, that makes it very, very definite, which means that 'if you abide in *the Word, the Word of Mine*. When the definite article is there it has a very distinct meaning.

"...you are truly My disciples. And you shall know **the** Truth, and **the** Truth shall set you free" (vs 31-32). There are certain things concerning the Truth of God that go together. We have *grace and Truth*, we also have *Truth and love*.

Notice how this ties in together, and this is what I like about the writings of John so much; they all tie together and fit together so nicely and just add one to the other as you're going along; just like beautiful building blocks.

1-John 1:6: "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness..." When we come to John 3 we're going to talk a little bit more about *the Light*, because there's something that's very important that we need to realize: *If we are seeking God's way we will be walking to the Light, so that our deeds will be shown by the Light that they are of God!*

"...we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing **the Truth**" (v 6).

- if *the Truth* is about God the Father and Jesus Christ
- if *the Truth* is about the grace of God
- if *the Truth* is about everything that came into being through Jesus Christ

then it's very important that we understand these things.

1-John 2:4: "The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and **the Truth** is not in him." John really hits this thing of *Truth, Light, and love* all the way through.

1-John 3:18: "My little children, we should not love in word, nor with *our* tongues; rather, *we should love in deed and in Truth*... [there we have love and Truth connected] ...And in this way we know that we are of **the Truth**, and shall assure our hearts before Him" (vs 18-19).

That's one thing we have to know. If you are not convinced by God's Spirit in your mind that you are "**...of the Truth...**" then that's what they have to convince themselves of. They have to go seek it; they have to ask God to make it *real* to them. *Come to the Light and then the Truth will set you free!* That's what Jesus said.

1-John 4:6: "We are of God..." Greek: 'ek'—*out from*; in other words, having God's Holy Spirit that comes *out from* God the Father to us.

"...the one who knows God... [there's only one God] ...listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the **Spirit of the Truth** and the spirit of the deception" (v 6). Very important! There is a spirit that comes from the 'prince of the power of the air.' That spirit that works in all the children of disobedience, which is *the spirit of the error!*

Eph. 4:12 is very important, because it tells us something that was happening and why we have so many *false* Christianities and how soon they started:

Ephesians 4:12—the purpose of the ministry: "For the perfecting of the saints, for *the* work of *the* ministry, for *the* edifying of the body of Christ; until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ; so that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about **with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men in cunning craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error**" (vs 12-14).

How do you systematize an error? *You dogmatize it!* They were, at that time, systematizing

by renaming all the pagan things ‘Christian’ and they were *systematizing the error!* You don’t get this in the *King James Version*. When you tie it in with 1-John—that you have *the Spirit of the Truth* and *the spirit of the error*—here is a system that has doctrines, when you hear them you are *tossed to and fro*. You hear one way that *sounds good*, then you hear it another way and that *sounds good*.

Verse 14: “So that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about **with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men in cunning craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error.**” We have seen that even within the Church of God, where there were people who came along to ‘systematize’—make part of the system—the error of belief, such as the primacy of Peter and all of the things that have propelled us to the point that we assemble together.

Maybe this helps us understand what happens in a Church of God when love leaves the Church of God. What enters in? *I think it will be very clear!* When love starts to leave a Church of God what enters in? *Error!* Notice John’s writing to combat the error in 2-John. {Note sermon series: *Epistles of John*}

2-John 1: “The elder to *the* chosen lady and her children, whom I **love in Truth...**” Love and Truth together.

- What happens when there is a lack of love within a church? *The church is losing Truth*, because they go together.
- When you lose Truth, what do you accept? *There’s never a vacuum, you accept error!* Error is *sin!*
- Why does the *love* of many grow cold? *Because of iniquity or sin!*

So, whenever you have a church where the love is growing cold, they are allowing error in, in place of Truth, which is sin and love cannot grow! ***Love can only grow in an atmosphere of Truth!***

“...and not I alone, but also all those who have known the Truth; for *the* sake of the Truth that is dwelling in us, and shall be with us forever: Grace, mercy, and peace shall be with us from God *the* Father, and from *the* Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in **Truth and love**” (vs 1-3). So, John emphasizes ***Truth and love!***

John 1:17: “For the Law was given through Moses, and **the grace and the Truth came through Jesus Christ.**” You see how weighty that statement is when you bring to bear the other Scriptures to it? How much more meaning it has?

Verse 18: “**No one has seen God at any**

time...” John wrote this about 85_{A.D.} and you put that together with the background that there were many antichrists. We know the history of Simon Magus. If you want a real interesting study see the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (pdf version online) and read about Simon Magus.

- he said that he was the father
- he said that he was Christ
- he said that he has seen God
- Why do you think this is written?
- Who saw Simon Magus face-to-face, person-to-person?
- Who refused to lay hands on him?
- ***Peter and John!***

John outlived Peter; he saw all the things that were going on. We come to 2-John and he talks about ***the love*** and ***the Truth*** and ***the commandments***, and ***knowing God!*** When he makes a statement, and you read *no one has seen God at any time* and you go right on to the next verse. There’s a lot that that says: ***NO ONE has seen God at any time!***

(go to the next track)

Here is something that in the discourse about Nicodemus and Jesus talking—which we will get into in John 3; and we’ll do an in-depth study into the Greek words concerning *begotten*, *born* and all the thing about *born again*. I think we’ll find it very interesting.

This is a parenthetical statement that John has written in here, John 3:13: “(And no one has ascended into heaven, except He Who came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man, Who is in heaven.)” John wrote that because no one has come down from heaven *except the Son of man*, and no one has gone up to heaven *except the Son of man*. That’s why John said, “...except He Who came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man, Who is in heaven.” At the time that he was writing this, Christ was in heaven, right in the middle of a dissertation, between Nicodemus and Jesus about being born again.

That’s why, when we go back to Exo. 33-34, Moses becomes—to the time of Christ—the most important human being to have walked the face of the earth, in one respect. We know that no one has seen God the Father. Every account except right here of seeing God the Father or God *was in vision*. Moses was only human being to have ever seen God eyeball to person. He didn’t see Him eye-to-eye, but he was the only one with his own eyes to literally see God! That’s why he’s the most important human being that ever existed until Christ, because no one

has ever done that. No one has ever seen God.

Here we find in Exodus 33:17: “And the LORD said to Moses, ‘I will do this thing also that you have spoken, for you have found grace in My sight... [what do you know, there’s even grace back here having to do with Moses] ...and I know you by name.’ And he said, ‘I beseech You, show me Your glory.’ And He said, ‘I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.’ And He said, ‘**You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live.**’” (vs 17-20).

So, no human being can see God and live; that is face-to-face. Why? *Because of the power and the righteousness of God!* Men as sinners cannot exist in the presence of God. That’s is why God’s grace is so fantastic, that He looks through *all* of that and brings us to His level. That is absolutely fantastic! Then God told Moses that ‘you can get in a little crevice over here and you can see My backside.’ And this is exactly what happened.

Exodus 34:5: “And the LORD came down in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth’” (vs 5-6).

If you want to know just a little bit about the truth of the politics of the world, every nation that blesses us is blessed; every nation that curses us is cursed. You can see that as an absolute truism; it just works that way.

Verse 7: “‘Keeping mercy to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but Who will by no means clear *the guilty*... [give license to the guilty to continue sinning] ...visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, to the third and to the fourth generation.’ And Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped” (vs 7-8).

Whenever you read a verse like that it’s always good to ask: ‘I wonder what Moses felt like at that time?’ You know how you have your own emotions, your own feelings. I wonder what he felt like at that time when he saw God and heard that and saw the backside of God? Actually eyeball to back, and God was right there and said these things. Moses bowed down and put his face on the ground. I wonder what was going through his head? I wonder

how he felt inside? It must have been quite an experience.

John the Baptist:

John 1:18: “No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*. And this is the testimony of John [the Baptist]...” (vs 18-19). This is very important. I will cover a little bit more of this when we get to John 6 or 7, and there is a special sermon I will bring to cover this.

“...when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem...” (v 19). Why would they send priests and Levites to go see John? Did you ever ask that question?

In your neighborhood, if there was something suspicious going on you would call the police to find out what’s going on. They sent priests and Levites: “...to ask him, ‘Who are you?’” (v 19). Why would they want to go down and ask John who he was?

Verse 20: “Then he *freely* admitted, and did not deny, but declared, ‘**I am not the Christ.**’” That’s quite a statement! Why would he say that? *Because they were looking for a Christ!*

- Remember the events that happened at the birth of John?
- Remember the events that happened at the birth of Christ and shortly there after?
- Remember what happened when Jesus, at age 12, went to the temple?

Verse 21: “And they asked him, ‘Then who *are you*? Are you Elijah?’...” Why would they ask him if he’s Elijah? They were reading the Scriptures. Remember when Herod called the Levites and said, ‘Where did it say that the King of the Jews would be born? *They said, ‘The Scripture says Bethlehem!’* They knew where to look. Why did they say, “...Are you Elijah?...”

Malachi 4:5 “Behold, I *will* send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the LORD.” They were looking for that. Later Jesus tells us that John the Baptist was Elijah! John didn’t know that. Jesus told us that.

John 1:21: “...And he said, ‘I am not.’ *Then they asked, ‘Are you the Prophet?’...*” {Note sermon: *That Prophet*} There’s a prophecy that Moses gave:

Deuteronomy 18:15: “The LORD your God will raise up unto **you a Prophet** from the midst of you, of your brethren, **One like me**. To Him you shall hearken.”

John 1:21: "...And he answered, 'No.' Therefore, they said to him, 'Who are you?'..." (vs 21-22). They had to give an account.

"...What do you say about yourself so that we may give an answer to those who sent us?" He said, 'I *am* a voice crying in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of *the* Lord," as Isaiah the prophet said'" (vs 22-23). John knew who he was.

I don't know exactly how God spoke to John, but it was probably much like it was in the Old Testament, 'The Word of the Lord came to...' such and such a prophet. It's interesting that it is said that way even though it was in vision. Who is the Word of the Lord? *Christ!*

Isaiah 40:1: "'Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people,' says your God. 'Speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.' A voice is calling out in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.' A voice says, 'Cry!' And he said, 'What shall I cry? All flesh *is* grass, and all the beauty of it *is* as the flower of the field'" (vs 1-6). We're going to see this in Matt. 3, what he likened in relationship to sin.

Verse 7: "'The grass withers, the flower fades because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people *are* grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the Word of our God shall stand forever.' Go up for yourself on the high mountain; O you that bring good tidings to Zion. Lift up your voice with strength, O you who tell good tidings to Jerusalem; lift up, do not be afraid. Say to the cities of Judah, '**Behold your God!**'" (vs 8-9). That's exactly what John the Baptist was doing in preparing the way for Christ.

This has a dual meaning because there is an Elijah coming before 'the great and dreadful Day of the Lord.' He is going to be doing the same thing. When the Jews hear it this time, it's going to be quite a different reaction than it was that time.

Again, we find the same thing, the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to the baptism of John, Matthew 3:1: "Now, in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' For this is he who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying, '*The* voice of one crying in the

wilderness, "Prepare the way of *the* Lord, make straight His paths.'" Now, John himself wore a garment of camel's hair, and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him *those from* Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the country around the Jordan" (vs 1-5).

Why do you think that they sent the priests and Levites down there? *Because there were so many people going!* They wanted to find out what was going on.

Verse 6: "And were being baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But after seeing many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, '*You* brood of vipers... [a bunch of snakes in the grass] ...who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, produce fruits worthy of repentance; and do not think to say within yourselves, "We have Abraham *for our* father"; for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. But already the axe is striking at the roots of the trees; therefore, every tree that is not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into *the* fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but the One *Who is* coming after me is mightier than I, of Whom I am not fit to carry His sandals; He shall baptize you with *the* Holy Spirit, and with fire... [the grass withers, the flowers fade] ...Whose winnowing shovel *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather His wheat into the granary; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire'" (vs 6-12). That's a pretty heady message!

I'm going to be anxious when the second John the Baptist comes on the scene and see what he's going to do. I think the more we get into the traumatic events at the end of the world, the more it's going to come as a shock and surprise to the world. I would not be too surprised to see that coincide with the rise of the Catholic Church. When it's coming into its final phase then God is going to raise up Elijah and prepare the way.

John 1:24: "Now, those who had been sent belonged to *the sect* of the Pharisees, and they asked him, saying to him, 'Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ...'" (vs 24-25). That tells you that they understood that when Christ came there would be baptism. Otherwise, why even ask the question.

"...nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them, saying, 'I baptize with water, but there is one *Who* stands among you Whom you do not know. He it is Who comes after me, *but* Who has precedence over me; of Whom I am not worthy to

loose the thong of His sandal.’ These things took place in Bethabara across the Jordan, where John was baptizing” (vs 25-28).

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 6:63
- 2) Matthew 16:25
- 3) John 6:63
- 4) Luke 21:32-33
- 5) Isaiah 5:24
- 6) Isaiah 1:19-20
- 7) Isaiah 40:5
- 8) Isaiah 58:14
- 9) Jeremiah 9:12
- 10) Isaiah 40:3-5
- 11) John 1:16-17, 3
- 12) Acts 20:24-25
- 13) Acts 13:38-39, 43-44
- 14) Revelation 22:21, 20
- 15) Ephesians 1:2, 6-9
- 16) John 8:31-32
- 17) 1 John 1:6
- 18) 1 John 2:4
- 19) 1 John 3:18-20
- 20) 1 John 4:6
- 21) Ephesians 4:12-14
- 22) 2 John 1-3
- 23) John 1:17-18
- 24) John 3:13
- 25) Exodus 33:17-20
- 26) Exodus 34:5-8
- 27) John 1:18-21
- 28) Malachi 4:5
- 29) John 1:21
- 30) Deuteronomy 18:15
- 31) John 1:21-23
- 32) Isaiah 40:1-9
- 33) Matthew 3:1-12
- 34) John 1:24-28

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Mark 13:31
- Matthew 24:35
- Revelation 1:5
- Luke 17
- John 4; 3

Also referenced:

Books:

- *Interlinear: Greek-English New Testament* by George Ricker Berry
- *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*

- *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (pdf version online)
- Sermon Series:
- *Grace of God*
 - *Epistles of John*
- Sermon: *That Prophet*

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