

I AM

34TH

ANNUAL

BIBLICAL VIEWPOINTS

LECTURESHIP • 11/2-6/2014

SUNDAY: 10:00AM, 6:30PM • WEEKNIGHTS: 7:00PM

"I Am"

34th Annual
Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship
November 2–6, 2014

CONTENTS

Roby Ellis

"I Am" (Introduction).....p. 1

Eddy Craft

The Bread of Life.....p. 6

Tim Haywood

The Light of the World.....p. 8

Dan Bailey

The Good Shepherd..... p. 11

David Pharr

The Way, the Truth,
and the Life.....p. 14

Benny Burns

The True Vine.....p. 17

Tracy Dugger

The Alpha and the
Omega.....p. 19

"I Am"

34th Annual Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship
Sunday AM, November 2, 2014
Roby Ellis

Scripture Reading: John 8:48–59

Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"⁴⁹ Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.⁵⁰ And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges.⁵¹ Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."⁵² Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.'⁵³ Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?"⁵⁴ Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God.⁵⁵ Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word.⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."⁵⁷ Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."⁵⁹ Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

Introduction

- A. Particularly in the fourth gospel, Jesus attributes to Himself a number of descriptive terms using the seemingly simple phrase "I am."
1. After feeding the five thousand, He told those who sought Him the next day, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). Whereas their bellies had grown hungry again after receiving the physical bread He had given, Jesus urged them to take the spiritual bread that He offered to satisfy themselves forever.
 2. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12). Jesus then demonstrated this power in a physical sense by opening the eyes of a man born blind (John 9).
 3. Jesus identified Himself as the good shepherd (John 10:11); the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6); the true vine (John 15:1); the alpha and the omega (Rev. 1:8); and the root and offspring of David (Rev. 22:16).
 4. When asked by the high priest if He was indeed the Christ, Jesus replied boldly, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:62).
- B. The gospel narratives are full of people trying to figure out who Jesus is.
1. When Jesus preached in Nazareth, the people were saying,

Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us? (Mark 6:2-3).

2. When Jesus spoke the paralytic's sins forgiven, the Pharisees said, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Luke 5:21).
 3. When He calmed the sea, the disciples themselves said, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" (Matt. 8:27).
 4. When Herod Antipas heard about the great things Jesus was doing, he said, "John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?" (Luke 9:9).
 5. When He preached in the temple at the Feast of Tabernacles, some said, "Truly this is the Prophet" (John 7:40). Others were saying, "This is the Christ" (v 41). Still others said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee?" (v 42). Some were saying, "He is good," whereas others said, "He deceives the people" (v 12).
 6. When the Jewish leaders asked Jesus outright, "Who are you?" (John 8:25), He replied, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning."
- C. There is still a lot of confusion about who Jesus is.
1. For some He is nothing more than an idol or an oracle or something even less.
 2. For some He is a political expedient.
 3. For some He is a charm worn on a necklace or a household ornament.
 4. For a few He is the center of their lives, the reason for every decision they make, and the motivation for every difficult thing they do.
- D. Like those of the first century who heard Him preach in their streets, we all have to decide who Jesus is and what role we will let Him play in our lives.

Discussion

- I. Let's think about the connotation of the phrase "I am."
 - A. For the Jews, this phrase plainly echoed the words of the Almighty from ages past.
 1. When Moses asked God how he should answer the people when they asked the name of the God who had sent him, He replied, "I AM WHO I AM. Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Ex. 3:14).

2. Isaiah wrote, "Who has performed and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first; and with the last I am He.'" (Isa. 41:4).

B. When Jesus spoke this phrase, it was more than a simple affirmation about His identity; it was a profession of His deity.

1. When Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58), His meaning was certainly clear enough to the Jews who "took up stones to throw at Him" (v 59).

Note: This statement is so bold and plain that the Jehovah's Witnesses (who deny the deity of Christ) changed the verb to a perfect tense in their version: "I have been" (New World Translation, 1950).

2. This was not a usurpation, for Jesus *is* God, and the claim is a rightful one.

i. Although I would not fully endorse the NLT as one's primary translation, I find that its rendering of one passage helps to clarify this point very well:

Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to.

Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being (Php. 2:6-7).

ii. As John points out from the start (John 1:1-3), Jesus was in every respect equal with the Father.

C. The phrase "I am" also entails an assurance of God's abiding presence with us.

1. When Gabriel announced the coming of Christ to Joseph, Matthew says,

All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." (Matt. 1:22-23).

2. Jesus' statement is a present-tense truth that transcends time and circumstance.

i. You will often find graffiti announcing the trivial fact that someone "was here," but Jesus' declaration says that He still "is here."

ii. In fact, just before His ascension to heaven, Jesus assured the twelve, "I am [*ego eimi*] with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

D. The phrase "I am" tells us that Jesus is with us and that His presence has the power to make all the difference in our lives.

II. Now let's consider the consequences of the phrase "I am."

A. What were the consequences of this phrase for Jesus?

1. The mere utterance of this truth so infuriated the Jews that they tried to stone Him twice-- once at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 8:59) and again at the Feast of Dedication (John 10:30-39).

Note: On the latter occasion, they explained their reason for wanting to stone Him: "Because You, being a Man, make Yourself God" (v 33).

2. When Jesus made this statement before the high priest (Mark 14:62), the entire complexion of the proceedings against Him changed dramatically.
 - i. Up to this point the Jews had no crime with which to charge Jesus, and no credible witnesses against Him could be produced or even bought (vv 55-59).
 - ii. When Jesus confessed His deity outright, they considered themselves all to be witnesses, not only of blasphemy, but also of treason against the powers of Rome (v 63; Luke 23:1).
3. When Jesus affirmed His rightful claim as King of the Jews to the governor (John 18:37), the scale tipped at once in favor of conviction and crucifixion.
4. Had Jesus only denied His deity before the high priest or before Pilate or had He merely chosen not to openly affirm His identity, no charges could have been brought against Him, but, as Paul says, even if others deny Him, "He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. 2:12-13).
5. So Jesus "witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate" (1 Tim. 6:13) at the expense of His own earthly life in order that we might have eternal life.

B. What are the consequences for those who believe that "He is"?

1. Our belief and confession that Jesus is God could cost us our mortal lives, but it will mean eternal salvation (Rom. 10:9-10).
2. The fact that "He is" means that we are never alone in our struggle.
 - i. We have the assurance of Him who said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb. 13:4).
 - ii. As a result, "we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (v 5).
3. David put it this way: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4).

C. What are the consequences for those who don't believe?

1. The fact that Jesus' tomb is empty means that Jesus is out there somewhere, and Paul said that this was God's confirmation that Jesus would be the one to judge the entire world in righteousness on that Day (Acts 17:30–31).
 2. Jesus told the Jews, "If you do not believe that I am He [*ego eimi*], you will die in your sins" (John 8:24).
 3. We may choose to deny Him (to our own peril) if we wish, but the fact nevertheless remains that the tomb is empty and that "He is"!
- D. The phrase "I am" may seem small and inconsequential, but the truth is that there have never been greater consequences attached to two little words.

Conclusion and Invitation

- A. What is Jesus to your life?
1. Is He the rock upon which your anchor is cast during the storms of life?
 2. Is He the reason for every decision that you make and all that you do?
 3. Is He the bread that sustains you, the light that directs you, the shepherd whom you follow, the king who rules over you?
 4. Is He the beginning and the end for you?
- B. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE
JOHN 6
EDDY CRAFT

INTRODUCTION:

1. This discourse is a sequel to the miracle of feeding the 5,000.
2. Jesus rebuked the crowd for their material motive in seeking Him. v. 26. and
3. Overlooking spiritual blessings, they sought loaves and fishes.
4. The conversation, which followed, involves four groups: the multitude, v. 25-40; the Jews, v. 41-59; the disciples, v. 60-66; and the twelve, v. 67-71.

I. DISCUSSION BETWEEN JESUS AND *THE MULTITUDE*. v. 25-40.

- A. Their motive was strictly material - earthly king, food for body.
- B. Jesus had something far more important for the world than mere physical Blessings. v. 26, 27.
- C. They did not understand the figurative language.
- D. Jesus shows His superiority over Moses. v. 32-33.
- E. I Am The Bread Of Life! v. 35-40. Here He reaches the climax of His Discussion.

II. DISSATISFACTION ON THE PART OF *THE JEWS*. v. 41-51.

- A. The Jews begun then to complain. They thought that He was the son of Joseph – thus they had incomplete knowledge.
- B. Jesus reiterated His claim and further explained it. V. 43-51.
- C. To receive blessings of the true bread it must be drawn by the Father. V. 44-45. This does not exclude mans will. John 5:40; Matthew 23:37.

III. DISSENSION AMONG *THE JEWS*. v. 52-59.

- A. The Jews strove among themselves.
- B. Here come the: "How Can" questions.
- C. Jesus makes His claims stronger than ever. "Eat" the flesh and "drink" the blood – figures of speech. Christ is the only way one can be saved.

IV. *DEFECTION OF THE DISCIPLES*. V. 60-66.

- A. The disciples said, "This is a hard saying." v. 60. Not hard to understand but hard to accept. Why was it hard to accept?
 - 1. Jesus reply: 61-65. Does this offend (ensnare, cause to stumble) you? He was speaking figuratively – referred to His ascension. His words were *spiritual* and gave life.
 - 2. The result – many left Him. V. 66. Those who followed Jesus for physical go back when difficult things are demanded of them! The worldly-minded are offended by The gospel (I Cor. 1:18,23).

V. *DEVOTION OF THE TWELVE*. v. 67-71.

- A. Jesus position to them. V. 67.
- B. Jesus would not make it any easier for His disciples either.
- C. Peter's reply: 68-69. "To whom shall we go?" How would you answer that question? The Good Confession!
- D. The exception to that devotion – Judas (v. 70-71.)

CONCLUSION:

- A. In this study we have seen that Jesus is truly the Bread of Life! That being true then why are men today turning to every source under the sun but Jesus?
- B. Jesus being the bread of life should we not be: members of His Church, obey His plan of salvation, teach only the doctrine of Christ and worship only the way He teaches in His word?
- C. His word will be the book that we shall be judged by at the last day, John 12:48.

*The outline for this lesson was basically taken from "Show us the father" by W.T. Hamilton.

"I Am the Light of the World"

Tim Haywood

Text: John 8:1-12

Introduction:

- a. Under the cover of night, a woman finds herself in the bed of a man who is not her husband.
- b. Under the cover of night, a group of men find themselves waiting for the woman to commit sin.
- c. In the darkness of early morning Jesus leaves the Mount of Olives for the temple where He had taught the night before, with many leaving wondering, "Who is this man?" (John 7:40-41, 7:51)
- d. In the early morning Jesus begins to teach in the temple when the scribes and Pharisees bring in the adulterous woman. (John 8:2-11)
- e. As the scene with the woman begins to dissolve and the sun is rising, Jesus answers the burning question from the night before; "I Am the Light of the World." (John 8:12)
- f. The Pharisees did not like this (John 8:13). They were intimidated by light. Their deeds earlier to capture the woman in adultery were done under the cover of darkness.
- g. Jesus tells everyone, "those who follow Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life!"
- h. For the woman caught in adultery, this offer brings hope and comfort.
- i. For the Pharisees, this offer is a threat.

Thesis: The responsibility of all Christians is to reflect the light and all His qualities to the world.

I. Light Chases Away Darkness

- a. Light and darkness cannot occupy the same space. Isaiah 59:1-2
- b. God and darkness cannot occupy the same space. I John 1:5-7
- c. Christians and darkness cannot occupy the same space. II Corinthians 6:14
- d. Priests and darkness cannot occupy the same space. I Peter 2:9

II. Light Exposes

- a. Light exposes the path. John 11:10, Psalm 119:105
- b. Light exposes danger. Luke 1:79, John 12:35
- c. Light exposes evil deeds. John 3:19-21
- d. Light exposes darkness. Ephesians 5:12-13

III. Light Nourishes

- a. Sunlight nourishes with Vitamin D, lowers blood pressure (*Journal of Investigative Dermatology* January 20, 2014), and prevents MS later in life for children exposed at a young age (*Neurology* July 24, 2007).
- b. Son-Light nourishes with every gift. James 1:17, Matthew 6:25-34
- c. Sunlight nourishes plants through the process of photosynthesis in plants, creating simple sugars the plant uses to grow and be fruitful.
- d. Son-light nourishes with fruit. Galatians 5:22-23, Matthew 7:15-20

IV. Light Renews

- a. Light renews during times of trial. Micah 7:8
- b. Light renews daily. II Corinthians 4:16
- c. Light renews eternally. Revelation 21:2-4

V. Light Reflects

- a. The church should reflect light. Matthew 5:14-16, Revelation 2:5
- b. The Law reflects light. Proverbs 6:23, Psalm 1:1-2
- c. Those once in darkness can reflect light. Ephesians 5:8-14

Conclusion:

Christ is the exposing, nourishing, and renewing light of the world that chases away darkness. Are we reflecting that light? As Christians our reflections should cause darkness to disappear when we arrive. Our reflections should expose error and stand up for truth. Our reflections should provide nourishment spiritually and physically to those in need. Our reflection should lead others to the renewing power of the blood of Christ.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD
John 10
Dan C. Bailey

INTRODUCTION

1. Shepherds are prominently found throughout the Bible.
 - a. Abel was a shepherd.
 - b. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were shepherds.
 - c. The twelve sons of Jacob were shepherds.
 - d. Moses, the great giver of the law, was a shepherd.
 - e. David, the sweet singer of Israel, was a shepherd.
 2. It should not seem strange that God's only begotten Son spoke of himself as the Good Shepherd.
 3. The prophets foretold the "Good Shepherd."
 - a. Isaiah 40:11
 - b. Ezekiel 34:23
 - c. Ezekiel 37:24
 - d. Zechariah 13:7
 4. His very birth was announced to "shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night" (Luke 2:8).
 5. In addition to John, chapter 10, Jesus is referred to as the shepherd on several other occasions in the New Testament.
 - a. Hebrews 13:20
 - b. I Peter 2:25
 - c. I Peter 5:4
 6. Let us open our Bibles to John, chapter ten, and let us study together about the Good Shepherd.
- I. The shepherd of the sheep is authorized to enter into the sheepfold by the door. John 10:1-3**
- A. The thieves and robbers are not authorized to enter in by the door.
 - B. The scribes and Pharisees and chief rulers of the Jews, as groups, rejected God's Son, and held to their traditions, false teachings, misconceptions, and prejudicial concepts of the Christ.
 - C. Jesus was authorized and sent by the Father to be our Good Shepherd.
 1. John 3:16-17
 2. Acts 4:11-12
- II. The sheep hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. John 10:3**
- A. All men are expected to hear God's Son. Matthew 17:1-5
 - B. The sheep are those who humble themselves before God.
 - C. They recognize who the Good Shepherd is.
 1. The Good Shepherd calls them by name, they hear his voice, and he leads them out.
 2. The sheep are saved, they are protected, they are loved, their needs are all met.
 - D. David said long ago: Psalm 23:1-6
- III. The sheep follow the Good Shepherd. John 10:4**
- A. No one can follow the Good Shepherd who refuses to obey Him.
 - B. Matthew 16:24-26
 - C. John 10:27-29

- IV. The sheep know or recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd. John 10:4**
- A. John 14:6
 - B. John 8:31-32
 - C. Matthew 7:13-14
- V. The sheep refuse to follow strangers. John 10:5-6**
- A. Matthew 7:15
 - B. I John 4:1
 - C. II John 9-11
- VI. Jesus is not only the Good Shepherd, He is the door of the sheep. John 10:7-9**
- A. We must enter into Christ if we are to be saved — Galatians 3:26-29.
 - B. Genesis 22:18
 - C. Galatians 3:16
 - D. Ephesians 1:3
 - E. Ephesians 1:7
- VII. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep. John 10:10-15**
- A. Jesus went steadfastly to Jerusalem. While in the garden of Gethsemane, He prayed so earnestly that his sweat was as it were great drops of blood.
 - B. Jesus was “despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3).
 - C. The Good Shepherd “endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).
 - D. The Good Shepherd has entered into the Most Holy Place, where He is also our Great High Priest! (Hebrews 9:7; 11-12).
 - E. To God be the glory! To God be the honor! To God be the praise!
- VIII. The Good Shepherd foretold other sheep. John 10:16**
- A. Both Jew and Gentile are in the fold.
 - B. I Corinthians 12:13
 - C. Ephesians 2:16
- IX. There is one fold. John 10:16**
- A. The Good Shepherd has one church or one body. That is one fold.
 - 1. Matthew 16:18
 - 2. Acts 2:47
 - 3. Ephesians 4:4-6
 - 4. If you can have more than one fold, you can have more than one Good Shepherd.
 - 5. If you can have more than one Good Shepherd, you can have more than one fold.
 - B. But Ezekiel said that there would be ONE SHEPHERD!
 - A. Jesus is that Shepherd!

- X. CONCLUSION**
- A. Matthew 11:28-30
- B. Mark 16:5-6
- C. Acts 8:37
- D. I John 5:4-5
- E. Acts 2:38
- F. Isaiah 53:6

"THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE"

John 14:6
David Pharr

One can understand the confusion and bafflement of the disciples at the last Supper. They had been startled by the Master insisting on washing their feet. There had been the shocking revelation that He would be betrayed, and that it would be by one of themselves ("He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.") He told them he was going away and that they could not come with him. When Peter had boldly said he would follow him no matter what, Jesus had said He would deny him before morning. If Peter would so fail, might not they all, they might have wondered. But Jesus said it was as necessary to believe in Him as to believe in God (Father). Then there was his promise to prepare them a place and to come and get them. In all of this they were perplexed. And when Thomas heard him say, "And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," he objected: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"

From our vantage point, after the fulfilment of Christ's ministry, we think we can understand some of these things they did not understand. Yet the world in general knows little of the gospel facts, and few have been able or willing to comprehend the force of Jesus's declaration to Thomas, and to us all. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me."

The words themselves are simple-only one word has more than one syllable, common, every day words. But here is the most dramatic, emphatic, and consequential declaration ever made.

I. First, let's notice the emphasis Jesus put on himself - "I" - "I am."

- A. The Greek words are: *ego*, "I" always emphatic; *eimi*, "I am," also always emphatic. Jesus was saying, "I myself (and no other), I am."
- B. All of the "I am" statements of Jesus have implications of deity.
 1. God had revealed himself to Moses as "I AM THAT I AM"
 2. Jesus had said to the Jews: "Before Abraham was, I am" (Jn. 8:58). Again in verse 24: "For if ye believe not that I am [*he* is supplied]." The point is the necessity of believing that He is "I am" - He is God.
- C. It's all about Jesus. There is no other.
 1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . The Word was made flesh and dwelled among us" (John 1:1f, 14).
 2. ". . . being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Philippians 2:6).
 3. "Who is the image of the invisible God . . ." (Colossians 1:15).
 4. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9).
 5. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person" (Hebrews 1:3).
- D. We have a song, "He is my everything." Christ is our hope (I Timothy 1:1). Christ is our life (Colossians 3:4). Christ is our "all and in all" (Colossians 3:11). And so, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

(Now, consider the second part of the verse: "the way, the truth, and the life . . .")

II. Only God-God the Son could avow that He is the only way to the Father. He is not saying He *knows* the way; nor that He *taught* the way; nor that He led the way, nor that He was *one* of the ways. He is the way.

A. The issue is the way to the Father, the way to heaven, the way to eternal life. The question is, "Do you want to go to heaven?" and the answer is, "Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life." Jesus is the way. It is the King's way, an open way, a perfect way, a free way, a joyful way, the only way.

B. The point to be made is that the way is:
not in a philosophy, but in a Person;
not in a system, but in a Savior;
not in rules, but in the Ruler;
not in knowledge, but in the Nazarene;
not in man's conscience, but in the Carpenter of Galilee;
not in our efforts, but in the one whose name is Emmanuel;
not in what we like, but in the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

We would even say it is not in the church, but in Christ. (This is not to disparage the importance of the church, but we are not saved because we are in the church, we are in the church because we are saved.)

C. He teaches us truth, but more than that He is himself the embodiment of truth.

John 1:17. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Note that verse 17 is not a contrast between the two covenants, but between Moses and Jesus. Moses was a mere lawgiver who could teach about grace and truth, but Jesus is himself grace and truth.

D. Every biologist knows that life only comes from life. Every believer knows that life only comes from God. Every Christian knows that eternal life only comes from Jesus Christ. John 17:3. "This is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

(But there is exclusiveness, narrowness, in the words "except by me.")

III. Because He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no man comes to the Father except by Him.

A. Let's notice that He says, "No man." What about a wise man? No man! What about a rich man? No man! What about a devout man? No man! What about a morally good man? No man! What about a devoted mother? No man! What about a good family man? No man! What about a rich man? No man! Well,

let's take the matter further: What about a sincere Muslim? A devoted Catholic? A practicing Protestant? A Calvinist? A zealous Mormon?

B. There is an exclusiveness, a narrowness, about the way of Christ that offends the world. Postmodernism says right is only what you want it to be. Denominationalism says there are many roads. Selfishness says "I want to do it my way." Worldliness says, "We will go with the crowd." Hedonism says, "Let's do what's fun. Indifferent humanity says, "It doesn't matter." But, does it really matter whether we are followers of Christ?

1. Let's ask the disciples what they say,
"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.
69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the
Son of the living God" (John 6:68f).

2. Let's ask Paul:
"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men,
the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5).

3. Let's ask John:
"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of
Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ,
he hath both the Father and the Son" (II John 9).

4. Let's ask Peter before the Jewish council:
"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other
name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be
saved" (Acts 4:12).

5. Let's ask the author of Hebrews:
"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at
the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed
unto us by them that heard him" (Hebrews 2:3).

6. Let's ask Jesus Himself:
"No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

C. Someone may say, "Well, yes, Christ is the only way, but what has that to do with the church, with, baptism, with how we worship, with all the other things in the Christian system?" Under the headship of Jesus Christ, all the rest of the Christian system falls into place. See Ephesians 4:4-6.

Conclusion:

Without Christ as the Way there is no going; without Christ as the Truth there is no knowing; without Christ as the Life, there is no living!

[David R. Pharr, Rock Hill, SC. drpharr@msn.com]

CHRIST, THE TRUE VINE
BENNY BURNS

- I. Text: John 15:1-16
 - A. Jesus said, "I AM THE TRUE VINE, AND MY FATHER IS THE HUSBANDMAN."
 - 1. John 14:8-11 Jesus and the Father have always been one.
 - 2. Psalms 80:3, 7, 8 (a vine out of Egypt=Israelites out of bondage, Jesus Christ came out of Egypt) 8-9-19 survey!!
 - B. Let us notice some needed lessons FROM CHRIST THE TRUE VINE: Textually verse by verse.
- I. John 15:3 "Now we are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."
 - A. It is quite revealing that "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Rom. 10:17
 - B. EVERY TIME in the conversations in ACTS the Word was preached, heard, received. The cleansing was the WORD.
- II. John 15:2 "Every branch?"
 - A. Who is this? Vs 5 "YE ARE THE BRANCHES"
 - B. Be sure as Christ is the only TRUE vine, YE (9 times)
"So shall ye be my disciples."
 - C. I attended a funeral years ago and saw first hand on the foyer entrance wall a great Big Tree Chart. Christ the main trunk of the tree and individual denominational churches as the branches? That is not what the Scriptures teach here in John 15 OR ANYWHERE ELSE!
- III. John 15:4-6; 8
 - A. "Fruit bearing is essential for several reasons"
 - 1. If no fruit He takes it away.
 - 2. If fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit.
 - 3. Luke 13:6-10 A tree is known by its fruit. Bananas do not grow on walnut trees! What kind and how much fruit?
 - 4. Rom. 7:4 "My brethren" dead to the law" "married to another" "to him who is raised from the dead" why? "to bring forth fruit unto God."
 - 5. "More fruit" "Much fruit" vs 5 is incriminating! "...for without Me you can do nothing" No fruit? "Cast them into the fire and they are burned"
 - a. Poison ivy vine burned in a fire, it's smoke is venomous too. Man breathed it and in hospital.
- IV. John 15:7 Textually, critically, revealing.
 - A. "Ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you."
 - 1. Qualified? IN FRUIT BEARING! I John 5:14 "anything according to his will" What is more according to His will than the salvation of the souls of men?
 - 2. Matt 18:15-20 vs. 19 "...anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them" Anything contextually- "the salvation of a brother in error?"
 - 3. John 15:7 contextually as in fruit bearing.
 - 4. THE FRUIT OF A CHRISTIAN IS ANOTHER CHRISTIAN.

- V. John 15:8 "The glorification of God is shown by our fruit bearing."
- VI. John 15:12-15 Love, true friends and keeping His commandments go hand in hand.
- VII. John 15:16 Textually analyzed in closing.
 - A. "Ye have chosen me, but I have chosen you" Jesus was God's elect! We are God's elect, chosen people. Elect in the SON!
 - B. Ordained, appointed by His blood, washed in the blood of the Lamb.
 - C. "To bring forth fruit" "That your fruit should remain."
- VIII. Jonah 4:6-11
 - A. Jonah was exceedingly glad for the gourd vine.
 - B. God sent a worm to wither the gourd that provided a shade!
 - C. He was angry about the frivolous. What about 120,000 souls?
 - D. Jonah's message was repent or be destroyed. Matt. 12:41 "Jesus said, the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah."

Benny Burns
6969 Delina Road
Petersburg, Tennessee 376144

I Am Alpha & Omega

Tracy Dugger

A. The Nature of God - Rev. 1:4

1. Jesus Christ is of the same nature – Rev. 1:8
-

I. WHICH IS - Present

A. He is God – Because He is God & thus equal with the Father, He has authority.

1. His Words have such authority that they need to be preserved – Rev. 1:11
2. Being the Alpha & Omega His words demand to be **preserved** by writing them in a book

B. Christ's present work

1. **Operating the Universe** (John 1:3; Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:16-17; Gen. 8:22)
2. **Mediation** – Heb. 7:25; 1 Tim. 2:5
3. **Continual Reign** - 1 Cor. 15:25-26

II. WHICH WAS - Past

A. **His Beginning?** John 8:58 – pre-existence of Christ

1. John 1:1-3,14
2. Col. 1:15-17

B. **The Firstborn of Every Creature** - Col. 1:15

C. **The Beginning of the Creation of God** - Rev. 3:14

D. **Propitiation** - "Which Was" suggests the past – Past Work of Propitiation

1. The Character of the Godhead: Holiness & Mercy
 - a) Holiness – Justice; Righteousness
 - (1) Romans 1:16-17
 - (a) "**Righteousness of God**" - A reference to how God makes sinners righteous
2. **Propitiation** – Rom. 3:23-26
 - a) 2 Cor. 5:21

III. WHICH IS TO COME - Future

A. He is Judge – Rev. 1:7; 22:12-15; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 1:17-18

B. Deliverance/Eternal Salvation

1. 1 Cor. 15:24; 2 Thess. 1:10; 1 Pet. 1:3-9

CONC: "The Almighty" - Rev. 1:8