

KINGDOM SPIRIT

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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 908

PAUL'S EPISTLES TO THE CHURCHES

We're ready to look at Paul's epistle to the Romans. Remember from our last issue that the backbone of the Roman church, or congregation, was probably a family of Britons, the leader of which was Britain's military leader against the attempt by the Romans to conquer the British Isles. Because the Romans respected his military genius so much, they brought him and his family to Rome for trial and sentenced him to stay in Rome for seven years and to never take up arms against Rome again. Because this family had the advantage of the British superior educational system, and because at least part of the family had been Christians for some time, having been converted by Joseph of Arimathea shortly after the resurrection of our Lord, Paul takes a different approach in this epistle. He delves further into Christian philosophy than in his other epistles.

Paul first deals with the subject of justification before the law. His approach seems to be an attempt to look at it through the mind of God, a very difficult thing for our finite minds to comprehend.

Looking first at the wickedness of man and how he became this way, even to the point of practicing homosexuality, Paul finally says of man, **“Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”** (Rom. 1:32)

If a man is to be justified (i.e. be made righteous) through the law, he must keep all of the law. Paul acknowledges that no one but Christ has ever done this. However, the Jews of Paul's time claimed justification was only through circumcision, i.e. it wasn't what you were but who you were. Paul shows the futility of this and then introduces justification by faith. He says **“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (that which appeases) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission (sending away) of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”** (Rom. 3:23-26) Because Abraham believed God, Rom. 4:22 tells us **“and therefore, it was imputed to him for righteousness.”** “Impute” is a bookkeeping term and means to reckon, as to reckon something to be so. The last part of verse 17 of chapter 4 explains how this imputation works. Paul says that God **“callesh those things which be not as though they were.”** Because Jesus, through the payment of his life, redeemed Israel from slavery to which they were sold, He also made justification for all available through the same sacrifice, Paul is telling the Romans. Through Jesus' righteousness and sacrifice, we can be called righteous in the eyes of God even though we are not. One must understand God's law, to understand the full significance of this.

In chapter 5, verses 12-18, Paul then explains “justification.” **“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that (or in whom or in which) all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”** Fully understanding this passage will probably require considerable study, but it is very important that each of us understand it. We will gain a great lesson in the sovereignty of God when we understand the full implication of what God has done through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Paul then takes up sanctification, meaning to separate, i.e. how we should live as Christians after we understand and accept His justification. Paul makes the statement in chapt. 5:20, **“But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:”** then in Rom. 6:1, he asks, **“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”** He emphatically answers the question, **“God forbid.”** then explains in verses 3-6 through the symbolism of baptism that we have symbolically destroyed the sinful body and been united with Christ, thus are now in the likeness of our risen Lord. Verses 11 and 12 may express it better. **“Likewise reckon ye also**

yourself to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.” Then verse 14, **“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”** Some misunderstand Paul here to the point of believing the opposite of his intent. He is saying that once we understand we are justified, we should not sin, not because it is a violation of the law (which it is), but that now, because we are justified, it violates, or damages, our relationship to God, not His to us, for what He did for us is a gift, free to all. God does not deal it out with partiality.

He explains the relationship of the Christian to the law, how by the law do we know sin, but also that by the law we can only bring forth fruit unto death. Obtaining the righteousness of the law can only be done by walking after the Spirit, not after the flesh (i.e. by our trying to keep the law by our own merits). If we recognize our justification through Christ, then are we in the Spirit and if led by the Spirit, then are we the sons of God. Verse 15 of chapter 8 says, **“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”** The word “adoption” as used here is explained in Gal. 4:1-5. In this sense Paul tells us when we walk with the Spirit, lead a sanctified (or separated from the world) unto Christ life, we are then adopted—made sons of God and heirs with Christ. Though we are still in the infirmity of the flesh, the Spirit helps our infirmity and makes intercession for us. Paul then closes this subject by saying he is persuaded nothing can separate us from the love of God. (Rom. 8:38-39)

The 9th chapter of Romans, sometimes called the sovereignty chapter, has Paul dealing with the history of Israel to show the development of Christianity. He first expresses a personal concern for Israel whom he calls his kinsmen according to the flesh saying of them, **“Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;**

Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” (Rom. 9:4-5) Through the history and development of Israel, he proclaims the sovereignty of God as he discusses the election of Jacob over Esau before these twin boys were even born. It may be difficult for us to understand that God chose a particular man, family, and ultimately a people simply because God chose to do so. But as he told Moses, **“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”** (Rom. 9:15) This is borne out further as He told Pharaoh, **“Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power to thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”** (Rom. 9:17) And then verse 18, **“Therefore, hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth.”**

This is bound to put questions in our minds, but Paul anticipated these with questions of his own and he then provides the answer using various prophets to show how the redemptive act of Christ, because it is God’s will to do so, and not because of the works of man or men, has brought salvation to all Israel, including the Gentiles (nations).

Justice to the philosophic theological discussion Paul presents here cannot be served with a brief condensation. To realize the level of thinking Paul was doing here, plus the level he expected of those he was writing to, certainly requires considerable study. He closes this portion of his letter saying, **“And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”** (Rom. 11:26-27) then verse 36, **“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.”**

Following this, Paul comes down to the more practical side of Christian living as he says in chapter 12:1, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable**

unto God, which is your reasonable service.” He then lists a number of do’s and don’ts of daily service to Christ. The spirit of these is, **“Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”** (Rom. 13:10) That we might not be a stumbling block to others, he reminds us, **“So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God.”** (Rom. 14:12)

Paul completes his epistle in the 16th chapter by listing several of those to whom he is addressing this epistle. Some, like Priscilla and Aquila, we recognize from our previous study. Other names are new to us, but it is thought by some that some are either Greek or Latin names for some of the British family, whom at this point Paul had not met, but knew only by reputation.

RECONCILIATION

RESTORATION

I would like to continue our discussion on these subjects, that we had for the past two issues, for at least one more issue. Usually, when I have a discussion of this type with someone and make the statement that all men will be saved, the first reaction is “why then bother to be a Christian in this life?” The inference seems to be that one can have a lot more fun not being a Christian, so why not enjoy oneself now and then, if we have to be a Christian in an afterlife, we will do so then. I think most true Christians would argue with this premise, but that is not the point I want to discuss.

To me there are three categories, or levels, of people when it comes to God’s judgment. These are: 1) the overcomers; 2) those whose names are written in the book of life but who failed to be overcomers; and 3) those whose name is not written in the book of life and we’re told will be cast into the lake of fire. All of these will face God’s judgment as none are perfect. The difference is how they will face the judgment. I might add that because God is totally sovereign, a person will be in whatever of these categories, because it is God’s purpose that they be there. No one is

where they are by their own will alone, nor is it any man's right or privilege to make the judgment as to who should be where. If you are like me, this statement, at first, seems very unfair. Most people want to think that they are Christians or non Christians by their own will and/or efforts. Before you decide to run me out of town on a rail, let's discuss these three categories for a moment.

The word "overcomer" is not in the King James Bible, but the word "overcome" is and it is from how this word is used that the word "overcomer" has come to be used by many. In chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Revelation, Jesus is foretelling the fate of each of the 7 churches (or church ages) and he lists a reward, or rewards, "**to him that overcometh**" after each church. Following is a list of those rewards.

1. I will give him to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (Rev. 2:7)

2. he shall not be hurt of the second death. (Rev. 2:11)

3. I will give him to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. (Rev. 2:17)

4. I will give him power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. (Rev. 2:26-28)

5. he shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. (Rev. 3:5)

6. I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. (Rev. 3:12)

7. I will grant him to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne. (Rev. 3:21)

Normally, when we think of rewards, we think in monetary terms or of something to en-

hance our pleasure. We don't normally think in terms of greater responsibility, yet this appears to me what Jesus is talking about here for those who overcome. In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), the two servants who had increased the talents given them by their master were told that he would make them ruler over many things, a greater increase in responsibility. Those who have part in the first resurrection are told in Rev. 20:4 that they will live and reign with Christ a thousand years. Again an added responsibility. I believe these are overcomers, people who earn these rewards by the responsibilities they are willing to take in this life.

Going back to Rev. 2-3, what did these overcomers have to overcome? They remained true to their Lord; they didn't fold under tribulation, but stood firm in their faith; they were not hypocritical; they did not allow the teaching of false gods to deter them; they are watchful and prepared for their Lord; they have resisted all temptation; they have not coveted and relied on physical riches. In the parable of the talents, they worked with what they were given, not coveting what someone else had. In Rev. 20, they were faithful unto death and refused to worship the Babylonian beast of physical riches.

Many today assume that because they have professed a belief in Jesus Christ, they are automatically a part of these overcomers. To those, I commend the words of Paul to the Philippians in chapter 3. In the original Greek, verse 11 is clearly speaking of the first resurrection as he says, "**If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after it that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.**" Then in verse 14 he says, "**I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**" Certainly if anyone could be considered an overcomer by man's standard of judgment, it would be Paul, but though he was striving for that status, it was still something that he felt he needed to work for. Understand that we are not talking about justification. Paul makes very clear in his epistles that there is a difference.

The second category, those whose names are written in the book of life, but who failed to achieve to overcomer status, we're told in Rev. 20, are part of the second resurrection and have to appear at the great white throne of judgment but will not be cast into the lake of fire. Luke 12:41-48 may apply to these people. The fact that those Jesus is talking about in this parable are servants, indicates to me that they are Christian. There is no indication that they ceased to be servants, but there was some judgment due them.

It is important that we understand the sovereignty of our God. Jesus says in John 6:44, **"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."** When we think that it is our decision that we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour, we are in effect saying that it is within our power to decide to be justified. When we realize that it is God's decision, and it is a free gift that we cannot earn, this should humble us into striving to do our very best to obey and honor our God. When we do, we can be overcomers. When we do not, though we are justified, we still have to appear before the great white throne. As I said previously, we all face judgment. An overcomer faces it daily as he strives to please the Father. The list we gave before of what the overcomer had to overcome is his working through his judgment. We all have a carnal mind that has to be disciplined and trained to obey God. There is no magic transformation that changes it, only if we walk after the Spirit can this be done. Please read Romans 8 for a greater explanation of this.

The person whose name is written in the book of life, but still has to appear at the great white throne, will be judged there since he has refused to be judged in this life. He or she may acknowledge Christ as their Saviour, but if this doesn't change their life, their judgment will come then, though they will be spared the lake of fire.

Finally, there are those, the majority I might add, who have not been justified, i.e. their names are not written in the book of life. Some are people that we would consider good people. Others have committed the most heinous crimes

we can think of. Yet I think we have to recognize the fact that each has his or her place in the plan and purpose of God. Paul gives us a good example in the 9th chapter of Romans. Verse 16 says, **"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."** Then he gives as an example, the Pharaoh in Moses' time. Verse 17-18 says, **"For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."** Then Paul asks the question himself that we posed earlier in this article, this apparent unfairness. Verse 19 poses the question, **"Why doth he (God) yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?"** The word "will" here is from the Greek "*boulema*" meaning "purpose." The word "will" usually comes from the Greek "*thelema*" meaning wish. The point here is that a person can resist God's *thelema*, but he or she cannot resist His *boulema*. You need to read the rest of Romans 9 for the complete answer, but in effect Paul says because we do not see nor understand the whole picture, we have no right to question God.

If we look at creation as a glorifying, or honoring, of the Creator in the same way that an artist paints a painting that will honor and glorify the artist, or an engineer designing and building a machine or structure that will glorify or honor the engineer, I think we can begin to get the whole picture. The artist is not going to leave an apparent flaw nor is the engineer going to leave out something that could fault the machine or structure. So God is not going to blot out something that is part of the whole picture. He has provided what is needed to make the whole picture complete and good. He is not through with the picture yet, though in God's eye it was complete at creation. If we, as Christians, will consider the whole picture and that God is doing the painting, I believe it will be much easier for us to do as He has told us and love one another, even our enemies, as all will ultimately be a part of the complete picture which God says is good. JRL

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

(Read John 4:1-6) If you recall, before the Assyrian captivity of Israel, the city of Samaria was the capital city of the kingdom of Israel. When the captivity took place, the majority of the Israelites were removed from the city and the surrounding area, but a few Israelites were left for various reasons. However, to keep the main group of Israelites from returning, the kings of Assyria, over the next several years, moved many people from Assyria, Babylon, and other nations of the area into what had formerly been Israel. These few Israelites, that had been left, maintained to some degree the religion of Israel, at least what they had of it at that time, though they mixed racially with the people who had been brought into Israel to replace the Israelites. Sanballat and Tobias of the time of Ezra and Nehemiah were of this now mixed race of people. These Samaritans had the Law, but they didn't have any of the prophet's writings. At the time of the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, race purity among the Jews took on special importance which was brought on in part by Ezra and Nehemiah to keep the returning Jews from worshipping other gods. This put a definite division between the Jews and the Samaritans, or these mixed race Israelites. Another event that strengthened this division is recorded in Nehemiah 13:28. (Read Nehemiah 13:23-29) When Nehemiah expelled this grandson of the high priest for marrying a daughter of Sanballat, this led the Samaritans to build a temple of their own on Mt. Gerizim. This temple was later dedicated to Zeus Xenios and then in 128 B.C. was destroyed by Hyrcanus. Jacob's well is at the base of Mt. Gerizim.

The following is a quote from The New Bible Dictionary: "The Samaritan creed has six articles: Belief in one God, in Moses the prophet, in the Law, in Mt. Gerizim as the place appointed by God for sacrifice in the day of judgment and recompense, and in the return of Moses as Taheb, or restorer (something akin to the Messiah)."

In Jesus' day, the short way to go from

Judea to Galilee was to go through Samaria, though this apparently was avoided by most Jews because of the contention between the Samaritans and the Jews. All of this might help us better understand what takes place as we continue our reading.

(Read John 4:7-26) According to a note in the Companion Bible, in 1869 this well was 105 ft. deep, and had 15 ft. of water. A little bit of word study might help us understand better. In verses 6 and 14, the word "well" is from the Greek "pege" meaning a fountain, spring well, or running. In verses 11 and 12 the word "well" is from the Greek "phrear" meaning a well, pit, or dungeon. We're talking about the same well in verses 6, 11, and 12, though from different aspects. The well of verse 14 is Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit. "Everlasting" in verse 14 means "age lasting." "Salvation is of the Jews" in verse 22 is, of course, a reference to Jesus Christ and the fact that He was born of the tribe of Judah. Keep in mind that "Christ" means "anointed" and "Jesus" means "Saviour."

(Read John 4:27-30) "The woman" in verse 27 should read "a woman" because, according to Dr. Bullinger's notes, one of six things forbidden to a Rabbi by the Talmud was speaking to (or teaching) a woman, and here the woman being a Samaritan caused even greater wonder among His disciples. It is interesting that the men of the city went out to see Jesus based on the woman telling them that Jesus told her all things that she had done.

(Read John 4:31-38) Again, a little word study. The word "meat" in verses 8, 32, and 34 are all from different Greek words. In verse 8, "meat" comes from a word meaning "nourishment." In verse 32, the Greek word means "act of eating." In verse 34, "meat" means "food." I don't know that this helps us understand verse 32 any better, but He is not referring to consuming food, but rather to consuming, or taking in, the lives of men. In verse 34 then, He says His food is doing the will of His Father. We hear the term today, "he eats and sleeps _____," i.e. a person is consumed by his work, his hobby, or anything that he or she really

enjoys. This is the way Jesus is referring to food in verses 32 and 34.

Verse 36 makes a statement that we need to understand distinguishes between “justification” and “sanctification.” Elsewhere we learn that “justification” is a free gift, something that Christ has already done for us and we couldn’t work for it if we wanted to. However, “sanctification” is a different story. Jesus says here, **“And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.”** He, in effect, is telling His disciples that He is sending them to reap what another (principally He and John the Baptist and the prophets) has sowed. If we look at what the disciples did as their part in this reaping, they preached and taught, often against great adversity, not only Jews, but Samaritans and Gentiles, i.e. all people. This was their working for their sanctification, their wages so to speak.

(Read John 4:39-42) As the Samaritans heard Jesus speak, many believed, not because of what the woman had told them, but because of what they heard Jesus say themselves.

(Read John 4:43-54) We’re told this was the second miracle that Jesus did, so this gives us reason to number all of the miracles that John records.

(Read John 5:1-9) John does not say what feast was being observed here, but it seems that most people believe that it was Passover, so, if so, this would be about a year later.

The pool Bethesda was apparently surrounded by a wall with 5 arches. We need to first explain that from the word “waiting” in verse 3 through all of verse 4, this part of the text is not in the original writings. It could possibly have been a marginal note explaining the common belief of the man who had an infirmity for 38 years. Apparently, the springs that fed the pool ran intermittently and the waters of the pool would be “troubled” when the springs ran and would be calm when the springs didn’t run. How often then it would run doesn’t appear to be known today. But it was at least believed that the first person stepping into the pool after the waters were

“troubled” would be healed of whatever infirmity they had. This intermittent running of the springs that “troubled” the water in the pool, at least so far as these sick folk were concerned, they attributed to an angel stirring up the waters.

It is interesting that John recorded that the man had his infirmity 38 years, the same time span that the children of Israel spent wandering in the wilderness after they refused to go into the land of Canaan the first time. I don’t always see the connection in things such as this, but I believe that this wasn’t recorded by accident. In this incident, Jesus takes the initiative, unlike the two previous signs or miracles, and asks the man if he wanted to be healed.

(Read John 5:10-16) By Talmudic law, or Pharisaic law, it was unlawful to carry anything from a public place to a private place on the Sabbath. The way this is written might imply that this was not the regular weekly Sabbath, but rather a special Sabbath in conjunction with the Passover Feast.

In verse 11, the man who was cured decided that the man who had cured him had more authority than any of the Jews questioning him and telling him it was unlawful to carry his bed on a Sabbath. This made it incumbent on the Jews then to find out who had cured this man before anyone else decided He had more authority than they did. Since Jesus could and did slip away in the crowd before the man could know who He was, he at first couldn’t tell the Jews who it was that had cured him. But after Jesus talked to him later, he told the Jews who it was and they immediately set out to persecute Him. The phrase **“and sought to slay him”** in verse 16 is not in most of the original manuscripts, however, in verse 18 it is clear that their intent was to kill Him. (Read John 5:17-18) The Jews felt justified in trying to kill Jesus because in their mind He was guilty of both “working” on a Sabbath and making Himself equal with God.

(Read John 5:19-47) It appears to me that Jesus is first establishing the unity of the Son and the Father. The Son, manifested as man has the limits of man, but as a manifestation of the Father is unlimited as is the Father. Whatever the Father

does, so also can the Son do. However, judgment is given to the Son because He is born of man (woman). If the Father judges, man would probably say, it is unfair because He never had to walk in my shoes, so to speak. But if the Son judges, He has not only walked in man's shoes, but has suffered all that man can bear and died as man, therefore, man has no room to complain, but has to honor the Son. Thus we see the title in verse 27, is discussing judgment, the "Son of man."

In verse 25, it is the resurrected Son whose voice is heard by the dead, thus the title, "Son of God." I believe we are also being taught of the two resurrections here. In verse 25, we are told that all that hear His voice shall live, referring I believe to verse 24, everlasting, or age lasting, life. This is reference to those raised in the first resurrection. It does not say here that all will be raised, but rather those that hear His voice. The phrase "**The hour is coming, and now is,**" in verse 25 I think is telling us that this first resurrection could have taken place at that time had the people accepted Jesus. This was not God's plan, but I believe it was His will. The fact that it did not happen at that time does not mean it won't, but rather the hour is still coming, but in accordance with His plan.

Verses 28 and 29 foretell of the second resurrection as **all** that are in the grave will hear His voice and come forth from the grave. Here we are told that some will be resurrected to life and some to judgment, but **all** will be resurrected. In verse 25 only some will hear His voice, but here all will hear and come forth. That there will be Christians that will not have a part in the first resurrection, as these Scriptures seem to indicate, is verified in Rev. 20 in that there ap-

pears to be some who will appear at the judgment, who, when their name is found in the book of life, will escape that lake of fire. We might point out that verses 28-29 also tell us that the people are in the grave, not in heaven or hell, when they hear the voice of the Son of God.

Jesus goes on to say that if He were the only witness of Himself as the Son of God, His witness would not be sufficient to verify that He truly is the Son of God. And even though John the Baptist witnessed of Him as the Son of God, man's witness is insufficient as well. The witness of the Father is the only sufficient witness here to prove beyond all doubt that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is telling the Jews that they have neither heard the Father's voice nor have they seen Him, He witnesses His presence and that Jesus is the Son through the works that Jesus is doing. As Nicodemus said, "**no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.**" (John 3:2)

Yet the Jews refused to believe Him. They prided themselves on being scholars of the Old Testament. They believe that these Scriptures teach them eternal life, and Jesus agrees as it is these Scriptures that teach of Him. But they cannot see this and honor Him because they are looking for honor for themselves. (Re-read verse 44) Jesus goes on to tell them that it won't be He who accuses them to the Father, but rather Moses who they say they trust. But if they would believe Moses, they would also believe Jesus as Moses wrote of Him. So He tells them that if they will not believe Moses, how can they believe Him. The problem is their own efforts to seek their own glory which blinds them to the real truth of the Scriptures. JRL