

# John



## CHAPTER 1

**I**N the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shines in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but was sent to

bear witness of that Light.

9 That was the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came to his own, and his own received him not.

12 **But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:**

13 **Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

**1:3,4** Rejection of the Bible's account of creation as given in the Book of Genesis could rightly be called "Genocide," because it eradicated man's purpose of existence and left a whole generation with no certainty as to its beginning. Consequently, theories and tales of our origin have crept like primeval slime from the minds of those who don't know God. This intellectual genocide has given the godless a temporary license to labor to the extremes of their imagination, giving birth to painful conjecture of human beginnings. They speak in *speculation*, the uncertain language of those who drift aimlessly across the endless sea of secular philosophy.

The Scriptures, on the other hand, deal only with truth and certainty. They talk of fact, reality, and purpose for man's existence. The darkness of the raging sea of futility retreats where the light-house of Genesis begins.

**1:9** On the Day of Judgment no one can plead ignorance. God has given light to every man. (See also 2 Corinthians 4:6.)

**1:11 Messianic prophecy fulfilled:** "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Isaiah 53:3). See John 1:32 footnote.

**1:13 New birth—its necessity for salvation:** See John 3:7.

1:13

## The “Sinner’s Prayer”—To Pray or Not To Pray?

The question often arises about what a Christian should do if someone is repentant. Should we lead him in what’s commonly called a “sinner’s prayer” or simply instruct him to seek after God? Perhaps the answer comes by looking to the natural realm. As long as there are no complications when a child is born, all the doctor needs to do is *guide the head*. The same applies spiritually. When someone is “born of God,” all we need to do is guide the head—make sure that they *understand* what they are doing.

Philip the evangelist did this with the Ethiopian eunuch. He asked him, “Do you understand what you read?” (Acts 8:30). In the parable of the sower, the true convert (the “good soil” hearer) is he who hears “and understands.” This understanding comes by the Law in the hand of the Spirit (Romans 7:7). If a sinner is ready for the Savior, it is because he has been drawn by the Holy Spirit (John 6:44). This is why we must be careful to allow the Holy Spirit to do His work and not rush in

where angels fear to tread. Praying a sinner’s prayer with someone who isn’t genuinely repentant may leave you with a stillborn in your hands. Therefore, rather than *lead* him in a prayer of repentance, it is wise to encourage him to pray himself.

When Nathan confronted David about his sin, he didn’t lead the king in a prayer of repentance. If a man committed adultery, and his wife is willing to take him back, should you have to write out an apology for him to read to her? No. Sorrow for his betrayal of her trust should spill from his lips. She doesn’t want eloquent words, but simply sorrow of heart. The same applies to a prayer of repentance. The words aren’t as important as the presence of “godly sorrow.” The sinner should be told to repent—to confess and forsake his sins. He could do this as a whispered prayer, then you could pray for him. If he’s not sure what to say, perhaps David’s prayer of repentance (Psalm 51) could be used as a model, but his own words are more desirable.

15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spoke, He that comes after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

18 No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the

bosom of the Father, he has declared him.

19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you?

20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

21 And they asked him, What then? are you Elijah? And he said, I am not. Are you that prophet? And he answered, No.

22 Then said they to him, Who are you?

**1:13 How to get false converts.** Our aim should be to ensure that sinners are born of the Spirit—of the will of God and not of the will of man. Too many of our “decisions” are not a work of the Spirit, but a work of our sincere but manipulative practices. It is simple to secure a decision for Jesus by using this popular method: “Do you know whether you are going to heaven when you die? God wants you to have that assurance. All you need to do is: 1) realize that you are a sinner (‘All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God’), and 2) believe that Jesus died on the cross for you. Would you like me to pray with you right now so that you can give your heart to Jesus? Then you will have the assurance that you are going to heaven when you die.” For the *biblical* way to present the gospel, see John 4:7–26 footnote. For more on false converts, see Matthew 25:12 footnote.

**1:17** “A wrong understanding of the harmony between Law and grace would produce ‘error on the left and the right hand.’” *John Newton*

## QUESTIONS & OBJECTIONS

1:18

**“I will believe if God will appear to me.”**

A proud and ignorant sinner who says this has no understanding of the nature of His Creator. No man has ever seen the essence of God. (When God “appeared” to certain men in the Old Testament, He manifested Himself in other forms, such as a burning bush or “the Angel of the Lord.”) When Moses asked to see God’s glory, God told him, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, . . . [but] you cannot see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Exodus 33:18–23). If all of God’s “goodness” were shown to a sinner, he would instantly die. God’s “goodness” would just spill wrath upon evil man.

However, the Lord told Moses, “It shall come to pass, while my glory passes by, that I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.” The only way a sinner can live in the presence of a holy God is to be hidden in the Rock of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4).



that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What do you say of yourself?

23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah.

24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

25 And they asked him, and said to him, Why do you baptize then, if you be not that Christ, nor Elijah, neither that prophet?

26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there stands one among you, whom you know not;

27 He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29 **The next day John saw Jesus coming to him, and said, Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.**

30 This is he of whom I said, After me comes a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, there-

fore am I come baptizing with water.

32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said to me, Upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he said, Behold the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and said to them, What do you seek? They said to him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where do you dwell?

39 He said to them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two which heard John

**1:32 Messianic prophecy fulfilled:** “And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:2). See John 6:14 footnote.



*"I believe that lack of efficient personal work is one of the failures of the Church today. The people of the Church are like squirrels in a cage. Lots of activity, but accomplishing nothing. It doesn't require a Christian life to sell oyster soup or run a bazaar or a rummage sale..."*

*Billy Sunday*

speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

**41** He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, We have found the

Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

**42** And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, You are Simon the son of Jonah: you shall be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

**43** The day following Jesus went forth into Galilee, and found Philip, and said to him, Follow me.

**44** Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

**45** Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

**46** And Nathanael said to him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him, Come and see.

**47** Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

**48** Nathanael said to him, Where do you know me from? Jesus answered and said to him, Before that Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.

**49** Nathanael answered and said to him, Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.

**50** Jesus answered and said to him, Be-

**1:41** After we have found the Messiah, we are to tell others about Him. The only "failure" when it comes to reaching out to the lost is not to be doing it.

"Many churches report no new members on confession of faith. Why these meager results with this tremendous expenditure of energy and money? Why are so few people coming into the Kingdom? I will tell you—there is not a definite effort put forth to persuade a definite person to receive a definite Savior at a definite time, and that definite time is now." *Billy Sunday*

"Our forefathers must be asking, 'How is it that we did so much with so little, and you do so little with so much?'" *R. Albert Mohler Jr.*

**1:46** **Come and see.** Jesus called Philip to follow Him, then Philip immediately found Nathanael and told him about the Savior. Nathanael's question is a typical reaction of the contemporary world to those who follow the Savior. To the cynical, Christians are intellectual wimps, prudes, rejects—unlearned cripples who need some sort of crutch to get them through life. So it is understandable for them to ask, "Can any good thing come out of Christianity?" Down through the ages, its good name has been tainted with the stained brush of hypocrisy, dead religion, and more recently, fanatical sects and televangelism.

Philip merely answered Nathanael's cynicism with the same thing Jesus said to Andrew—"Come and see." Skeptic, come and see. Atheist, come and see. Intellectual, come and see. Just come with a humble and teachable heart, and you who are sightless *will* see and know that this Man from Nazareth is the Son of God.

cause I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? you shall see greater things than these.

51 And he said to him, Verily, verily, I say to you, Hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

## CHAPTER 2

**A**ND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus said to him, They have no wine.

4 Jesus said to her, Woman, what have I to do with you? mine hour is not yet come.

5 **His mother said to the servants, Whatsoever he says to you, do it.**

6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jesus said to them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he said to them, Draw out now,

and bear to the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And said to him, Every man at the beginning does set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but you have kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and over-

**1:47** Nathanael was "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." He was a Jew in *deed*, not just in *word*. As an honest Jew he didn't twist the Law, as did the Pharisees. He read it in truth. The Law and the prophets had pointed him to Jesus and he was therefore ready to come to the Savior.

**2:13-17** **Cleansing the temple.** When Jesus went to the temple, He found it to be filled with those buying and selling merchandise. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, at each Passover, over 250,000 animals were sacrificed. The priests sold licenses to the dealers and therefore would have had a great source of income from the Passover. When the Bible called them "changers of money," it was an appropriate term.

There is, however, another theft going on in another temple. Mankind was made as a dwelling place for his Creator. God made him a little lower than the angels, crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of His hands (Hebrews 2:7), yet sin has given the dwelling place to the devil. The thief, who came to steal, kill, and destroy, is making merchandise out of mankind. Instead of the heart of man being a temple of the Living God (2 Corinthians 6:16)—a house of prayer—iniquity has made it a den of thieves.

When someone repents and calls upon the name of Jesus Christ, He turns the tables on the devil. The ten stinging cords of the Ten Commandments in the hand of the Savior cleanse the temple of sin. *Charles Spurgeon* had a resolute grasp of the Law. In preaching to sinners, he said, "I would that this whip would fall upon your backs, that you might be flogged out of your self-righteousness and made to fly to Jesus Christ and find shelter there."

**2:15** This is the Lord's righteous indignation at Israel's equivalent of money-hungry televangelists.

## 2:6-11 *The Significance of the First Miracle*

**1.** The turning of water into blood was the first of the public miracles that Moses did in Egypt (Exodus 7:20), and the water into wine was the first of the public miracles that Jesus did in the world (John 2:11).

**2.** The signs that God gave to Egypt in the Old Testament were plagues, destruction, and death, and the signs that Jesus did in the world in the New Testament were healings, blessings, and life.

**3.** The turning of water to blood initiated Moses (a type of the Savior—Deuteronomy 18:15) leading his people out of the bondage of Egypt into an earthly liberty; the turning of water into wine initiated Jesus taking His people out of the bondage of the corruption of the world into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Romans 8:21).

**4.** The turning of water to blood culminated in the firstborn in Egypt being delivered to death, while turning the water into wine culminated in the life of the Firstborn being delivered from death (Colossians 1:18).

**5.** The Law was a ministration of death, the gospel a ministration of life. One was written on cold tablets of stone, the other on the warm fleshy tablets of the heart. One was a ministration of sin unto condemnation and bondage, the other a ministration of righteousness unto life and liberty (2 Corinthians 3:7-9).

**6.** When Moses changed the water into blood, we are told that all the fish in the river died. When Jesus initiated the new covenant, the

catch of the fish are made alive in the net of the kingdom of God (Matthew 4:19).

**7.** The river of blood was symbolic of death for Egypt, but the water into wine is symbolic of life for the world. The letter of the Law kills, but the Spirit makes alive (2 Corinthians 3:6).

**8.** When Moses turned the waters of Egypt into blood, the river reeked and made the Egyptians search for another source of water supply (Exodus 7:21,24). When the Law of Moses does its work in the sinner, it makes life odious for him. The weight of sin on his back becomes unbearable as he begins to labor and be heavy laden under its weight. Like the Egyptians, he begins to search for another spring of water; he begins to “thirst for righteousness,” because he knows that without a right standing with God, he will perish.

**9.** Moses turned water into blood, and Jesus’ blood turned into water (1 John 5:6). They both poured from His side (John 19:34), perhaps signifying that both Law and grace found harmony in the Savior’s death—“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other” (Psalm 85:10).

**10.** The water of the old covenant ran out. It could do nothing but leave the sinner with a thirst for righteousness. But as with the wine at Cana, God saved the best until last. The new wine given on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:13; Ephesians 5:18) was the Bridegroom giving us the new and “better” covenant (Hebrews 8:5,6).

threw the tables;

**16** And said to them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise.

**17** And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of your house has eaten me up.

**18** Then answered the Jews and said to him, What sign do you show to us, seeing that you do these things?

**19** **Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**

**20** Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and will you rear it up in three days?

**21** But he spoke of the temple of his body.

**22** When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this to them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

**23** Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the

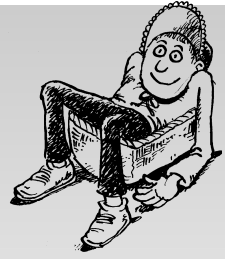
## QUESTIONS & OBJECTIONS

3:3

*“I have been born again many times.”*

Like Nicodemus, many people have no concept of what it means to be born again. He thought Jesus was speaking of a physical rebirth. Others see the experience as being a spiritual “tingle” when they think of God or a warm fuzzy feeling when they enter a building they erroneously call a “Church.” Or maybe they are of the impression that one is born again when one is “christened” or “confirmed.” However, the new birth spoken of by Jesus is absolutely essential for sinners to enter heaven. If they are not born again, they will not enter the kingdom of God. Therefore it is necessary to establish the fact that one becomes a Christian by being born again, pointing out that Jesus Himself said that the experience was crucial. The difference between *believing* in Jesus and being born again is like believing in a parachute, and putting one on. The difference will be seen when you jump. (See Romans 13:14.)

How is one born again? Simply through repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Confess and forsake your sins, and trust in Jesus alone for your eternal salvation. When you do, you receive spiritual life through the Holy Spirit who comes to live within you. See Ephesians 4:18 and 1 Peter 1:23 footnotes.



miracles which he did.

**24** But Jesus did not commit himself to them, because he knew all men,

**25** And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

### CHAPTER 3

**T**HERE was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

**2** The same came to Jesus by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that you do, except God be with him.

**3** Jesus answered and said to him, Verily, verily, I say to you, Except a man be

born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

**4** Nicodemus said to him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

**5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say to you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

**6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

**7** Marvel not that I said to you, You must be born again.

**8** The wind blows where it lists, and you hear the sound thereof, but can not

**2:24,25** “We may deceive all the people sometimes; we may deceive some of the people all the time, but not all the people all the time, and not God at any time.” *Abraham Lincoln*

“Character is what you are in the dark.” *D. L. Moody*

**3:2** **Grace to the humble.** Nicodemus was a humble Jew (he acknowledged the deity of the Son of God), who knew the Law (he was a “master of Israel,” v. 10); therefore, Jesus gave him the good news of the gospel. He was convinced of the disease and consequently ready to hear of the cure.

**3:3** “These verses aren’t necessarily about what Nicodemus asked Jesus; they are about what Jesus knew. The last verse of the previous chapter said that He knew what was in man. Jesus knew what was in the heart of Nicodemus: he was a Law-breaker, and he needed to be born again.” *Garry T. Ansdell, D.D.*

## USING THE LAW IN EVANGELISM



3:16

"If I had my way, I would declare a moratorium on public preaching of 'the plan of salvation' in America for one to two years. Then I would call on everyone who has use of the airwaves and the pulpits to preach the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, and the Law of God, until sinners would cry out, 'What must we do to be saved?' Then I would take them off in a corner and whisper the gospel to them. Don't use John 3:16. Such drastic action is needed because we have gospel-hardened a generation of sinners by telling them how to be saved before they have any understanding why they need to be saved."  
*Paris Reidhead*

tell whence it comes, and where it goes: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nicodemus answered and said to him, How can these things be?

10 Jesus answered and said to him, Are you a master of Israel, and know not these things?

11 Verily, verily, I say to you, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and you receive not our witness.

12 If I have told you earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

13 And no man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he

**3:7 New birth—its necessity for salvation.** This is a fulfillment of Ezekiel 36:26: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." Man cannot enter heaven in his spiritually dead state; he must be born again to have spiritual life. Jesus said that He is life (John 14:6; John 11:25,26), and that we must come to Him to have life (John 5:39,40; 1 John 5:11,12). Those who trust in Christ are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides for ever" (1 Peter 1:23). See 2 Corinthians 5:17.

"Ever since Adam sinned, the earth has been the land of the walking dead—spiritually dead. What is the disease that killed man? 'The wages of sin is death.' So from God's point of view, salvation involves the raising of spiritually dead men to life. But before God could give life to the dead, He had to totally eradicate the fatal disease that killed men—sin. So the cross was God's method of dealing with the disease called sin, and the resurrection of Christ was and is God's method of giving life to the dead!" *Bob George, Classic Christianity*

**3:14,15** When fiery serpents were sent among Israel, they caused the Israelites to admit that they had sinned. The means of their salvation was to look up to a bronze serpent that Moses had placed on a pole. Those who had been bitten and were doomed to die could look at the bronze serpent and live (Numbers 21:6–9). In John 3:14,15, Jesus specifically cited this Old Testament passage in reference to salvation from sin.

The Ten Commandments are like ten biting serpents that carry with them the venomous curse of the Law. They drive sinners to look to the One lifted up on a cross, and those who look to Him would live. It was the Law of Moses that put Jesus on the cross. The Messiah became a curse for us, and redeemed us from the curse of the Law.

**3:16,17** Salvation is possible for every person. See John 4:14.

**3:16,17 God Himself provided our way of escape:** "But God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:5,6). See Romans 10:9 footnote.



3:16

## Is Repentance Necessary for Salvation?

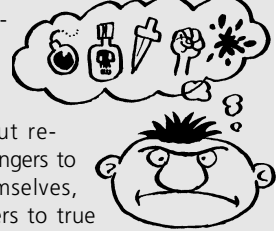
It is true that there are numerous Bible verses that speak of the promise of salvation, with no mention of repentance. These merely say to “believe” on Jesus Christ and you shall be saved (Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9). However, the Bible makes it clear that God is holy and man is sinful, and that sin makes a separation between the two (Isaiah 59:1,2). Without repentance from sin, wicked men cannot have fellowship with a holy God. We are *dead* in our trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1) and until we forsake them through repentance, we cannot be made alive in Christ. The Scriptures speak of “repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18). We turn *from* sin to the Savior. This is why Paul preached “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

The first public word Jesus preached was “repent” (Matthew 4:17). John the Baptist began his ministry the same way (Matthew 3:2). Jesus told His hearers that without repentance, they would perish (Luke 13:3). If belief is all that is necessary for salvation, then the logical conclusion is that one need never repent. However, the Bible tells us that a false convert “believes” and yet is not saved (Luke 8:13); he remains a “worker of iniquity.” Look at the warning of Scripture: “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” (1 John 1:6). The Scriptures also say, “He that covers

his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesses and forsakes them [repentance] shall have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13). Jesus said that there was joy in heaven over one sinner who “repents” (Luke 15:10). If there is no repentance, there is no joy because there is no salvation.

When Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, he commanded his hearers to repent “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). Without repentance, there is no remission of sins; we are still under His wrath. Peter further said, “Repent . . . and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19). We cannot be “converted” unless we repent. God Himself “commands *all* men *everywhere* [leaving no exceptions] to repent” (Acts 17:30). Peter said a similar thing at Pentecost: “Repent, and be baptized *every one* of you” (Acts 2:38).

If repentance wasn’t necessary for salvation, why then did Jesus command that *repentance* be preached to all nations (Luke 24:47)? With so many Scriptures speaking of the necessity of repentance for salvation, one can only suspect that those who preach salvation without repentance are strangers to repentance themselves, and thus strangers to true conversion.



gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten

Son of God.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

21 But he that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made man-

**3:19** Jesus said that we loved the darkness of sin rather than the light of righteousness, because the human heart finds pleasure in sin. If you don’t believe it, visit the “adult” section of your local video store. Look at the covers to see type of entertainment the hearts of men and women crave—unspeakable violence, inconceivable horror, and unending sexual perversion.

**ifest, that they are wrought in God.**

22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

25 Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

“Sin and hell are married unless repentance proclaims the divorce.”

**CHARLES SPURGEON**

26 And they came to John, and said to him, Rabbi, he that was with you beyond Jordan, to whom you bare witness, behold, the same baptizes, and all men come to him.

27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

29 He that has the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which stands and hears him, rejoices great-

ly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

31 He that comes from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaks of the earth: he that comes from heaven is above all.

32 And what he has seen and heard, that he testifies; and no man receives his testimony.

33 He that has received his testimony has set to his seal that God is true.

34 For he whom God has sent speaks the words of God: for God gives not the Spirit by measure to him.

35 The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand.

**36 He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.**

#### CHAPTER 4

**W**HEN therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

3 He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

**3:19,20** The same sunlight that melts wax also hardens clay. As God's light shines on man, the sinner's heart determines his response. One whose heart is tender will respond to God; one whose heart is bent on evil will harden his heart further against God and will remain in darkness. Sinners should note: After Pharaoh repeatedly hardened his heart against God (Exodus 8:15,32), God then hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 10:27). Those who continually reject God will be given up to "uncleanness, vile affections, and a reprobate mind" (Romans 1:24,26,28).

**3:36** The Greek word used here for the first occurrence of "believes" is *pisteuo*—which means "to trust." However, in the second occurrence in this verse ("he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him"), the word used for "believes" is *apeitheo*—which means "disobedient." The disobedient will not see the salvation of God, no matter what prayer they have prayed, because they refuse to surrender their will to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He is coming "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:8, emphasis added).

**3:36** Those without Christ are dead in their sins, separated from the life of God, and will not have spiritual life unless they trust in Jesus Christ. Their sin makes them objects of God's wrath.

Somehow we think that time forgives sin. This is not so. The more we sin, the more we store up God's wrath. See Romans 2:5.

4 And he must needs go through Samaria.

5 Then came he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

7 There came a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus said to her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away to the

city to buy meat.)

9 Then said the woman of Samaria to him, How is it that you, being a Jew, ask drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that said to you, Give me to drink; you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water.

11 The woman said to him, Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then have you that living

4:7

## Personal Witnessing—How Jesus Did It

*How to address the sinner's conscience and speak with someone who doesn't believe in hell*

Verses 7–26 give us the Master's example of how to share our faith. Notice that Jesus spoke to the woman at the well when she was alone. We will often find that people are more open and honest when they are alone. So, if possible, pick a person who is sitting by himself. From there, we can see four clear principles to follow:

**First: Jesus began in the natural realm** (v. 7). This woman was unregenerate, and the Bible tells us "the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:14). He therefore spoke of something she could relate to—water. Most of us can strike up a conversation with a stranger in the natural realm. It may be a friendly "How are you doing?" or a warm "Good morning!" If the person responds with a sense of warmth, we may then ask, "Do you live around here?" and from there develop a conversation.

**Second: Jesus swung the conversation to the spiritual realm** (v. 10). He simply mentioned the things of God. This will take courage. We may say something like, "Did you go to church on Sunday?" or "Did you see that Christian TV program last week?" If the person responds positively, the question "Do you have a Christian background?" will probe his background. He may answer, "I went to church when I was a child, but I drifted away from it."

Another simple way to swing to the spiritual is to offer the person a gospel tract and ask, "Did you get one of these?" When he takes it, simply say, "It's a gospel tract. Do you come from a Christian background?"

**Third: Jesus brought conviction using the Law of God** (vv. 16–18). Jesus gently spoke to her conscience by alluding to the fact that she had transgressed the Seventh of the Ten Commandments. He used the Law to bring "the knowledge of sin" (see Romans 3:19,20). We can do the same by asking, "Do you think that you have kept the Ten Commandments?" Most people think they have, so quickly follow with, "Have you ever told a lie?" This is confrontational, but if it's asked in a spirit of love and gentleness, there won't be any offense. Remember that the "work of the Law [is] written in their hearts" and that the conscience will bear "witness" (Romans 2:15). Jesus confronted the rich young ruler in Luke 18:18–21 with five of the Ten Commandments and there was no offense. Have confidence that the conscience will do its work and affirm the truth of each Commandment. Don't be afraid to gently ask, "Have you ever stolen something, even if it's small?" Learn how to open up the spirituality of the Law and show how God considers lust to be the same as adultery (Matthew 5:27,28) and hatred the same as murder (1 John 3:15). Make sure you get an admission of guilt.

*(continued on next page)*

(4:7 continued)

Ask the person, "If God judges you by the Ten Commandments on Judgment Day, do you think you will be innocent or guilty?" If he says he will be innocent, ask, "Why is that?" If he admits his guilt, ask, "Do you think you will go to heaven or hell?"

From there the conversation may go one of three ways:

1. *He may confidently say, "I don't believe in hell."* Gently respond, "That doesn't matter. You still have to face God on Judgment Day whether you believe in it or not. If I step onto the freeway when a massive truck is heading for me and I say, 'I don't believe in trucks,' my lack of belief isn't going to change reality."

Then tenderly tell him he has *already* admitted to you that he has lied, stolen, and committed adultery in his heart, and that God gave him a conscience so that he would know right from wrong. His conscience and the conviction of the Holy Spirit will do the rest.

That's why it is essential to draw out an admission of guilt *before* you mention Judgment Day or the existence of hell.

2. *He may say that he's guilty, but that he will go to heaven.* This is usually because he thinks that God is "good," and that He will, therefore, overlook sin in his case. Point out that if a judge in a criminal case has a guilty murderer standing before him, the judge, if he is a good man, can't just let him go. He must ensure that the guilty man is punished. If God is good, He must (by nature) punish murderers, rapists, thieves, liars, adulterers, fornicators, and those who have lived in rebellion to the

inner light that God has given to every man.

3. *He may admit that he is guilty and therefore going to hell.* Ask him if that concerns him. Speak to him about how much he values his eyes and how much more therefore he should value the salvation of his soul. (For the biblical description of hell, see Revelation 1:18 footnote.) If possible, take the person through the linked verses in this Bible, beginning at the Matthew 5:21,22 footnote.

**Fourth: Jesus revealed Himself to her** (v. 26). Once the Law has humbled the person, he is ready for grace. Remember, the Bible says that God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). The gospel is for the humble (see Luke 4:18 footnote). Only the sick need a physician, and only those who will admit that they have the disease of sin will truly embrace the cure of the gospel.

Learn how to present the work of the cross—that God sent His Son to suffer and die in our place. Tell the sinner of the love of God in Christ; that Jesus rose from the dead and defeated death. Take him back to civil law and say, "It's as simple as this: We broke God's Law, and Jesus paid our fine. If you will repent and trust in the Savior, God will forgive your sins and dismiss your case." Ask him if he understands what you have told him. If he is willing to confess and forsake his sins, and trust the Savior with his eternal salvation, have him pray and ask God to forgive him. Then pray for him. Get him a Bible. Instruct him to read it daily and obey what he reads, and encourage him to get into a Bible-believing, Christ-preaching church.

water?

12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank there of himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 **Jesus answered and said to her, Whosoever drinks of this water shall thirst again:**

**14 But whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.**

15 The woman said to him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come here to draw.

16 Jesus said to her, Go, call your husband, and come here.

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said to her, You have well said, I have no husband:

18 For you have had five husbands; and he whom you now have is not your husband: in that you said truly.

19 The woman said to him, Sir, I per-

ceive that you are a prophet.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and you say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Jesus said to her, Woman, believe me, the hour comes, when you shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 You worship you know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

25 The woman said to him, I know that Messiah comes, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

26 Jesus said to her, I that speak to you am he.

27 And upon this came his disciples, and marveled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What do you seek? or, Why do you talk with her?

28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and said to the men,

29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

30 Then they went out of the city, and came to him.

31 In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

32 But he said to them, I have meat to eat that you know not of.

33 Therefore said the disciples one to another, has any man brought him anything to eat?

**34** *Jesus said to them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*

35 *Do you not say, There are yet four months, and then comes harvest? behold, I say to you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.*

**36** *And he that reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit to life eternal: that both he that sows and he that reaps may rejoice together.*

**37** *And herein is that saying true, One sows, and another reaps.*

**38** *I sent you to reap that whereon you bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and you are entered into their labours.*

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

40 So when the Samaritans were come to him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

41 And many more believed because of his own word;

42 And said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of your saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.

**4:34** The “meat” that nourished the Savior was to carry out the work of evangelism—to seek and to save that which was lost.

**4:36** “I would think it a greater happiness to gain one soul to Christ than mountains of silver and gold to myself.” *Matthew Henry*

**4:37,38** **The measure of success.** Don’t be tempted to measure evangelistic “success” by the number of “decisions” obtained. We tend to rejoice over decisions, when heaven reserves its rejoicing for repentance—“There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents” (Luke 15:10). It is easy to get “decisions for Jesus” using the modern method of well-chosen words and psychological manipulation. Rather, see success as having the opportunity to sow the seed of God’s Word into the hearts of your hearers. If you faithfully sow, someone else will reap. If you have the privilege of reaping, then someone has faithfully sown before you. One sows, another reaps, but it is God who gives the increase. See 1 Corinthians 3:6,7.