



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 8:13-20

"The Authority of Jesus Christ"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are, as most of you in this audience know, studying together the Gospel of John. And for today the Scripture reading and the passage that we shall look at in the exposition is John 8, verse 13 through verse 20. The apostle, remember is giving some of the conversation and other things that happened during our Lord's celebration during the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. He has just uttered one of his great "I am" statements. "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." And in verse 13 the apostle continues the account writing,

"The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, or whither I go. (Now for those of you who have the Authorized Version you'll notice I've made a change from "and" to "or," which agrees with the Greek text. It has the correlative "or" instead of "and" in the last clause.) Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bears witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. Then said they

unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. (That means essentially, if you had known the Father, you wouldn't have asked me that question.) These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple. (The treasury was a part of the court of the women in the temple. It was called the court of the women, simply because it was one of the courts to which the women had access. It was the court in which most of the activities of the ordinary people took place. And also, in the court of the women was the treasury. The treasury was a place where gifts were given. Offerings were brought, and they were put in the boxes or containers that were about the court. There were thirteen trumpet shaped chests in which people deposited their gifts for various causes. And on each of these boxes or chests the designation was written for which the money was to go. It was probably into one of these that Jesus was sitting once looking at the individuals coming and giving and then commented upon the women who gave two mites to the effect that she had given more than all of those who had been giving. So these are things that Jesus spoke in the treasury. That is in that part of the temple, the court of the women, where the chests were contained): and no man (John adds) laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come."

Now that was remarkable, because, of course, all of all the places in the temple that were under the daily control and authority of the chief priests and Pharisees and Sadducees and scribes, the other officials. It was that place, but it was there that the Lord Jesus boldly gave his messages.

The subject for today in the exposition in the Gospel of John is "The Authority of Jesus Christ." Nowhere are the claims of Jesus Christ loftier than in what Clement of Alexandria called "The Spiritual Gospel." The Gospel of John has a different touch from the Synoptics. And all of the students of John notice the different outlook that he gives to the message concerning the Lord Jesus. In the first place, it opens in heaven. "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God." John does not have miracles, he has signs. That is, his miracles are intended to teach spiritual truth. And the spiritual truth that they teach is just as important for John

as the fact of the miraculous. Furthermore, John is characterized by that magnificent upper room discourse, chapters 13 through 16, and then the great high priestly prayer, chapter 17. It's doubtful that in the New Testament is there any more exalted teaching than the teaching of the upper room discourse. Wordsworth used to say about the Gospel of John, "I meditate on Saint John's gospel, and my creed rises with the ease of an exhalation." Well, I think if we spent some time mediating upon the Gospel of John, reflecting upon it, pondering it, there is no doubt in my mind that our beliefs and our creed, too, would deepen with that same ease.

One of the things that characterizes the Gospel of John is the magnificent claim that Jesus Christ makes for himself. They are unique in the sense that they are self-proclaimed. And therein lies a problem. That is, a problem for those who believe that only by the testimony of two or three men may a matter be established. Now, these claims that the Lord makes for himself, we've said are unique. And they are unique and self-proclaimed. Buddha believed he had a gospel to offer but considered himself only the re-discoverer of an old path. He urged followers not to think of him but to think of his teaching. Jesus Christ does not make that distinction. He thinks of himself and his teaching as forming one object of faith. Confucius said, "How dare I lay claim to holiness or love? A man of endless craving who never tires of teaching, I might be called, but nothing more." On the other hand, the Lord Jesus said, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Mohammed covering his head cried out that unless God cast the cloak of mercy over him there was no hope for him at all. Oh how different is the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth.

What shall we do with the claims of Christ, and particularly what shall we do with the authority that these claims imply? Well, our Lord says something about that in the passage that we are looking at. And it would help us, I think, to remember the context in a little bit more detail. Remember, chapter 8 of the Gospel of John is set in the context of our Lord's celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. John has given us material that pertained to the time before the celebration of the feast, during the celebration of the feast, and then on the last day of the feast, and then a few things after the celebration of the feast. And we are now at that last part of the celebration of the

feast, the last day Jesus had stood and cried saying, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture had said, out of his belly should flow rivers of living water." John said he was speaking of the gift of the Holy Spirit when he said that. And the Holy Spirit would come when Jesus Christ was glorified.

Now another thing that Jesus said was "I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." So in effect he has claimed to be the true fountain, and he has also claimed to be the true light. Commentators have wondered what is our Lord speaking about when he says, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." And what does he refer to when he says he's the light of the world? When one studies the ceremonies that were associated with the Feast of the Tabernacle one notices that two of the things that they celebrated particularly in this feast were the incidents in the Old Testament when complaining God gave Israel water through the rocks that Moses smote. Remember shortly after they came out of the land of Egypt they began to murmur. And they murmured and said to Moses, "If we were back in Egypt things would be different." And Moses then went to the Lord with their complaints. And God said to Moses, "Moses, I want you to go over and stand by the rock over there, and as you stand by the rock I'll be there. And I want you to smite the rock and out of the rock will flow water." And so Moses did as the Lord told him to do. He went over. He stood by the rock. The Lord stood there with him. He smote the rock and out of the rock there flowed water from the complaining Israelites who were complaining of lack of water.

Now that rock and that incident meant a great deal to Israel, and they celebrated that fact down through the years. And in the Feast of Tabernacles there was a certain type of ceremony; I'll mention it in just a minute, which celebrated that. Later on at the end of the forty years the same complaints came. They complained to Moses about their food and drink, and again Moses went to the Lord. Isn't it so much like us? We complain through all of our earthly life. Even though we've come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and have the assurance of everlasting life we are constantly

complaining to God. Why am I in this situation that I'm in? Why do I have this job? Why do I have these trials? Why do I have this problem, and so on, constantly complaining? And even Moses, the servant of the Lord, was a little upset with the people who were complaining. And so he went to the Lord and he said, "Lord, they're complaining again. And they're complaining about lack of water again." Forty years before he had given them water. And then the Lord said to Moses, "Moses, I want you to go over and stand by the rock. And I want you this time to speak to the rock. And when you speak to the rock water will come out and their thirst will be satisfied." So Moses, complaining about the complaining, no doubt, of the children of Israel went over and instead of obeying the Lord. Out of his complaining he lost his temper and smote the rock instead of speaking to it, but the water came out. Oh the faithfulness of God even through the disobedience of his servant.

What is interesting about it is that in the first occurrence, the smiting of the rock, we have in that an illustration of the fact that it is by the smiting of the Son of God that the gift of the Holy Spirit comes. It's by Calvary and the cross that we are able to possess a permanently indwelling Holy Spirit, the smiting of the rock. Now, of course, once our Lord Jesus is smitten there is no need for any further smiting, therefore no need for any further offering of our Lord. He is offered once for all for sinners, not constantly offered as some churches in their ceremonies suggest as if he were offered every Sunday. On Sunday when we observe the Lord's Supper we do not re-sacrifice our Lord Jesus Christ, for one sacrifice is sufficient for sins. Being the sacrifice of an infinite person, it has infinite value before God, and thus is sufficient for the sins of the world.

Now, the last time Moses was told to speak to the rock. Because you see, now that the Lord Jesus has suffered and has been raised from the dead he's at the right hand of the Father. And as priests we all have the right as priests to go directly to him, the Father, through the Son. There's no further need for sacrifice. But on the basis of the merits of the sacrifice we have access to the Father. So Moses was told simply to speak to the rock the second time. His disobedience lay illustratively in the fact the he smote our Lord again instead of speaking, as if to suggest by his actions that it was

necessary for the rock to be smitten more than once for a sinner's sins. Illustratively, of course, that's what was suggested by it. Illustratively it was designed to indicate that we simply, after he has been sacrificed, need to go to him with our requests as priests. We all are priests. We all have access to the Son of God. That teaching is illustrated also, I think, by the fact that the very term that's used for rock in those two instances are different. One suggesting a sharp, jagged rock suggestive of the cross, the other, a high, large cliff suggestive of the ministry of the Lord Jesus at the right hand of the Father; one suggesting his ministry as the sacrifice for sins, the other suggesting his ministry as our great high priest who is our intercessor and advocate.

Well now when on the Feast of Tabernacles the celebrations took place, one of the celebrations was the ritual of the pitcher. And then the priestly element went out to the pool of Siloam with a pitcher of water, or a pitcher not filled with water. They filled the pitcher with water, and in the midst of a procession accompanied by the blowing of trumpets when they came into the temple area. The priests went over to the altar, and there was a funnel, and they poured out the water. That was done every morning, suggestive of God's supply of the water for the children of Israel through their forty days in the wilderness. Remember Paul talks about the rock that followed them and says that rock was Christ. So the fact that that incident happened at the beginning of the forty years and a similar instance at the end suggested to them that God's presence was with them through the forty years. He was the rock. Paul says the rock was Christ who accompanied his ancient people just as he accompanies his contemporary people.

Then one other thing that characterized the Feast of Tabernacles was the lighting of the candelabra. And these were lit upon the first day or two of the Feast of Tabernacles. And because the temple area had a beautiful temple with a golden top, the lights of the candelabra in the temple area, reflecting off the temple area, reflected into all of the homes that were around the temple. And there were not so many homes that they did not all see that light. Just as today if a large light is in the vicinity, we might see it's usually the light of someone celebrating something that's happening in a shopping center. In those days it was the light of the candelabra. Now that was designed to

represent the provision that the Lord made for the children of Israel through the wilderness. What he did for them, as we read in Exodus 13 and 14 in the beginning, when they escaped from the hands of Pharaoh and went out to the Red Sea, God said that he was going to give them a guide, and the guide would be a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire.

Now, we know from studying carefully, I think, those documents, that the fire was there all along. It was really a pillar of fire, because the fire was particularly the sign of the presence of God. In the daytime you couldn't see the fire because of the sun. But at night when the sun went down the pillar of cloud was a pillar of fire. That was the sign of God's presence with them, to guide them and to protect them. When the Egyptians raced out after them in order to destroy them, the pillar of fire stood between the children of Israel and the Egyptians, and the Egyptians were unable to attack them. There was light in the camp of the Israelites. There was darkness in the camp of the Egyptians. It was God's teaching of distinguishing grace; the things that he does for his people are different from the things that he does for those who are not his people. And all the way through the wilderness they were guided by the pillar of cloud and the pillar fire. When the pillar of cloud stopped they were to stop. When the pillar of fire moved, they were to move. If they had to stay a day, or a month, or a year in one spot, they stayed. If they stayed only a day, they were to stay only a day. Everything was determined by the movement of the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire.

Just as in our lives everything is determined by the movement of God the Holy Spirit who dwells within each one of us. The Apostle Paul says the sign, the evidence, that we are children of God is that we are led by the Spirit of God. Those who are led by the Spirit of God, Paul says they are the sons of God. All the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God. That's part of our birthright, that's part of our salvation, to be led by the Spirit. We don't always follow, but we are constantly led. We don't have to ask the Lord for guidance, he gives us guidance. The guidance is there, what we need to do is ask the Lord to enable us to follow the guidance that he gives us. We have the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire in better form, in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Now, you know it's amazing but I think it's true. There are many Christians who would like to say something like this, "Lord, don't give me the indwelling, permanent presence of the Holy Spirit, but give me a little cloud that will hang over my particular life and let me follow the cloud. Let me follow the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud. I think I'll do better." Come on now, isn't that true? Wouldn't you like to have something visible like that? Wouldn't you like to have your own personal pillar of cloud and pillar of fire? I know you're afraid to say it, but I know you really think that deep down within. Listen, you have something far better. You have the Holy Spirit. You have the third person of the trinity who is indwelling every believer permanently. That's the final guidance, most excellent superior guidance that we could ever have.

Well now, that is the background. The Lord Jesus has said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Not only will you, if you believe in me, receive water, but you yourself will be a fountain of waters for others. And then secondly, "I'm the light of the world, and if you have me, you have the light through the Spirit." So he's the true fountain. He's the true light.

Now that's the background. In verse 13, the Pharisees just having heard him say, "I'm the light of the world," you might have expected them if they were really interested in spiritual things to say something like this, "What is it to be the light of the world? What do you mean by that?" We read, they replied, "Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true." They dropped the idea of light, and in fact John does not develop that thought, because they did not develop that thought. And he himself records this conversation in order, I think, to lead up to our Lord's statements concerning authority. But the interesting thing about the Pharisees is that they don't address the main question at all. What they do is they fasten on a technicality. That is characteristic about all unbelievers. When you speak to them about the gospel of Christ, if you are not careful in your conversation pretty soon you will be discussing things that are absolutely extraneous to the gospel. Men constantly want to avoid the spiritual issue. It doesn't make a bit of difference what the teaching of the word of God may be, the gospel, the deity of Christ, the resurrection, the atonement,

the second coming, the kingdom of God. We like to say things like, "Well, what does Mr. So and So say about that? Aren't there some people who believe such and such?" I don't quite see it that way. We want to avoid the issue always. So here our Lord has given a magnificent unfolding of what he is, and they say, "You're bearing record of yourself. Your record therefore is not true. You're not following the teaching of the Scriptures." That's really what they're saying, "You're not following the teaching of the Scriptures."

Now, what would our Lord reply to that? Well we read that he says, "Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go." Now the Lord Jesus did not have any doubts whatsoever that Moses had said that if a person is to give testimony concerning a man's sin there should be two or three witnesses with reference to a man's guilt. In fact, back in chapter 5 verse 31 Jesus had said, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true." Let me read it again, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true." So you would think that perhaps the Pharisees have something in their favor. They say, "Thou bearest record of thyself, their record is not true." If they had been there previously they might have said, "After all, you said of yourself. If you bear witness of yourself, your record is not true."

Now in answer to this question, which the Lord admits is true under certain circumstances. He introduces three supports for his authoritative judgment. First of all he says, "I know my origin and I know my destiny." "Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and I know where I am going; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I am going." In other words, men are creatures, and they are creatures of the present. And they are therefore unreliable, but I have in myself embraces the two eternities, the eternity of the past and the eternity of the future. And therefore, I know that the things that I say are true. He was not like Christopher Columbus who knew whence he had come, that is from Genoa, and launched in 1492 with his three little vessels, the Santa Maria, the Pinta, and the Niña. And went out for a land that he really did not know. Our Lord was not like that. He was not a person who knew something about his past but did

not know something about his future, or even about an individual who knows something of what he may expect in the future but not of his past.

As a matter of fact, he knew whence he had come. Incidentally, that is said in such a way as it refers to an event. "I know whence I have come." I guess it settles definitely upon the fact that "I have come from the Father." But he knew then that he had come from the Father. He knew about his incarnation. He knew about his baptism. He would know about the transfiguration. He would know about his death, his burial, his resurrection, his second coming, the kingdom of God, and the ages of eternity. He knows his past and he knows his future. So consequently, since he knows his origin and he knows his destiny, there is no reason whatsoever for him not to tell the truth. He is such an individual. Someone has said, "Jesus on the other hand knows whence he came, and therefore fully understands himself and whither he goes. And is therefore subject to no temptation to conceal or twist the truth. Hence his own witness regarding himself is true."

Now secondly he says he does not judge by appearances, or human standards. "Ye judge after the flesh," he says in verse 15, "I judge no man." That may be understood in two ways. That may mean that he judges not by carnal reason, that is out of a sinful understanding of things. Or it may simply mean, "I don't judge by physical appearances, the things that we see with our eyes, as you do." In fact he says, "I judge no man." That's an interesting statement, because of course he will also say, "I have not come for judgment," but yet at the same time he will talk about judgment, because you see, the Lord Jesus while this is not his purpose in his incarnate life, to judge men, the very fact that he comes in the midst of us as the sinless Son of God is a judgment upon men constantly.

No one can read the gospels without being convinced that the Lord Jesus is in his life a constant judgment of us, just like Noah who built his ark, and by the building of his ark condemned the world. He was a man who by his actions made it very plain he was not thinking about the present, but about the future, not about human thought, but about divine revelation, and lived by it. And by so doing he condemned the world. Every believer in Jesus Christ who lives in any way his

faith is in that respect one who condemns the world. But Jesus says he does not judge the world. Probably he means, I am not judging it now. He uses the present tense. "You are judging after the flesh, I am judging no man." In the fifth chapter he said all judgment's been given to him and in the last day he will exercise his judgment but not now. So he doesn't judge by human standards.

False cults judge by appearances, by human reason. The denials of the deity of Christ, the denials of the atonement, the denials of the bodily resurrection, the denials of the inspiration of the word of God, as a general rule they're all ultimately related to reliance upon human reason. The Lord Jesus is not an individual who judges according to human reasoning, according to appearances. When one of the false cults says by Christ is not meant the man Jesus, that cult is judging by appearances. When another one of the cults says Jesus Christ is not God, as Jesus himself declared, but the Son of God, as if the term Son of God in the lips of Jesus does not mean God, then that cult is judging by human standards, by human reasoning. When Nell Spirey said, "The sinlessness of Jesus is an umbrella which keeps away from us the truth that God longs to become organically incarnate in us, that the light of the Son is for us all," suggesting that we believe in the deity of Christ our attention is diverted from the Father, and thus the Father is not glorified by that doctrine. He's arguing according to human reason. Jesus does not judge after the flesh.

At the moment he's not judging any man, but he said, "If I do judge, my judgment is true, for I am not alone, but I am the Father that sent me." Now that is a most interesting statement. For he has just said, or he will just say here in verse 17, "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true." Now what Moses said was very close to that. He said, "At the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses shall a thing be established." Jesus refers to that. He says, "It [is] also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true." Now I'd like for you to notice a couple of important things. In the first place, when you turn to Deuteronomy 19:15 the word men is not there. Strictly speaking that text says simply, "In the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, a thing shall be established." It doesn't say anything about men. But of course they interpreted it as men, and generally speaking Moses had in his mind the fact that it was

men that was referred to. And hence there is nothing wrong in our Lord saying, "It's written in your law that the testimony of two men is true." In other words, our Lord is saying when you talk laws for testimony, you're talking about laws for testimony among men not about laws of testimony for divine beings, or the divine being, for divine person.

In other words, the divine persons stand in a different relationship to the law. They are not under the law, they are over the law. The law is given by the divine trinity. The one God who subsists in three persons. When you say, for example, you bear record of yourself and your record is not true, as if to suggest that I must subject myself totally to the Mosaic Law, and there is a sense in which our Lord did subject himself to the Law, of course. But to subject myself in such a way that I deny the fact that I am the eternal God, why then, that is not true. Notice it's men, "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true." Strictly speaking Moses said, "Two witnesses." In fact he goes on to say, "There are two witnesses here that are testifying to things that I am saying, I and the Father who is with me." Verse 18, "I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." So if you want two witnesses to establish the truth of something, then the things that I am saying to you are the testimony of me, the Son of God, and the testimony of the Father who is with me. And the testimony of two divine beings is infinitely better than the testimony of hundreds of human beings.

Furthermore, how is possible for human beings to testify authoritatively of a divine being? Divine testimony can only be attested by a divine being. So when our Lord says, "I am one that bears witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me," here we have witness that is infinitely superior to any possible human witness. We, of course, keep twisting the teaching of the word of God, just like the Pharisees did, avoiding the main points to our own confusion, mistaking our prejudices for the love of the truth, our anxious keeping in step with what is customary for loyalty toward God. And thus we follow our traditions instead of the word of God. And we're not willing to move from the traditions that have been taught us. Tertullian said, "Christ did not call himself the conventions, the traditions. He called himself the truth." And Christians are individuals

who are not to be guided by the traditions of men, but by the truth. And the truth is found in the testimony of the Lord Jesus in the word of God.

The Pharisees are like you and me. It's not sluggishness that kept them from the truth, it was mulishness. Listen, Jesus has given this wonderful exposition of things. "Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father?" Now one wonders what they really meant. John doesn't tell us. Did they mean by that to cast dispersion on his origins? It was known, of course, that it was claimed for him that while Mary was his mother, he had no human father. That would seem to be evident in some of the things that will be said in a few moments. Is that what they mean, "Where is your Father?" Produce your human father. Or is that they clearly see what he's claiming, he's claiming to be the divine Son. And so cynically they are saying, "Produce your Father," in order to give credence to the idea that you're testifying to something and the Father is testifying with you. So they demand that he produce the Father. Does that embarrass you? Does that make you think well maybe they've got the Lord in a corner? No, that never happens. They're only building corners for themselves.

Listen to how Jesus replies, "You do not know me. Nor do you know my Father. If you had known me, you should have known my Father also." Now one looks at that at first and thinks, well now, that's an incomplete answer, he hasn't said where is the Father. He hasn't answered that question. Now he's gone to the more fundamental question. You don't know me. You don't know my Father. If I produced my Father you wouldn't even know him. You know why, because you don't know me. If you had known me, you would have known the Father. One knows the Father only as he knows the Son. There is no other way to the Father, except through the Son. Anyone who claims to know God, apart from Jesus Christ, does not know God does not know the God of the Scriptures. The God of the Scriptures is only known through the Son. Over and over again the Bible teaches that. The Lord Jesus later on will say, after Phillip asks him, "Lord, show us the Father." He will turn to Phillip and say, "Phillip, have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. How sayest thou then, show us

the Father." And then later on he will say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but through me." It's impossible to know God except through the Son.

One knows the Father only as he knows the Son. No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he, he and he alone, has led him forth into full revelation. You cannot know God except through Jesus Christ. Paul calls him the only foundation. Peter says he's the only name through which we may be saved. The Bible teaches an exclusive salvation only through Jesus Christ. "You don't know me, nor do you know my Father. If you had known me, you would have known the Father. I have come to reveal him."

Now, occasionally John Calvin has some good things to say. And he says something quite good here. He said, "Let us know that the same thing is addressed to us all. Whoever aspires to know God without beginning at Christ must wonder in a Labyrinth, so to say. For is not for nothing that he is called the image of God. Again, because everyone is deprived of all right knowledge of God who leaves Christ and strives Titan-like after heaven, so whoever directs his mind and all his senses to Christ will be led straight to the Father." So as you put aside Jesus Christ and seek to know God, you'll just wander around in a labyrinth, Calvin says. You won't have any knowledge of God. On the other hand, if you'll put aside all of your false ideas and you will strive through Christ to know the Father, you will be led to the knowledge of God. How important that is. In the Scriptures we have the testimony of Christ. It's only as we listen to their testimony that we shall arrive at the knowledge of God. There is no knowledge of God in Mohammedanism. There is no knowledge of God in Hinduism. There is no knowledge of God in any system of truth that is not grounded in the truth of Holy Scripture. He is the exclusive Savior. Call it narrow-minded. Call it bigoted. But it is the teaching of God himself. And since he's the governor of this universe, I would think he has a right to lay down the conditions for the knowledge of himself. And he does.

Well the paragraph concludes with an interesting statement. Jesus spoke these words in the treasury. That's the place where everybody gathered together. He didn't go off in a little corner and whisper this information to his disciples. He stood up boldly in the midst of all the people and he

spoke that dividing truth. For it was a dividing truth. And furthermore, here he is right in the mouth of the lions, the mouth of the lie-ons, not li-ons, but lie-on; that's for the benefit of any Yankees in the audience [Laughter]. In the mouth of the lions the Lord Jesus gave his truth. In the mouth of the den of the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the chief priests and others, he spoke his truth about the exclusive way to the knowledge of God through himself. And isn't it striking, not a hand was laid on him? No man was able to take him. They wanted to. They were angry at him. They were repelled by the things that he said. But nevertheless they did not lay a hand on him, for, John says, his hour was not yet come. It was not yet the time.

There is a text in Psalm 32, "My times are in Thy hands." That's beautifully illustrated here. That's true of every believer. There is not a thing that can happen to the saints of God that is not within the decretive will of our great God. Our times are in his hand. What a comfort that is.

Well, our time is up. Let me just make a couple of comments in closing. It's a glorious thing to have an authoritative Christ. His invitations to life are true factually. As he says in the 16th verse, "And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me." And his invitations to life are true experientially. He knows whence he has come. He knows where he is going, and he says through his author of the Epistle to the Hebrews that he's the file leader of their salvation. He's the great leader of the people of God. And he is guiding and bringing all of them to salvation. Lewis Sperry Chafer used to like to speak of Hebrews 2:10 as a text that spoke of the Lord Jesus as the file leader of their salvation. And he spoke of it as bringing many sons to glory. And that's what he's doing. And he's no blind guide. How important it is to remember that. In Matthew chapter 15, verse 14 the Lord Jesus in the presence of the scribes and Pharisees made the comment, "Hear and understand, not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, that defileth a man." His disciples came and said to him -- you know, anybody who teaches the word of God has had some friends who will come and say to him if he's bold at all in giving what the Bible says, they'll say, "Don't you know that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying. You've got to tone down your words." They were offended.

Listen to what he says, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." Let them alone. They be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. He's no blind guide. Micah said that the day is coming when someone is going to come out of Bethlehem, and he's going to be leader of the people of God. "And his goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. He is no blind guide, because he knows from whence he has come, and he knows where he is going." Lancelot Andrews, one of the most winning of the early Puritans who later became closely attached to the throne, was the Bishop of Chichester, of Ely, and Winchester has said in one of his sermons, "None can bring to a place so well as a he that hath been there." It's often comforting to ask, "How do you get to so and so?" And someone says, "Wait, I've been there." And then you listen carefully because they've been there. No one, Andrews says, can bring to a place so well as he that hath been there.

My dear friends, Jesus has been there. He knows whence he has come from heaven, and he knows where is he going, where he is now in heaven. And there is no authoritative guide but he. May I ask you, trust the authoritative Christ. Trust him. You shall never be disappointed, never be ashamed, never be put to shame. Trust Christ who went to the cross at Calvary, shed his blood as an atonement for sinners, and offers the gospel of Jesus Christ to all sinners. I'm so glad I'm not an Arminian. I'm so glad I do not have to say he offers the gospel to all sinners, and so believe out of your free will. For any kind of whosoever will doctrine given to people of whom it is said in Scripture that "whosoever won't" is no gospel. The mind of the flesh is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God. It cannot be. So they that are in the flesh cannot please God. We preach a whosoever will gospel to men with the assurance that it is God the Holy Spirit who moves in the hearts of men to change their unwillingness to willingness by his marvelous grace. Come to Christ. Trust the authoritative Christ. Believe in him. Receive everlasting life as a free gift, and enjoy his presence now and forever. Come.

[Prayer] Father we are so thankful to Thee for these wonderful texts which set forth so plainly the authoritative Christ, the divine second person of the eternal trinity. Our great God who subsists in three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit. How wonderful to have a sure guide into the future. And O Father, if there should be some in this audience who have never come, may they in their heart right now turn to Thee and say, "O God, out of my sin and guilt..."

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]