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# The Gospel of John

*Part 5 - by: Ronald L. Dart*

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Considering all that Jesus did and considering His personal charisma, does it strike you as strange that there was a point when many of His disciples turned away and did not follow Him any longer? What could Jesus do or say that would come to the point where John says, "From that time, many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him" (John 6:66).

## **Many of His Disciples Walked No More with Him**

Now you know, having a religious leader lose some disciples is not a big deal but we are talking about Jesus. We are talking about a man who healed the sick, who caused the lame to walk, who caused the blind to see. A man of great love and charisma and for some reason on this occasion, some of His disciples went back and never went with Him again. It was not anything He did. It had to be something He said.

This sentence comes late in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel and it is verse 66. He was healing in the synagogue in Capernaum, not far from his old home and something had caused His disciples to say, "This is a hard saying who can hear this?"

What on earth could have offended them. Well, here's what Jesus had to say, verse 41, "The Jews murmured at him because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven," and they said, "Now hold on a minute. {42} This is Jesus, son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know. What is He doing sitting here saying, "I came down from heaven." {43} Jesus therefore answered and said, "Don't murmur among yourselves. {44} No man can come to me except the Father which has sent me, draw him, and I'll raise him up at the last day. {45} It is written in the prophets, And they should all be taught of God. Every man therefore that has heard and has learned of the Father comes to me."

The odd thing about this is, what Jesus is telling these men in the synagogue, a whole bunch of them who were there, that they had not learned, and they had not believed the Father. They had not accepted the Father. They thought they did. They sat there and read the Scriptures and memorized many, but they were not listening.

## **Jesus Is the Bread of Life**

Continuing in John 6, Jesus said, "Anyone who has learned of the Father comes to Me." {46} "Not that any man has seen the Father, save He which is of God. He has seen the Father. {47} I'll

tell you the truth. He that believes on Me has everlasting life. {48} I am the bread of life. {49} Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness and they are dead. {50} This is the bread that came down from heaven that a man can eat it and not die."

You would think immediately, "Okay, I want that. This is something I can do. I can eat this bread and I will never die, and then Jesus said there is a problem, and here it is!

Verse 51, Jesus plainly said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven, that a man can eat of it and not die. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Most Christian people believe that Jesus Christ did come down from heaven, entered into human flesh and it is that flesh that He gave for the life of the world, and that it was necessary.

But {52} "the Jews who were there in the synagogue on that day argued among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

Of course, in the synagogue, argument was the staff of life and they did it all the time. It was their way of life.

Jesus said, {52} "Look, I'll tell you the truth, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you."

### **New Covenant**

Now this is a long time before the Passover, (the Lord's supper), but the men listening should have realized that this is a metaphor, it's a symbolic act that Jesus is talking about here. The eating of the flesh of the Son of Man and drinking His blood because the idea of a blood covenant was totally familiar to these people. The idea of the sharing of blood, the sharing of a sacrificial meal and symbolically the drinking of the blood and the symbolic eating of flesh was a part of creating a new covenant. They shouldn't have had a problem with that.

Continuing in John 6 verse 54, "Who eats my flesh and who drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day, {55} For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed, {56} He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me and I in him."

And that's the whole idea of the blood covenant. You're familiar with it from the old idea of blood brotherhood which you probably have seen in Western movies and cowboy movies, where one man cuts his hand and the other cuts his hand and they let their blood flow together and they become blood brothers. In the ancient Semitic world, the drinking of the other person's blood, put his blood in you and your blood in him, and therefore you became blood brothers.

So Jesus said "He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood dwells in me and I in him." (We become blood brothers.) {57} "As the living Father has sent me and I live by the Father, so he that eats me even he shall live by me. {58} Now this is the bread that came down from heaven, not like your fathers did eat manna and are dead, he that eats this bread shall live forever."

Now this is the sort of thing that people who do not and will not believe are prone to point out and even ridicule, make remarks about cannibalism or what have you but they are just completely missing the point.

"Now," {59} "Jesus said these things in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum, {60} Now many of His disciples, when they heard Him say this, said, "This is a hard saying who can hear it."

### **Jesus Came Down from Heaven**

It wasn't the eating and drinking of Jesus' flesh and blood that was the problem, that idea was not as foreign to them as it sounds. The real problem was, that Jesus said He had come down from heaven, and that was just too much for them. It still is for some people. I think you would be surprised at how many Christian people do not believe that Jesus existed before His human birth and that He came into existence when He was born of the Virgin Mary, and that He did not come down from heaven. He became the Son of God when the Holy Spirit descended on Him after His baptism. You would be surprised, perhaps you should ask around to see who believes what? Now this is a problem!

Continuing in verse 61 of John 6, "When Jesus knew it Himself that His disciples were murmuring at it, He said, "Does this offend you? {62} What and if you see the Son of Man ascend up to where He was before?""

Now this sounds like it is hanging out in midair, but it is not at all, because the issue was that He came down from heaven. He said, "Are you going to stumble over this? What are you going to do when you see Me go back to where I came from?"

And right here we are faced with a real difficulty. It was the identity of Jesus, where He came from, where He was going, that was the problem.

"It is the spirit that quickens," Jesus said {63} "the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life. {64} But there are some of you who don't believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who didn't believe and even who would betray Him. {65} And He said, "Therefore I said to you. "This is why I told you no man can come to me except it's given to him of my Father. {66} From that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him."

Now this isn't just the idle hangers, it wasn't the casual listener that came by. It was disciples, students, followers, who packed up their stuff, gathered up their things and left Jesus and didn't go any further down the road with Him.

This is why C.S. Lewis said of Jesus, "You can't argue that He was merely a great teacher." It is no good. A lot of men have tried to solve the Jesus problem by saying that, "Jesus was a great teacher. He was a great moralist. He was a good man," They go through all this rigmarole of trying to tell you how good Jesus was, and C.S. Lewis says, "No, no, it won't wash, either Jesus was what He said He was or He was a lunatic or a fraud or worse!" Sorry, it is just not possible.

There is no middle ground, although a lot of Christian people these days, are looking for it. Either Jesus, as He said He did, came down from heaven and ascended back up to heaven or He's a fraud or a lunatic, because He said, He had and that He was going to return.

Continuing in verse 67, "Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Are you going to go too?" {68} Then Peter answered Him, "To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. {69} And we believe. We're sure that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God." {70} Jesus answered, "I've chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil," {71} He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he that would betray Him, being one of the twelve." Jesus said, "I knew it from the start."

You know that is one of the saddest, the strangest thing, in the whole gospel story, that this man who eventually would betray Jesus was known from the beginning to be the one who would betray Him, and yet, Jesus took him, accepted him, and placed him in office and loved him.

### **Feast of Tabernacles**

"After these things, Jesus stayed up in Galilee around the Sea of Galilee because He wouldn't go back down to Judea, because the Jews wanted to kill Him" (John 7:1).

It was as simple as that.

Verse 2, "Now the Jews Feast of Tabernacles was at hand." (The Feast of Tabernacles is one of God's Festivals - See Leviticus 23:33-44).

Now these references, by the way, to the Jew's feasts are one of the reasons we feel quite certain that John was writing with a non-Jewish readership in mind. He was a Jew, all the disciples were Jews originally, but by the time John wrote this, he was concerned about Gentiles, who would be reading this.

"So, the Jews feast of Tabernacles was at hand. {3} His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart now, and go into Judea, so your disciples can see the works You do. {4} No man does anything in secret. You need to get on down there, to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." {5} For neither did his brothers believe in Him."

I'm sorry to disturb you with this, but Jesus had brothers and sisters (Matthew 13:55, Acts 1:14, Galatians 1:19). They were all younger than He was and it isn't surprising that they didn't believe in Him. I mean after all, who believes his brother on any real serious matter.

Verse 6, "Then Jesus said to them, "My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready. {7} The world can't hate you, but me, it hates." Why? "Because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." {8} "You guys go on up to the feast. I'm not going up yet. My time has not yet fully come." {9} When He had said these words to them, He stayed in Galilee. {10} When His brothers were gone, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret."

Funny, can you imagine Jesus, covering his head and shielding His face and wandering into Jerusalem and around the streets of Jerusalem, all by himself. Nobody knowing who He was and it was basically because they would kill Him if they could find Him.

"The Jews," {11} "were looking for Him" and they actually had people out, saying, "Where is he?" {12} And there was much murmuring among the people concerning Him for some said, "He's a good man." Others said, "No, No, He's a deceiver of the people", {13} But nobody would say much about Him openly for fear of the Jews."

### **Jesus Taught in The Temple**

John 7 verse 14, "Now about the middle of the feast, Jesus went up to the Temple and taught. {15} And the Jews there marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never learned?"

It was well known that Jesus did not sit at the feet of any great Rabbi. He didn't go to some equivalent at that time of a university to learn letters. How is it that He knows it?

Jesus said, {16} My doctrine is not mine. It's His that sent me."

I'm not making this stuff up. God gave it to me.

Verse 17, "If any man will do his will, he will know the doctrine, whether it is of God or if I speak of myself."

This is really not that complicated, what He is telling these people is, "If you people have read the Bible, if you read your Old Testament, if you read the Scriptures, the Tanakh, you will know that what I'm saying is not my doctrine, it is the doctrine of God. It is the doctrine of the Book."

"The man that speaks of himself is seeking his own glory. He that seeks His glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. {19} Didn't Moses," (Here's a crisis point, He's looking at people sitting around Him, listening to Him,) "Did not Moses give you the law and yet none of you keep the law? Why are you going about to kill Me? "

It must have been stunning to the people who were standing there, front row, back row, and on the sides, who were looking at Jesus and as He looked back at them.

And He said, "Why are you going about to kill me? {20} And the people answered and said, "You have a devil, who is going about to kill you?"

They were in denial about the matter, but they knew, and I think they were stunned by it.

Jesus said, {21} "I have done one work, and you all marvel." ("I just caught you in one of your little plots and you are amazed.") {22} "Moses gave you circumcision, (not because it is of Moses, it is of the fathers, it goes all the back to Abraham,) and you on the Sabbath day will circumcise a man."

You will take a man child and you will cut his foreskin off and you will listen to him howl, you will actually do this on the Sabbath day.

Verse 23, Now if a man on the Sabbath can receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken, why are you angry at Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath day?"

The rationale is inescapable. If you have somebody here and if it is okay to go ahead and snip off a piece of foreskin on the Sabbath day, but for Me to come in here and find a man who is sick and make him whole, healing him, that is bad. You say I shouldn't be healing on the Sabbath day. And this is what the big argument was about with these people, but it wasn't really. It wasn't really about healing on the Sabbath day and Jesus is underlining that in this case.

What it was really about was leadership, power, who's in charge here, who is the people looking to? The Jewish leadership's fear and they were deathly afraid of Jesus. Their fear was that people would follow Jesus and forsake them!

Jesus said, in verse 24, "Don't judge according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

And the people who were there, who lived in and around Jerusalem, began to wonder about this, John 7 verse 25, "They said, "Look, is this He whom they have been talking about killing? {26} But look, He is speaking boldly, right up there in the Temple, and no one is saying anything to Him. Do the rulers know indeed, that this is the Christ?" (That was terrifying to the rulers.) {27} "But, look, we know this man and where He came from, but when Christ comes, no man knows where He comes from.""

Now I don't know whatever gave them that idea, because it is plainly in the Scriptures where He came from.

"Then Jesus cried in the Temple where He taught and said, {28} "Look, you know me, and you know where I am from, and you also know I'm not come of myself, but He that sent me is true, whom you don't know. {29} I know Him. I am from Him. He sent me,"" {30} And then they tried to take him, but no man laid hands on Him because His hour was not yet come.""

And the worst thing that could have happened as far as the rulers were concerned was, {30} "Many of the people believed on him, and said, "When Christ comes, will He do more miracles than this man has done" (Look at what he's doing. He must be the Christ!) {32} "The Pharisees heard this and they sent officers to take Jesus finally." (They said, "We have to put a stop to this.") {33} And Jesus said to them, "You know I am only going to be with you a little while, and then I'm going to go to Him that sent me." (You are going to look for me and you will not find me.)" And where I am, there you cannot come." {35} Then the Jews talked to themselves saying, "Where is He going that we can't find Him? Is He going to go to the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?""

What is He talking about when He says, "You shall seek me, and not find me and where I am you cannot come?" Nothing happened! They sent men to take Him and they didn't take Him.

## **On the Last Day, That Great day Of the Feast**

Continuing in John 7 verse 37, "Then, on the last day, that great day of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.""

Now there are people who believe that this was that day of the feast where there was a water festival, and as a part of it was where the whole Temple Mount was awash in water as they were pouring water on this and that and consequently the illusion to water on this occasion. What's important is that Jesus stood up in the middle of them all.

Jesus said, "If you are thirsty, come to Me and drink. {38} He that believes on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters." {39} (But this He spoke of the Spirit, which they who believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus had not yet been glorified.)

That in itself is an interesting story, but the interesting part about this and the most interesting part is the symbolism of the water which is not merely that we receive the Holy Spirit, not merely that we drink in of Christ, but that we become a source ourselves, out of our belly, out of our innermost being flow rivers of living water. The implication of this and I think is as clear as it can be, is that we are supposed to become a blessing to other people as Jesus has become a blessing to us. We don't just get the Holy Spirit, we become a source for the Holy Spirit.

"Many of the people therefore," {40} "when they heard this saying, said, "Of a truth, this is the Prophet," {41} Others said, "No, this is the Christ! But some said, "Can Christ come out of Galilee?" (They felt that he had to be a Jew and of course He was.) {42} "Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

They all thought that He was from Nazareth. The truth was, He had been born in Bethlehem.

Verse 43, "So there was a division among the people because of Him. {44} Some would've taken Him, but nobody laid hands on Him. {45} And when the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why haven't you brought Him?" and they said, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

And yet this man, is the one whom some of His disciples turned and walked back and wouldn't go with Him any longer. This was the man that they wanted to kill. Kind of hard to figure, isn't it?

## **The Attitudes of the Pharisees**

Jesus had managed to create a deep division among the Jewish people there at that time. That is the reason why it's silly to say that the Jews crucified Christ in a way, any more than we all did. The fact is a lot of people were believing on Jesus, but a lot of people weren't.

The officers, who the Jewish leaders sent down to take Him said, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" {47} Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? {48} Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on Him? {49} But these people out there, they don't know the law, they are cursed.""

The contempt of the ruling elite in Jerusalem for the ordinary man on the street is profound but there's nothing particularly new about that. That's just the way people in power often are, and you and I should never forget it for a moment, but they were just basically saying, "Nobody in the rulership or leadership has believed on Jesus. How come you people can't just do what we tell you to do?"

But Nicodemus, who might've been pinched a little bit by this statement because he was the one that went to Jesus by night and said, "Master, we know that you are a teacher come from God" (John 3:2).

Continuing in John 7, "Nicodemus spoke up and said, {51} "Does our law judge any man before it hears him, and knows what he is doing?" {52} They answered and said, "Are you too out of Galilee, search and look because out of Galilee arises no prophet," {53} Then every man went to his own house."

They made one of the biggest and stupid mistakes human beings can ever make. They assumed that God can't find His man anywhere. Anyhow! If He wants him, God can have him and if God decides to bring a prophet out of Galilee, or for that matter out of Mesopotamia, then everybody needs to sit up and listen to the man of God.

Now all of these guys went home, and they didn't do anything about Jesus.

### **Woman Taken in the Act of Adultery**

In John, the eighth chapter, "Jesus went to the Mount of Olives, {2} And early in the morning He came again to the Temple, and all the people came to Him, and He sat down and taught them".

Now, apparently the Feast of Tabernacles was over and {3} "the scribes and the Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery and they set her in the midst of the people gathered there."

The poor woman, the embarrassment, and her fear is unimaginable.

They said to Him, {4} "Master, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. {5} Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned. What do you say?"

They thought they had Jesus on this, because the civil law, the Romans, did not allow them to do this kind of thing. The law of Moses was explicit they thought on this sort of thing and I guess in a way it was, but there was something in the law of Moses that I think they weren't quite considering and Jesus is about to hit them with it, but it is just so striking to stop for a moment and imagine the scene and to think in terms of these guys whether it was opportunistic or



whether they planned it or whatever had grabbed this poor woman right in the act of adultery and drug her out in the streets over to Jesus and set her there and said, "She's supposed to be stoned, what do You say?"

Verse 6, "This they said tempting Him, that they might have something to accuse Him of. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground as though He didn't even hear them. {7} They continued asking Him and pressed Him and He raised himself up and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."

This is something which everybody kind of forgot, that for someone to be stoned to death, someone, the accuser had to be there, had to testify, had to pick up and cast the first stone.

Jesus said, "Okay, who's ready to do it. Which one of you is without sin and is able to cast the first stone." {8} And He stooped down and began writing on the ground some more. {9} And they that heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last."

I don't think there is a coincidence at all that the oldest were the quickest guys there to realize their status before God and that they didn't have any business picking up a rock and throwing it at this poor woman. Jesus was left alone with the woman standing in the midst with nobody there, just Jesus and the woman standing there.

Verse 10, "And Jesus lifted up Himself, He looked around and didn't see anyone but the woman, and He said, "Woman, what happened to your accusers, did no man condemn you?" {11} She said, "No man, Lord." And Jesus said to her," which must have been the sweetest words she ever heard in her life, "Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more."

Now think about what this means. It means essentially, that Jesus is not the least bit interested in condemning man. He didn't come into the world to condemn the world. He came into the world to save the world (John 12:47). We don't know much about this woman. We don't know much about her heart other than the fact than at this moment I'm sure she was very repentant and very sorry. At least that she had been caught and was hurting bad in the situation she was in and she was afraid. She probably saw her life pass in front of her eyes and because of this man, Jesus, nothing happened. And when He looked at her, He said, "I'm not going to condemn you." He was the only man there who could! "Go on home, BUT sin no more!"

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*The late Ronald L. Dart was a Christian evangelist whose teachings still inspire thousands of people around the world. His legacy spans decades. For more information about the teachings of Ronald L. Dart, visit [RLDEA.com](http://RLDEA.com) where you will find booklets, articles, sermons, Bible studies, and books by Mr. Dart.*

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### Discussion Questions

1. Is it hard to understand why people didn't follow Jesus while He walked the earth?
2. Why do you think so many who did follow Jesus eventually quit following?
3. We have the whole Gospel today, why then do you think people have a hard time believing in Jesus now?
4. What are your thoughts about Jesus including Judas Iscariot despite knowing that he was going to betray Him?
5. Isn't it interesting that the Jews would circumcise on the Sabbath, but they condemned Jesus for healing on the Sabbath?
6. Are there similarities of the Jews' conduct and how some of the Christian churches behave today?
7. What are your thoughts about Mr. Dart's revelation that "We don't just get the Holy Spirit; we become a source for the Holy Spirit"?
8. In what ways can we become a blessing to other people to the point that the 'living waters' flow out of us?
9. Do you find it interesting that they brought a woman who was caught "in the very act" of adultery before Jesus, but they didn't bring the man? What are your thoughts about that?
10. Do you ever wonder what Jesus was writing about in the sand?