



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 1:6-13

“The Word of God in History Among the Jews”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Now if you have your New Testaments or your Bibles turn with me to John chapter 1. This is the third of our studies in this great gospel which has been called by some the profoundest of all writings, and we are going to read for our Scripture reading this morning verse 6 through verse 13, John chapter 1 verse 6 through verse 13.

Now the apostle has just been writing about the word, that the word was in the beginning, that the word was with God, and that the word was God. So he makes a distinction between the persons of the Father and the word. Later on we learned the word is the Son of God. But at the same time he affirms the essential deity of the word also. So we have the beginnings of a doctrine of the Trinity. We have plurality in the Godhead. The word is God. The Father is God and yet both are God and we do not have two Gods. He goes on to say that all things were made through the mediation of the Son of God, and then coming to verse 6 he introduces a new character.

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.” Now let me stop for just a moment. There are two or three things I’d like to say in the Scripture reading which will

make it unnecessary for me to say them later on. Many modern scholars debate the authorship of the Gospel of John and probably it's fair to say that contemporary scholarship of a more liberal kind affirms that the Gospel of John was probably not written by the one we know as the Apostle John, but rather by someone else whose name was John or perhaps a disciple of the Apostle John. But you will notice that the author of the gospel says, “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John,” and he is alluding as the context goes on to point out to John the Baptist.

Now if someone other than John the Apostle wrote the gospel that would be a very confusing statement. “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John,” because the reader would immediately say, “Which John?” John the Baptist or John the Apostle, but if everyone knew that John the Apostle was the writer of this book, if they knew the book came from him, then there would be no difficulty at all. They would know that the man sent from God whose name was John was not the author but John the Baptist. And so this is one of those little implicit indications of apostolic authorship. He says, “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John,” knowing that his readers would have no difficulty at all in making the identification with John the Baptist rather than him, the apostle.

“The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him (that is through John) might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

This verse may be rendered because of some ambiguities of the Greek text in several ways. It could be rendered, “The true light which lighteth every man was coming into the world,” and it could be rendered in some other ways because the word enlighten may mean to give light in the sense of give illumination, or it may mean to give light in the sense of judging that which is right and that which is wrong. So it is very difficult to be absolutely certain of the rendering,

but the general sense is I think plain, and later on I will make comment concerning that. “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own things, and his own people received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the children of God (or the authority to become).”

Now I want you to notice that those who are given the authority to become the children of God have received Him. This is something that comes to those who have received Him, who have been born. They have the authority. They have the power. They have the privilege of being the children of God. “Even to them that believe on his name: Who were born, not of bloods, (the word is plural in the original text) nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

That thirteenth verse is rather interesting for another reason. The great majority of the manuscripts of the Gospel of John, some of which go back very early, read as your versions read, “Who were born,” the reference being to the many who have received him, but some of the ancient manuscripts and some of the ancient fathers had manuscripts that read not, “Who were born,” but “Who was born,” singular.

Now if this is correct, then this text becomes a text that is suggestive of the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. “As many as received him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name: Who was born, not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” However in the light of the fact that the manuscripts are relatively few and not nearly so ancient as some of the others that read the plural, the plural is probably correct. It has been interesting, however since men such as Augustine read the other reading in their expositions of this passage.

May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

[prayer removed from audio]

[Message] The subject for today in the exposition of the Gospel of John is “The Word in History and Among the Jews.” The Apostle John in the Gospel of John makes the profound and prodigious claim that the knowledge of Jesus Christ is the knowledge of God. Christians are not surprised by that because they know God through Jesus Christ and they’ve come to understand what is meant by that, but surely that must be a surprise to the world. But John makes the claim that the knowledge of Jesus Christ is the knowledge of God. Listen to what he says, for example, in the fourteenth verse of this very first chapter he says, “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.” One sees the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. In the eighteenth verse he writes, “No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” So it is the Son who has exegeted or interpreted the Father he says.

Later on, speaking to Philip when Philip asks, “Lord show us the Father and it sufficeth us.” The Lord Jesus says, “Have I been so long time with you, Philip, and hast thou not known me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?” In the 19th verse of the eighth chapter speaking with the Jews, they said 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.” They were saying where is the Father, produce him. But to ask that question is to disclose an incapacity to receive the answer because the light is shining right in their presence, and they cannot see it. And so when they say, “Where is Thy Father?” they are in effect confessing they don't see the light of the glory of God in the fact of Jesus Christ who is speaking to them. The individual who says as they

said, “Where is the Father,” then makes confession of the fact that he doesn't have the capacity for seeing the Father because the representation of the Father, the one through whom the Father is manifested is standing right before them at that very moment.

Now one might think from this is that the purpose of John is to cause men to worship the Son exclusively, but John is very careful, and our Lord is also very careful, to avoid that. Throughout this work the writer is careful to emphasize that while the revelation of God is found in the face of Jesus Christ, still we do not have an independent cult of Jesus in Christianity, but we have the revelation of the Father through the Son and the call is sent out to men to worship God, worship God the Father through the Son of God who is himself possessed of divine nature. So in the presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ we have the Son presented as the revelation of the Father, but not as the end in himself, but as the means to the worship of the Father by all of the saints of God.

Now in our last study we saw that the word was with the Father in ages past. And then we say that the word was God. In other words, there is a distinction in the divine persons. The word was with the Father. They are two different persons, but at the same time the word possesses the same nature as the Father. There is plurality in the Godhead and there is another person who possesses divine nature. So he is fully and completely divine. We also saw that the divine person, the second person of the Trinity is the means by which the silence of God is broken finally. God has spoken in the final sense in his Son.

Now we're studying the prologue to the Gospel of John. It's one of the magnificent chapters in the Bible. In fact one of the most magnificent of the 18 verses of Scripture anywhere, this magnificent prologue, and in it all the central ideas of the gospel are set forth. The Son is the revelation of the Father. There has been a two-fold response to him. Some have received him. The great mass have rejected him. And those who have received him have

been brought into the family of God, “Born of God.” And the general movement is found right here in the prologue. We have the revelation of the Father through the Son. We have the response in unbelief and then the response in faith and the blessings that flow out of the response in faith. And we also saw, at least I made the affirmation that what we have is something that is set forth concentrically. That is there is breadth and then the author narrows down the thought as he proceeds through the 18 verses. We saw “The Word in Ages Past,” now, “The Word in History and Among the Jews,” and then we shall look at “The Word in History and Among Believers” next Sunday, the Lord willing.

Well we are looking now at the word as he is found in the ministry of John the Baptist, and in verse 6 John says, “There was a man sent from God whose name was John.” Leon Morris has written a very good commentary on the Gospel of John and he finds it rather curious, that’s a good scholarly word. Scholars like to use curious. They mean I see something wrong here with something that my friends have written, and so, he finds it rather curious that John has mentioned in the prologue. And he suggests that it may have been because some improper prominence was given to John the Baptist by some of his followers because John had his followers, and they thought of him as a great man. And perhaps some of them did go a little too far. In the third chapter, we will read that some of the disciples were disturbed by the fact that men were following Jesus instead of following John. So perhaps Professor Morris suggests that John the Apostle inserts this because of improper prominence had been given to John the Baptist. And so he writes, “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John,” and makes it very plain that he was not the light. The light was Jesus Christ. He was simply a witness to the light.

But I find it rather interesting that John the Baptist is mentioned here. John was certainly an unusual individual. The importance of John the Baptist in the New Testament

maybe gleaned from just one statement that the Lord Jesus makes concerning this remarkable man. In the eleventh chapter and in the eleventh verse of the Gospel of Matthew, the Lord Jesus said with reference to John the Baptist, “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” That’s a remarkable testimony to the greatness of John the Baptist. He was the last of the prophets and the greatest of the prophets evidently. “Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.”

Now of course he will go on to speak of the spiritual status of those who are in the Kingdom of Heaven, but it’s clear that John the Baptist was a remarkable man and a great man. What kind of man was John the Baptist? Well he was a rugged, stern, John Knox kind of character who thundered out the way of the Lord to a stiff-necked generation. John was one of those fearless characters just like John Knox who didn't mind saying what they thought was the word of God. His message was not geared to the times. He didn't look around and see what the fads of the day were and give messages on them. He didn't say, “Now I know that people are interested in love, sex, and marriage, and so I’ll give a series of studies on love, sex, and marriage in order that the people may come out to hear me.” His message was not geared to the times. He was a man sent from God, and in spite of the fact that his message was not geared to the times, he had tremendous influence. In fact we really shouldn't say in spite of should we? We should say because of. His message was not geared to the times therefore he had the influence that he had.

“Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,” Matthew says in his gospel. In other words, John was popular just because he didn't try to be popular, just because he did not play to the fads of the day, but rather gave the

message that God intended for him to give and because he gave it and because he gave it with earnestness under the direction of the Holy Spirit, everybody came out to hear him because they recognized that there was some reality in this man and that he really was in touch with the Lord God. His message was a very convicting kind of ministry. “And they were baptized by him in Jordan, as they confessed their sins,” and so his message was a message that caused men to look at themselves in the light of the word of God and to confess their sins, to receive the forgiveness of sins as they heard John’s message about the one who was to come whose shoe latches he was not even able to hold in his hands. And furthermore it was a very, very invective form of ministry too as it has been described. “But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

Many years ago I was listening to a man in a Bible conference where at the end of the meetings they took up a love offering for the preachers who were there, and he said, “You know John surely would have felt that when they took up the love offering after he had called all of his audience of Pharisees and Sadducees a generation of vipers. When the plates were passed they probably did not put a whole lot of money in the plates.” Well John didn't care two cents about how much money was in the plates because he realized that he was responsible to the Lord God, and God had promised to take care of him, and so he didn't mind calling those Pharisees and Sadducees a generation of snakes. That's what they were, and John did not hesitate to say it to their faces. I'm sure there would have been someone in the background if they had known of our Lord's text at the time who would have said, “Tisk, tisk, he's judging.” But nevertheless he was speaking the truth, and there comes a time when truth is more important than our false interpretations of passages which are so sentimentally useful to us in certain situations.



Matthew says, “He came preaching.” Now that word is a word that means “to proclaim.” It’s a word that means to proclaim a message. It was the word that was used to describe the individual who ran in front of the chariot of the king, and who shouted out, “It’s the king! The king’s coming! It’s the king!” And so John came preaching. That was characteristic of his message. He was a man who preached because he had the word of God, and he felt that the things that he was saying were the really important things. Richard Baxter used to say, “I preached as never sure to preach again and as a dying man to dying men.” Well that is the kind of preaching that John the Baptist did. He was a great man and ultimately because of the fact that he would say things like, “Generation of vipers,” and did not mind telling Herod that he was sinning against the Lord God in his actions, he lost his head. But listen what’s better, to lose your head or to have the Lord Jesus Christ say, “Among those born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist?” What’s better? Well I’d love to have John’s place, head lost and all, to have the Lord Jesus say “There hath risen none greater than this man.” John was a truly blessed man because he was faithful to the word of God.

Now the voice of prophecy had remained silent for four hundred years after the completion of the Old Testament and suddenly through this modern Elijah, John the Baptist, the voice of prophecy is again in the midst of the professing people of God. John leaps, as it were, into the arena fully grown and fully armed. “There came a man sent from God whose name was John.”

Now there is an important point here that I think that we ought to get, and it’s found in the original text, but I think you can easily see it even if you cannot read Greek. The word that is used in the first verse and translated “In the beginning was the word,” is the verb “to be.” I am, you are, he is, etcetera, the verb “to be,” that’s the copula. Greek has two words

very closely related. One means “to be,” the other means “to come to be,” to enter into a different form of existence. Now the first word is used of the Lord Jesus Christ, “In the beginning the word was,” suggestive of his continuing existence. But in verse 6, the other word is used of John. You could render this, “There came to be a man sent from God whose name was John,” or simply, “There came a man.” Now in verse 1 we are told that the Lord Jesus simply was in existence, and he had been in existence. He was with God. He was eternally God, but in verse 6 John is said to be a man who has a beginning in existence, “There came to be a man sent from God whose name was John.” In other words, John became, Jesus was, and that’s the difference between the two. In a moment in verse 15 John will say, “This was he of whom I spoke, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.” So, Jesus was; John became. John came into existence at a particular time. The Lord Jesus is possessed of full deity. John is a man such as you and I are men. So, there came a man sent from God, but he is sent from God. The real source of John’s coming is the Lord God himself. I know that people thought he was some sort of freak, but you know sometimes those that we think are some sort of freak are really the ones who may be sent from God.

Now when you think about John the Baptist you could easily see how people would have thought he was a rather strange character, some sort of freak. The Bible says that he ate locusts and wild honey. Now in our day we have all kinds of fads of eating. People gather together and see how many goldfish they can swallow, other similar things. They have chili, where everybody gathers and you eat as many bowls of chili as you can, or as many steaks as you can.

I was in Portland recently and went into a restaurant, and they have a seventy-two ounce steak, and if you can eat that, you can have your dinner free. Well I took one look at it and said, “That’s not for me. That’s for a Dallas Cowboy or something like that.” The steak

was about this big and about this thick. Don't think I'm exaggerating. It was about that thick, and I think you had to eat it in a limited amount of time too. In other words, you couldn't put it aside and, “I'll eat this next week and the week following.” But you had to eat it right there, and I understand that some have actually done it, some traveling Cowboys up through Portland went there, I know and managed to eat it up. Athletes have tremendous appetites. Well we do eat strange things. This morning at the breakfast table I heard of a particular dormitory where the girls had an eat-off, and they ate rolls, brown and serve rolls, and some of them ate thirty and thirty-five rolls. [Laughter] Can you imagine that?

Now what is meant when it says, “John ate locusts and wild honey?” In the Congo I'm told they eat fried ants. Don't have any of that Martha please. The French with some misguided Americans regard snails as delicacies. In John's day—you know I was in Geneva, Switzerland many years ago and I had three years of French in high school and college, and I knew a little French. I could make a few sentences and hear a few things, and we were in this French speaking part of Switzerland, but I had in the past, if I had known of the word escargot, I had forgotten its meaning. I walked in this room and it was called the escargot room of this restaurant. I had the menu, and I ordered. And fortunately I didn't order escargot, but I looked around, and people were eating the strangest things. And then I thought escargot, escargot, could that be snail in French? And of course that's what it was, and these people were actually enjoying snails.

Now some of you are looking rather strange in the audience because I know you've eaten them, and you like them don't you? [Laughter] Well you have a strange diet, [Laughter] very strange. [Laughter] No it's a delicacy of course, but don't think of locusts and wild honey as being a delicacy because they were not a delicacy even in John's day. This was the diet of a person who had limited resources. In other words, it's like we would say today,

“That fellow’s diet is made up of grits and oatmeal, or grits and corn bread,” or something like that. Well John, you see, was—in spite of the fact that people said about him, “He’s some kind of freak.”—he was a man sent from God. Don’t be surprised that occasionally the word of God comes to us from characters that we consider rather strange. John must have made that impression. “There was a man sent from God whose name was John.”

Now the apostle says, “He came for a witness.” He was not the light himself. He came to bear witness of the light. Perhaps some of John’s disciples had made more of him than ought to have been made of him as Leon Morris suggested, but the thing that the apostle singles out for attention is the activity of witnessing. “He came for witness.” Now that is commitment of course, commitment to his subject. “He came for a witness of the light,” the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, “He came in order that all men through him might believe.” Now he didn’t come that every single individual in the whole world might believe. He came that all who listen to him might believe, one of the many indications of the limited nature of the term “all” in various contexts. But notice he said, “He came for a testimony,” or for witness, that’s what the text says, “He came for witness, to bear witness of the light that all men through him might believe.”

Now, that suggests that the only thing necessary in order for a person to have eternal life is that he believe the message that John gave. What was John’s message? Well he said, “Repent for the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand.” That indicates incidentally, since John says that “All men might believe,” and that John actually preached, “Repent for the Kingdom of Heavens is at hand,” that true belief in the Lord Jesus Christ includes a repentance with reference to sin and a repentance with reference to the object of our faith, the Lord God. “He came that men might believe.” He told the men of his day that there was someone coming who was greater than he who actually was before him. He was the eternal Son, and when he

came sins would be forgiven by virtue of what he would do. And when men believed that message, they'd possess life. They were given life. They were given the forgiveness of sins. And then they were baptized by John as they confessed their sins. So, John's message was a message of the coming redeemer.

Later Paul says that John preached, “That men might believe on him who was to come after him.” So, John's message was very simple. He wished that the men who listened to him might recognize their sin and their need of forgiveness and that they would recognize that there was one coming who was greater than John who had existed before John and that if they rested themselves upon him and what he was to do, they would have the forgiveness of sins. And when they did that, when they confessed their sins and confessed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ they were baptized in testimony to that fact that they have received the forgiveness of sins through faith in the coming redeemer. It was the same kind of message that we preach today, the only difference being the historical circumstances. Now we preach that if men believe on the Lord Jesus Christ who has come as the atoning sacrifice you may have the forgiveness of sins. As you recognize your sin and as you recognize what Christ has done for sinners and as you rest in him and not in the church or in your baptism or in your good works or the fact that you sit at the Lord's table or that you have culture or education or whatever, if you rest purely and wholly and completely upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ then you possess the forgiveness of sins. So John came for a witness to the light. He was a voice crying in the wilderness, not an echo, but a voice. Dr. Chafer used to like to tell us at theological seminary that John was not an echo he was a voice. Someone has said a witness tells what he knows not what he thinks. Well John was a person who told us what he knew about the coming redeemer. And the men of God who preach the word of God are those who tell us what they know. They are witnesses of the great salvation that is found in Christ.

Now John the Apostle continues, and in verse 9 he says, “That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. “Some have taken this text to mean that the Lord Jesus Christ has enlightened every man that has ever come into the world. Well there is a sense in which that is true. Every man who has ever come into the world has some light from God in nature about him, for example, by general revelation. But that’s probably not what this text means. It can mean actually two things. It can mean every enlightened man is enlightened by him alone. If we are enlightened, we are enlightened only by Christ.

Luther gave it that meaning. He said, “There is only one light that lighteth all men, and no man comes into the world who can possibly be illumined by any other light. He refers to Romans chapter 5 and verse 18 where Paul says that all men are justified through Christ, but he means all men that are justified are justified through Christ. And Luther continues, “Although all men are not justified through Christ he is nevertheless the only man through whom justification comes.

Augustine, who was probably the teacher of Luther in this respect saw the same thing in this text. He said, “Jesus Christ is the only man who ever gives light to anyone. If anyone is enlightened it is because of Jesus Christ.” So he gave it the force of every enlightened man is enlightened by him alone.

Now we might illustrate that this way. Let’s just suppose for example, that we grew up in a small community which has a small school. Let’s suppose that it’s so small that there is just one teacher, and let’s say his name is Smith. And we might say in that community, “Everybody in this community is taught by Mr. Smith.” But it might be that there are many individuals in the community who have never been to school there at all. But nevertheless the general statement is made that everybody in this town is taught by Mr. Smith. That is, everybody who is taught is taught by Mr. Smith. There is no other teacher. There may be

some who are not taught who don't go to school, but all who are taught are taught by Mr. Smith. Well Augustine and Luther said that that's what this text meant. That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. If men are enlightened it's because of Jesus Christ. It's possible to understand it that way. I don't think that that's a bad interpretation at all.

The word enlighten, however, also means to bring to light with a view to evil or to good, and in John's language occasionally it means that. It may mean that was the true light which lights every man that comes into the world in the sense that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one who ultimately throws light upon our actions. And they are seen to be either right or wrong, either good or evil. And that he does for every man that comes into the world. Perhaps that's the meaning because the next verse says, “He was in the world and the world was made by him and the world knew him not.” So the light of God has been thrown upon men's actions and they are seen to be evil. But there are some men who by Thy grace of God have come to faith in Christ.

Now he says, “He was in the world and the world was made by him and the world knew him not. He came unto his own and his own received him not.” Isn't that a striking thing? He came into his own situation made through his own instrumentality, this world about us and also the people of Israel, the people chosen in Abraham their father, made the purveyors of the divine revelation. He came to his own people, born in Bethlehem of the family of David, heir to the Davidic throne; he came to his own things and his own people, his own friends, his own relatives, his own kinsman did not receive him. But by the way that word “receive” is one of intimate fellowship. It's the word that is used of Joseph when after he is told by the angel that Mary is pregnant by the Holy Spirit he receives her into his home as his wife, into the most intimate of relationships, husband and wife. So he came to his own

things and his own people did not welcome him into fellowship. “But,” John says, “As many as did receive him, to them he gave power or authority to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name who were born of God.” In other words, the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ was not a failure.

Now, let’s notice a couple of things about these verses because they’re rather important. “As many as received him, to them he gave the authority of becoming the children of God. Even to them that believe on his name.” Here we have the definition of what receiving is. To receive Christ is to believe in Christ. To believe in Christ is to receive Christ. It is to these who have believed that are given the status of the children of God. In other words, when faith comes to an individual or when he has received the Lord Jesus he is installed in the family of God as a child. That word really is a word that comes from the word that means to beget so that we are begotten ones. We are children, the children of God, those who have been begotten of God. That means that there is a supernatural work of God that has taken place in the heart of every single Christian. He has been begotten spiritually by God, and because he has been brought to faith and because he has received him, he is installed. He’s given the authority. Calvin says, “The dignity” of becoming a child of God.

Well we know about that of course, that’s a most wonderful relationship that we have. We are begotten ones of God when we have believed in Christ, but now in verse 13 we read, “Who were born.” Do you notice the order here? He says, “As many as received him,” or as many as believe on his name, they are given the status of children. In other words, the gift of the status of children follows their believing. But the believing is preceded by the being born. “Who were born, not of bloods, not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but of God.” So those who believe, who receive, and who then are installed in the family with the dignity of the children of God are those whom have been born. Do you not see what John is



saying? He’s saying that birth comes first, faith, reception comes next and status of children comes next. “Who were born,” that’s the fundamental fact. “Were born,” given birth to by God, “Not by bloods, not by the will of the flesh, not by the will of man, but of God.” What a magnificent picture John presents. The means of reception is faith.

Many years ago I heard an Africa Inland Mission Missionary say that he heard an African Negress give a testimony to her salvation in a public meeting, and she stood up and she said, “I had heard of the gospel by the hearing of the ear, but one day it went in and sat down in my heart.” Well, that’s her way of putting faith. “One day it came in and sat down in my heart.” That’s something given by God. She said she had heard the gospel many times, but one day it came in and sat down in her heart. In other words, God gave faith.

Now, that arose out of her birth, “Who were born,” that’s the origin of the reception. Paul says that we are made the children of God according to the good pleasure of God. John says, “Who were born of God.” Now, notice he says we’re not born of bloods, as if the birth may point to the action of both parents or to blood as made up of many drops. It’s uncertain exactly what he means by who were born not of bloods. Possibly simply descent, that is not from Abrahamic descent. The will of the flesh is of course human sexual impulse, not born by human sexual impulse or the will of the man. The word that John uses here is the word that speaks of a male, not the generic term man, mankind, but the word male often used of the husband, nor of the husband, for in their concepts it was the will of the man that determined the conception and birth. So he says, that these individuals who’ve received him and who have this authority to be the children of God are individuals, “Who were born not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh (human sexual impulse), nor even the will of the husband, the man,” but of God.”

In other words, all human volition, all human initiative is ruled out in the birth of a believer in Jesus Christ, and the order is simple. It is God who works. It is God who is responsible for the conception through the word of God of life in the heart of an individual and the first activity of the life produced by God through the word in the heart of an individual is to believe. And when we believe or receive him we are given the dignity of the children of God. And listen, if salvation is all of the Lord, to whom do we give the praise? To the Lord, to the Lord, that's why it's so important for us to understand that our salvation is from a birth by God. So, we praise him. All human volition, and that includes free will, is ruled out. “Who were born, not of bloods, not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but of God.”

Now the Apostle Paul later on will tell us plainly, “It's not of him that willeth or him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” If the apostles were standing here and we were to have a little fun, we would say, “How many of you believe in free will? Would you come and stand over here?” I have a hunch there would be a number in this audience. It's amazing as often as we have preached, not simply I but the other men here, have preached the doctrine of the bondage of the will, as often as the reformers have preached the doctrine, as often as their followers have preached the doctrine, as often as Augustine and others have preached the doctrine, as often as it is set forth plainly in the word of God, there are individuals who still shaped by human philosophy and they love the idea of free will. There would be a lot of them standing over here. And if the apostles were in the audience they would be standing over here with the rest of us who don't accept the doctrine of free will. Free will is ultimately destructive of the doctrine of the grace of God, and ultimately our salvation is attributed not only to what Christ has done but to the decision of our free will. And that's why those who believe in free will never have the sense of the grace of God that the saints do who see that

salvation is all together of the Lord God. So John says, “Who were born not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” We really don't have free will even in our ordinary life.

Ambrose Bierce, the American satirist, has said that every time a woman has twins you have absolute proof that there is no free will. [Laughter] How true. Well John then traces our new birth to the Lord God. He says we are born of god and thus we have to learn the great truth stated so often in the word of God, stated in the Book of Proverbs even, “A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.”

In the final analysis it is God who determines our existence. And it's to him that we are responsible for the life that we have. If you are here in this audience this morning and you have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ there was an individual who once said, “No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” That man was the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot come to him unless the Father draws you, but of course we know that the Scriptures teach that we are lost. The Scriptures teach that Christ died for sinners. The Scriptures teach that if a man flees to Christ he'll find reception, and so we invite you in your inability to come to the Lord Jesus Christ crying for mercy and you will find a reception there. May God speak to your heart. May you recognize your lost and unable condition and may you flee to Christ and find the forgiveness of sins and find installation in the family of God as a child of God, a born one of God.

You have no excuse. We have no excuse. We have a glorious gospel preached to all men. Come to Christ. If you say I don't want to come, then of course you have no one to blame but yourself, but if you see that Christ has died for sinners and that you are a sinner, flee to Christ. You'll find open arms to receive you. We invite you to him. That means you don't have to join the church. You don't have to sit at the Lord's table to be saved. You don't

have to be baptized in order to be saved, yes because you have been saved. Salvation is a free gift. Come to Christ. Receive it.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for these wonderful words spoken by the Apostle John, so full of the fundamental truths of life. We thank Thee for the gift in grace of membership in the family of God. We thank Thee for the divine initiative which sought us out and brought us to Christ, conceived the eternal life within us, gave us faith, brought us to our father. We worship Thee and praise Thee. Glorify Thy name through the Lord Jesus Christ, and Lord, if there should be someone here who has not yet come, O give them no rest in their hearts until they come to him. May they come right now. May grace, mercy, and peace go with us. For Jesus' sake, amen.