

John (Part 17)

Love produces Unity/ Self centeredness Produces Anarchy

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In the last Bible study, we had gotten up to John 10:10, and I want to go back just a little bit and hit some of the highlights of those first verses before we go on to those areas that we have not yet covered.

The analogy of God shepherding His people is one that has very frequent Old Testament roots to it, so it certainly was a concept that the Jews should have found agreeable to their ears. We know that they did not understand it, or understood it very little, but nonetheless, it is something that should have been recognizable to them.

The verse that is most obvious to you and me is Psalm 23:1, where it says, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." All of us are aware of that, and the Jews certainly should have been aware of it. They should have recognized that what Jesus was claiming was, in effect, that He was God, that He was the Messiah. He said, "I am the good shepherd," and they should have understood that by connecting it, if only to one verse, in Psalm 23:1.

It is in many other places besides: Psalm 77:20; 79:13; 80:1; 95:7. The shepherd is called "the anointed one" in Isaiah 44:28-45:1. So there were plenty of verses that they could have attached to this idea that He was teaching them about, but they did not grasp it.

The duty of the shepherd is to lead and care for the flock in a wide variety of circumstances. The Latin word for shepherd is *pastor*, and that is where we get the comparison with a minister. A shepherd in the Hebrew language would be the same as a pastor in the Latin language. The word *pastor* was used in the Latin translations of the Bible in place of the word *shepherd*, so that is how it came to be in the English Bibles. When the translators in 1607-1611 translated the King James Version, they used the Latin Vulgate translation as a guide, and used the word *pastor* instead of the word *shepherd* to indicate a minister.

The relationship between a shepherd in Judah was somewhat different from the relationship between a shepherd and a sheep in the United States, Britain, or Australia. That is because of the use that the sheep are put to. In Judah, the sheep are kept primarily for their wool. In the United States, Great Britain, and Canada the sheep are used primarily for meat. So the relationship in Judah tended to be a long relationship,

whereas the relationship in the United States between the shepherd and the sheep is very short, usually one season of growing, and then off to the slaughterhouse they go.

So because the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep in Judah was a long one, it almost became a family relationship. The sheep had names, "Black Ear," "Brown Leg," or whatever they might name them. We might call them Nellie, Matilda, Charlie, or whatever. The shepherd and the sheep became quite familiar with one another. So He said that the sheep know the shepherd's voice, and they will not follow another shepherd because the voice is not recognizable.

Christ compares Himself here, not only to being the shepherd, but also the door to the sheep. That is important for you to understand spiritually, because the way into God's flock is through Christ. He is the door, as well as being the Shepherd. He is our chief Pastor, He is the chief Shepherd. That is what Peter calls Him in I Peter 5. But He is also the way into the flock.

What Jesus was drawing upon here was something that should have been common understanding to those people, and that is, when the sheep were out in the field, the enclosure that they were brought into for the night tended to be quite irregular. By that I mean, oftentimes it was just a narrow place in the hills so that they would be somewhat encompassed. Sometimes they did have a fenced-in area, although not fenced in as well as a corral. In order to keep the sheep enclosed where they were, the shepherd laid down across the opening. If a sheep wanted to get out of the opening, it had to go over the shepherd's body.

So in or out, the sheep had to go over the shepherd, so the shepherd himself was the door. That is the comparison that He was drawing upon. In Ephesians 2:18, it shows that Christ opens the way to God.

I mentioned the phrase "in and out."

John 10:9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."

"In and out" is a Jewish idiom that means security, liberty, peace, law and order, stability. The lesson there is that our stability is to go in and out, as it were, through Christ. There is order, there is stability, it means full life, we are fit and healthy. It has a lot of ideas that go with a good life, that He is the vital ingredient to an abundant life.

In John 10:10, He gets right to that subject:

John 10:10 ...“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

So we see two things there. The people were already living, so the life that He is talking about has to be eternal life. We will see more about this as we proceed through this chapter. He came that they might have eternal life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

I am going to change something here, and you will see why when I get to this other place where it mentions eternal life. I am going to change *life* from *eternal* to *life without end*. I will tell you why when I get to the other place. So my paraphrase is: “I have come that they may have life without end, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

From that, we can come to the conclusion that it is God’s intent that through Christ we be brought to a place of security, and of peace, an abundant life, a full life, a fit and healthy life.

The thieves and robbers were all of those who came before Christ; I am talking about false shepherds. I am not talking about John the Baptist or Isaiah or Zechariah. Simply by implication, it has to be those others, because John the Baptist, Isaiah, and Zechariah were good shepherds. So He could not possibly have meant them.

John 10:11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”

This is very important. As I mentioned in the previous Bible study, He is showing to us some of the responsibilities of a pastor. But there is a principle here that is extremely important to every single one of us, and we cannot let it slip. We might say that the first law of God’s Kingdom is self-denial. I am saying this in relationship to life as it is lived as a human being. Human nature is inherently selfish. It wants to go its own way; it wants to do its own thing; it wants to have its own pleasures, when it pleases. Usually, that is right now.

Sacrifice is the essence of love. It is the vital principle, it is the foundation, it is the heart and core of love. It is what love is built upon or built around. That is why I am saying that perhaps the first law of God’s Kingdom is self-denial. The good shepherd gives his life

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for the sheep. It does not always mean that the good shepherd is sacrificed in death, but rather, that he spends his life in the way that he lives for the well-being of the sheep.

By contrast, the hireling, who does not own the sheep, does not sacrifice or deny himself for the sheep. Rather, he flees when trouble comes. When there is an opportunity for service, when the need for sacrifice is there, he takes care of himself, rather than the sheep.

John 10:13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.

That ties directly back to verse 11, because it tells you what a good shepherd is. A good shepherd is one who cares for the sheep. A hireling is one who cares for himself. In effect, he is simply a man who is getting a paycheck. He did not care about the sheep. He did not care about their well-being. He did not care whether they were protected. If we translate this into a church congregation, the hireling really does not care whether his people are educated spiritually. He does not care whether they understand. He does not care whether they are attacked from the outside. He does not care whether they are blown about by every wind of doctrine. He really does not care what they do, and so he does not correct them. So they receive all of the bumps, and hurts, and bruises that come from doing things the wrong way.

So the sheep do not know whether the shepherd really loves them or not. He does not care about what happens in their lives, so they just drift away. So the sheep are lost. They are not well fed, and they become easy pickings for the wolves.

We can say this in another way. Because the hireling is the way he is, those people become victims of the hireling. It is very likely that the hireling will also be preaching false doctrine. He himself will be a wolf within the flock.

John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own."

This ties directly back to verse 3:

John 10:3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out."

The true sheep of God will respond to the truth that comes from the voice of their shepherd. Those who are not sheep, but are wolves in sheep's clothing, will not respond in the same way. They will be people that drag their heels. They will be people who question everything in a wrong attitude. Please understand that I am not saying that we should not question; we should question until we understand. But the wolf in sheep's clothing will not question in the right attitude. His will be a questioning that is filled with skepticism, cynicism, and sarcasm. It will be questioning in a negative way, not to get truth, but rather, to hang on to his own ideas. The real sheep of God respond to the truth of God.

When you look in Acts 2:41, on that first day of Pentecost, did you ever notice who it was that the apostles baptized that day? God tells you who they baptized:

Acts 2:41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized;

They immediately responded to the government of God. They were not questioning; they were like little children. The apostles could tell by their attitude that these people were being converted; they were hearing the master's voice and responding. They could see it in their attitude. So He is known by His own.

John 10:15 "As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep."

We are getting into something that is indicative of Christ, and I think that it is good to know. We often have a tendency to write off Christ's obedience as being something that He did because He had to. He did because He was predestined and foreordained to do it. He did it because He was forced into that mold, and there was no other script written for Him. So we say, "He did it because He had to." We say that because it gives us justification, "We're not like Christ. We don't have to do it." We are going to see here that He did not have to do it, either.

He said, "I lay down My life for the sheep." He is telling you that what He did is a voluntary act of submission. He *did* have the choice.

We will read it and study it a little bit later in the book of John, where He made it very clear to Pontius Pilate, "You're not killing Me. I'm *letting* you kill Me." Remember that He said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were then would my servants fight." Another time, He said to Peter, "Put up your sword. Do you think that I could not call to My

Father and have 12 legions of angels” here in the blink of an eye?

He did what He did by choice. It was a voluntary submission to the will of God. He could read in the Bible, just the same as we can read in the Bible, and He could read what the Messiah was supposed to do. We can read in the Bible what we are supposed to do. He made the choice to lay down His life; have we yet made the choice to lay down our life for one another, or for God? We will see that in a little bit, too. He had the same choices that we do. He was not a puppet on a string. He had to voluntarily submit Himself to the will of God.

John 10:15-16 “As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also must I bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”

That was a jab at the people who were standing around listening to Him. The Old Testament showed very clearly that Israel was the chosen of God. God had not chosen other nations. The average Israelite, as we have seen in other places, had developed a trust in his pedigree, that he was of Abraham, that he was Abraham’s seed. Over time, they developed a lot of stories about Abraham and his descendants, things that were not biblical at all, that became a part of their tradition. What it amounted to was that because they were born into Israel, they were better than others, and they had a “free ticket into heaven.”

John the Baptist warned them very sternly, when he said, “Do not think that you can depend upon Abraham being your father, because God can raise up sons to Abraham out of the very stones of the ground.”

What Jesus is saying here follows along the same line: “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold.” Not of the Jews; not of Israel. What He was announcing here was something that was going to come to pass, that had not yet been activated, and that is, the conversion of the whole world. God was going to go to the Gentiles.

God had that in mind from the very beginning; there is no doubt about that. There are very strong intimations of it in the Old Testament, especially in the book of Isaiah. Zechariah made it very clear that God was going to convert the whole world. Jesus Himself told His apostles that He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He was letting us understand, and letting them know, that it was not going to stop there. It was going to go on and on.

John 10:16 “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring [it is still in the future], and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”

That is very clear. What He is leading to is for all of us to understand that although we are scattered all over the world—there are German converts, and there are Polish converts, and there are people in Austria, and Italy, and in Africa and Australia—and although we seem to be very diverse in culture and personality, and languages that we speak, we all have one thing in common: that is Christ.

Although we are not all of the same nation, we are all of one flock, and we have one Shepherd. You can read that in the book of Ephesians, where Paul makes it very clear that Christ has broken down the middle wall of separation (Ephesians 2:14), and that the one thing that we all have in common is Jesus Christ. Israelite and Gentile. It is through Him that we have peace.

So this is a little fore mention of the unity that will be in the church. God is going to accomplish something within the church that has never, ever been accomplished in all of the history of mankind: everybody in one group, at peace. There will be one flock and one Shepherd.

John 10:17-18 “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.”

...

Jesus Christ was not the victim of circumstances. He would not ever let events control Him. He had spiritual power that is way beyond you and me. It shows us a standard toward which we need to grow, that is, where we are not the victim of circumstances, but we are in control of our lives as much as possible.

John 10:18 ...“I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”

What we have here is a tremendous example of Christ’s sublime submission to the Father’s will. He is not a play actor at all, nor was He the victim of circumstances in any way. He was His own man, and the only one that He took orders from was the Father. He would listen to the appeals of all, but He took no orders from anyone except the

Father. He discerned what the Father wanted, and that is the direction that He went. That is a very high standard for any one of us to shoot for.

Another way we might put it, as a way that we ought to follow, is that first, He sought God's will. Second, He chose it. Third, He lived it out. His whole life was an act of obedience to God, even to death.

We can also look at it like this. His unique position as the Son of God, as God in the flesh, did not give Him the right to do anything that He chose to do. One would think that if one were in command of everything, if one were the boss, one could do anything one wanted. That is the way that we think: if were the boss, I could do things the way that I wanted.

That is not the way the He conducted His life. He did not do what He liked; He always did what God liked. That is what set Him apart.

We would think that would make a person a slave. No, that is whole point! It made Him the freest individual who ever lived! That is what we have to come to understand. That is what God's whole purpose is in trying to get us turned around. *We have been doing all of our lives what sin likes.* We read about that in John 8. The person who sins is the slave of sin. The person who sins as a way of life is doing what sin dictates. He thinks he is doing what he wants to do, but actually, he is doing what sin wants to do. Christ said that person is actually a slave of sin.

What we have to learn is that in perfect submission to God, we are actually producing greater liberty than we could ever have by doing what we think we like to do. So He sought God's will, He chose to do it, and then He lived it out, and that is what produced the liberty that He had.

It is a simple concept to say, but it is so hard to do it, because self-denial keeps standing in the way. We do not want to deny ourselves, because human nature keeps telling us not to do it.

You might say that Christ's approach was that if it is God's will, it is right and I will do it. In another chapter, Christ gave the solution to all of man's problems: He said to believe in the Son. That was a big, broad statement, but nonetheless, it is the solution. Our problem is that our beliefs keep getting in the way. Our beliefs are the things that come from the culture that we have grown up in.

John 10:19-21 Therefore there was a division again among the Jews

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because of these sayings. And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?" Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

Do you know that this principle that John is illustrating here is still happening today? Christ is still dividing the world. That is what happened there; there was a division among them. Everybody heard what He said somewhat differently. Look at how many different 'Christian' religions there are. They cannot agree amongst themselves as to what He actually said.

Matthew 10:34-36 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'"

Christ divides. He divides those who are really hearing His voice away from those who are not hearing. Is that not what happens in a flock? Remember how He said at the beginning of John 10, and how I described it to you when several flocks are together all in one area? The shepherd calls out with his voice, and his flock listens. They perk up their ears, and they begin to divide themselves away from the other flock.

Christ is still doing that. In actual practice, what happens so frequently is that those who do not hear the voice of Christ persecute those who are dividing themselves away from the rest of the flock. As they leave the flock, the persecutors take pot shots at them, verbally and sometimes physically.

This is beginning to lead into something in John 10:20-21. It mentions His words and His deeds. Some people were at least trying to fairly analyze what He said and what He did. They had to admit that His words and His deeds were not the words and deeds of a madman. But He was still not the Christ. He was still not the Messiah of their expectations.

That is important because there are many out in the world who hear the word, and they do not disagree with what they hear. But it is still not what they want to hear. It is not the Christ, it is not the words of their expectation. So the world becomes very divided over Christ. There are those who become angry and even violently disagreeable to the truth of God. There are others who will go so far as to say, "These words are good. They aren't the words of madmen. They're not the deeds of madmen." Yet, they still are not

convicted enough that they will perk up their ears and follow those who are being separated from the flock.

There are all kinds of different approaches to this, but it still ends up with the same thing: Christ, in a sense, is dividing the world right down to this day. It still has not stopped.

John 10:22-28 Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand."

The Feast of Dedication is the feast that is today called Hanukkah. It has its roots in the period of time between roughly 168-165 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes picked on Egypt, and he bit off more than he could chew, because the Romans came to the defense of the Egyptians. He was rebuffed in no uncertain terms. Antiochus Epiphanes retired from Egypt, very thoroughly embarrassed. For many years, Antiochus Epiphanes had been trying to Hellenize the Jews. He had been unsuccessful to a great degree, because the Jews adamantly stuck to their own traditions. And I say, good for them, they were far better than Hellenism. They were not right, but they were better.

Antiochus Epiphanes, after failures for many years, came back from being embarrassed. He had to take his embarrassment out on somebody. These obstinate Jews stood in his way, and they became the perfect foil for his anger. If could not Hellenize them by more peaceful persuasions, trying to educate them to the "goodies" of Hellenism, trying to get them to worship Athena and Diana and other Greek gods, he would force them into it by fear of persecution. In the course of that, there many gruesome deaths and many Jews fell. In one account that I read, in his attack on Jerusalem, 80,000 people died on his return from being embarrassed in Egypt. There were about that many also taken into captivity. Even though he did that, the Jews still held to their beliefs.

They went to the extent that if Jewish families circumcised their baby boy, the Syrians would kill the baby boy and tie the baby boy around the mother's neck and make her

leave it there until the baby rotted. The final act was the desecration of the Temple, in which swine was offered on the altar and its blood and various other parts were scattered about the Holy of Holies.

The Hasmonean family gave rise to the Maccabees, which was a nickname for "hammer." They kept hammering away at the Syrians. Judas Maccabeus, the greatest, the leader of the five brothers, became known as Judas the Maccabee, Judas the Hammer. In a period of about three years, they finally drove the Syrians out, through guerilla warfare. They could not mount an army like the Syrians, but they finally drove them out by constantly "nipping at the dog's heels." Little by little, they wore the dog (the Syrians) down until there was nothing there.

Then they cleansed the Temple. It was in winter, the month Kislev, and when they looked around for oil to burn in the menorah, they only had a one day supply of oil. They put the oil in and lit it, and the oil lasted for eight days, or until they could make new oil according to the instructions that are given in the Old Testament. It took them that long to make it. When they finally had a supply on hand, then the lights went out.

The Feast of Dedication became the Festival of Lights, or Hanukkah. That is the time of the year, and Jesus was in the area of the Temple, Solomon's porch, which was a series of colonnades or pillars that surrounded the outside of the Temple.

They asked a very blunt question: "How long do you keep us in doubt?" Are you the Christ?

I keep wondering why these people kept asking the same question. They had already asked that question in several different ways. Jesus told them that He had already told them. He did not tell them directly; He did not say "I am the Christ." He did say that directly to the woman at the well, and He had told the blind man of John 9, "I am the Christ." To the others, He gave a typical veiled answer, and He did it again here.

That seems to be God's approach to teaching, and it is good to understand that. He seems to give enough of an answer to whet our appetite, but not so much that we will just accept it. But rather, it will force us to look a little bit further. By doing that, it becomes more indelibly ingrained in our minds, because of the search that is necessary to achieve a right answer.

He said, "I told you, and you do not believe." Here is how He told them, and it is good to get this principle. "The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me." They should have been able to connect what He did with the scriptures in the Old

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Testament, because what He did lined up with what God had already prophesied that the Messiah would do. Had anybody else done anything like that? The answer is obvious, that nobody else had ever done anything like that.

Like He said, they did not believe Him. He could even say, "You do not believe Me," because He was the One who inspired the Old Testament. He was the One who caused those things to be written; therefore, it was His Word. They were not connecting the works with the word of the Old Testament.

Mr. Armstrong used to say something that was very similar, as proof that he was God's apostle. He said, "What am I doing?" He was doing the works of an apostle.

John 10:25-27 "The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

I am using predestination in the sense that God knows who He is going to call, that some things are predetermined beforehand. We understand from what is said about this in Romans 8 and in Ephesians 1 that predestination only applies to a person's calling. We know from John 6:44 that unless God draws us we cannot really hear the call. We cannot really respond. And yet, it also shows that God does hold men, who are not called, responsible for their actions. There is a tension between the calling of God, or predestination, and the use of free moral agency, even by those who are not called. God is holding them responsible, and what He is saying is that there is enough evidence available that what I am doing should be apparent to you. My Word should be apparent to you.

He is accusing these people of turning away from it because of their unbelief. They are making a choice.

John 10:28 is a verse that I mentioned earlier about eternal life. For those who hear His voice:

John 10:28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand."

The way that is written can be taken to mean that there are three things that He is going to give to His people. We would have a tendency to read two things; we would have a

tendency in English to read *eternal life* and *never perishing* as being both one and the same thing. But other portions of the Bible show that there is a separation between eternal life and never perishing.

Eternal life, in the biblical sense, seems to mean something more than just living a life without end. Eternal life in the biblical sense includes not only *quantity* of life (that is, life without end), but also includes *quality* of life as well, that is, the way a person lives. Eternal life is to live life as God lives. It is not only endless, it is abundant as well. It is not only endless; it is a life that is filled with good, with challenge, with responsibility, with privilege, with honor, with every good thing that a person can think of.

It is possible for a person to have endless life without having good quality: witness the demons. Do they live like God lives? They have endless unhappiness, misery, suffering, depression, pain, discouragement. Do you see why Jesus separated eternal life and life without end, a life that never perishes? Because eternal life indicates quality; life without end indicates quantity.

The third thing that He offers to us is absolute security. We will never be snatched out of His hand. Satan will not be able to get us away from God. That ought to be so encouraging to you. Even though this way is hard, and even though we fail frequently, God says, "You will not be able to snatch that person out of My hand, Satan."

Do you remember what Christ said in John 17? He said to the Father in that prayer, "Thank you for the ones that you have given to Me, and I have not lost any of them, except the son of perdition," meaning Judas.

That ought to be so encouraging. God is not in the business of losing children. He is in the business of preserving the lives of His children, and producing character. The things that He wants to do, He accomplishes.

John 10:28-30 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."

Now what does that mean?

Many years ago, there arose in the church a controversy that is called by the historians and the theologians the *Arian controversy*. It arose in part because of Gnosticism. One

of the beliefs of Gnosticism was that Jesus, as God, was not really real. For instance, He did not leave any footprints. When He was on the cross, that was not really Him; it was just something that looked like Him.

There were those led by a man named Arian who said that Jesus really was real; that He was human, that He was separate from the Father. The Gnostic wing or clique used this verse (John 10:30) as proof that Jesus Christ had not really had a body. Since everybody agreed that God is spirit, and Jesus and the Father were one, then Jesus would have been just like the Father: He only looked like He was there. He was not really there. That sounds weird to you and me, but they were serious about it. It proved to be a very divisive issue in the early church.

What did He mean, "I and the Father are one." To you and me, this is no big issue. The answer is quite apparent, and it is because we understand that there is no trinity. We understand that God is a Family, and we understand that the Father and the Son are distinct personalities. They are both God, but they are two beings; two different personalities. And yet they are one: they are one family, for one thing, and they are one in their purposes, in their mind, in their intent. They are in complete harmony in the same way that a man and a woman in marriage are to be one. We can certainly see that: a man and a woman are two distinct personalities, even two different sexes, yet God says they are one. It is one family, and hopefully within that union, they can come to be of the same mind, as well in the way that the Father and the Son were one.

So in John 10:30, He is showing that God is the real source of His confidence that we will not be able to be separated. He was very confident because He and the Father are of the same way.

Let us pursue this a little bit further.

John 17:11 "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world [meaning, His disciples], and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are."

Mr. Armstrong applied this verse to the name of the church: it is the church of God, and we are kept through that church in being one with God.

We are all distinct personalities. Most of us have different names. Some of us are related, physically, but we are also related spiritually because we are all part of that one God Family, and that is the family name. It is God, and we are kept, guarded, protected,

preserved through that name, which is the name of God, which is the church of God. That keeps us one with the Father.

John 17:20-22 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:”

They were undoubtedly unified. That is what the word *one* indicates. Where did that unity come from? How did it arise? What produced it? How were the Father and Son able to be so unified with one another, at one with one another? This is important, because it tells us how we can become unified. It tells you how, in a broad way, you can make your marriage one.

John 15:10 “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide [or live] in His love.”

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”

We just saw in John 17 that He asked the Father to be in us. How do we get the Father in us? How can we be one with the Father? By loving the Son. If we love the Father, and we love the Son, that means that both the Father and the Son will love us and will be in us.

John 14:24 “He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.”

John 14:23-24 show that if we love the Father and the Son, we become at one with them, and they live their lives in us. We are with them, and they are with us.

John 14:15 “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

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John 14:21 “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

What is being shown here? What is being shown is that it is love that produces unity. Love is an outgoing concern that is equal to our concern for ourselves. It is awfully hard to fight against someone that loves you, and it is hard to fight against somebody that you love. Sometimes we do it, but if we really love, would we really fight? I do not think so; we would be too unified to that person to really fight with them.

Ephesians 4:1-3 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

What does love produce? It produces unity; the unity of the spirit, oneness.

James 3:13-14 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

What is envy? It is a feeling that manifests itself when somebody has something that you want. Even worse, it is a feeling that manifests itself when somebody has something and you wish they did not have it. It is not so much that you want it for yourself; you just hate that they have it. That is not good, that is rather selfish. Is that going to unify people, when you have that feeling that somebody has something that you want, or they have something that you wish that they did not have? Is that going to unify you to them, or is going to drive you apart?

Self-seeking: when a person is going after his own thing within a group, whether he is striving for office, trying to get to be the leader among the pack, is that going to endear him to other people?

James 3:15-16 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

That word *confusion* means anarchy, political disorder. That will be the result, the effect, of people seeking their own thing. Remember, this is the opposite of love. Is this going to unify, when there is anarchy, and everybody is going in his own direction, seeking his own thing? This self-seeking is in other translations as *ambition*, selfish ambition. "For where envy and self-seeking exist," here comes the result, political disorder, or anarchy, "and every evil thing will be there."

James 3:17-18 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Fruit is that which is produced. It is the harvest, it is the crop. That which is produced of righteousness, or by righteousness. What is righteousness described as in the Bible?

Psalm 119:172 For all Your commandments are righteousness.

How is love defined in the Bible? Love is keeping the commandments. You begin to get an equation. Righteousness is love. Righteousness is love expressed to God in the keeping of the first four commandments; righteousness is love as it is expressed to man in the keeping of the last six commandments. What is going to be produced by righteousness? What is going to be produced by love? What is going to be produced by keeping the commandments? It is sown in peace by those who make peace: it is going to produce peace.

Peace means that everybody is in harmony with each other. Peace means that everybody is unified.

You get one of those circles that keeps going around and around. Peace is what is produced by love, and love is produced in peace. Do you now understand why God said what He did in I Corinthians 7, about a brother or sister not being in bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace? Peace is so important that it is one of the few reasons why God will permit a divorce. The reason is because more righteousness can be produced in peace than in warfare. Warfare within a family is such a distraction that you cannot concentrate on being righteousness. We are so busy fighting one another that we cannot keep the commandments. It is human, it is carnal, to defend ourselves and go on the attack.

The very best quality righteousness is produced in peace. The way you produce peace is to love, and love is a choice. Keeping the commandments is a choice. Being righteous is a choice. That is why we can even love our enemy: you can make a choice to do that.

I saw love defined as being “an unconquerable good will.” It is not sappy; it is not being nicey-nice. It even has the word *will* in it. The person who uses it sets his will to be good, and it is unconquerable. It does not give up being good.

I think we can summarize that what Jesus is saying is that Christians are in unity with each other and with God when the love of God is the driving force in their words and deeds. That is what Christ said here. His words and His deeds proved who He was, and He was at one with God. If we are going to be at one with God, and at one with each other, it means that love is our driving force, and that means that we are keeping the commandments.

John 10:31-39 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?” The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.” Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, “You are gods”’? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.” Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.

To them, His words were blasphemy and you really have to admire Christ’s courage, because He was face-to-face with death. He knew it; yet, He faced them down.

In Leviticus 24:16, it is made very clear that the penalty for blasphemy is to be stoned to death. It is interesting that the Jews understood this so well. Here was an Old Testament scripture, way back in Leviticus, and they knew that the penalty for blasphemy was death. But they could not make the same connection to the words and to the deeds that made it so clear that He was the Messiah. They could believe what

they wanted to believe, but that which they chose not to believe, they did not believe.

That is why God held them responsible. They were selective in what they chose to believe and what they did not choose to believe. They could choose to believe in the death penalty, but they did not choose to believe that He was the Messiah. They believe in Him in one place, and not in another. And that is the way that most of Christianity is: very selective in what it chooses to believe.

So Jesus' courage here is impressive. There is no hint at all of fear. His defense was to point to His conduct, primarily. His defense was to ask them a question: "For which of these works do you stone Me?" Then He went on to use Scripture against them. "Is it not written in your law?" Here the word *law* is *torah*. It is used in this sense to include the whole Bible, not just the first five books, because the quote that Jesus gives is in Psalm 82. Yet, He said it is the law, and that is not wrong, because the commands of God are not in just the first five books. The commands of God are everywhere. In one sense, they are in the New Testament too; that is part of the law of God as well.

He said, "I said, 'You are gods'," which was another poke in the ribs, because He was telling them "I inspired that. I'm the real author of that Psalm, and I said, 'You are gods.'"

John 10:35 If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken) . . .

Go to Exodus 21. This has nothing to do with blasphemy, but it has everything to do with that word *god*, because it is part of the argument that Jesus used here.

Exodus 21:1-2 "Now these are the judgments which you shall set before them: If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing . . .

Exodus 21:6 . . . then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door . . .

Notice the word *judges*. That word in the Hebrew is *elohim*. "Shall bring him to the gods."

Why is it written in that way? It is a Biblical principle that the one who was commissioned by God is as God to the ones to whom he is sent. I showed you this with Moses; remember how God said to Moses, "You are as God to Pharaoh." The one sent

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by God, or we might say the one commissioned by God. Jesus used the word *consecrated* or *sanctified*, so we can use that word as well. *Commissioned* is a more modern word; *ordained* is a more modern word.

The one who was consecrated, sanctified, commissioned, sent, dispatched by God is as God to the one to whom he is sent.

Why were the judges of Exodus 21:6 called gods? Because they were acting in God's behalf. God was the real ruler, but the judges were the ones the people could see. They were acting in God's behalf before the people. They were standing before the people, judging as though God was their judge. The implication is that God would inspire and guide the judges of Israel in the making of decisions as long as they were using the law of God to make their decisions.

It is a part of the bigger thing, where the keys of the kingdom were given to Peter, and he has the power to loose or to bind.

The thrust of Jesus' argument is if inspired scripture (Psalm 82) allowed that title to be given to mere men, to whom God entrusted a responsibility, how then can He whom God consecrated, that is, Jesus Christ, and sent into the world, be guilty of blasphemy? That was one of His arguments.

His other argument begins in John 10:37. He says, "If My works are not what God Himself would do, then I am discredited. Give credit to what the works tell you." What He was saying was, "How many other people have you seen heal a blind man? How many other people have you seen heal people who have been blind or lame since birth, or have had chronic illnesses for years and years?"

The word *sanctified* in John 10:36 is one of those words that nominal Christianity uses a great deal. You will even see it on the name of a church, "The Sanctified, Holy Brethren Church," or "The Sanctified New Testament Church," or "The Sanctified Holiness Church." Let us take a look at the word, and how it is used in several places in the Bible.

In Exodus 20:11, in the Greek version of the Old Testament, the same word is used where the Sabbath is sanctified. It is called *holy*. It is the Greek word *hagios*.

Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you."

The prophet was sanctified, in this case, even before he was born.

Leviticus 16:19 Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and consecrate it [sanctify it] from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

In English, the word meaning *sanctified* can be translated several different ways: holy, sanctified, consecrated, and dedicated. Regardless of the context in which it appears, the basic meaning is always the same. Its basic meaning is *different*. The Sabbath is holy; the Sabbath is sanctified; the Sabbath is different from other days. The Holy Spirit is different from other spirits that are available. It is clean; it is pure; it is true. It is the right kind of power. The priests are sanctified; they are different from other men, because of their responsibility. That is the meaning and usage of the word.

Anytime you see the word *holy*, its basic meaning is *different*, set apart, sanctified, dedicated, because it is different from other things that are similar in name.

John 10:40-42 And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. Then many came to Him and said, "John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true." And many believed in Him there.

He went beyond Jordan, apparently to the same place that He was baptized. He did not go there necessarily to get away from people; He went there to prepare Himself for the final push, to gather His spiritual strength. In a way, it was almost like going back to His roots spiritually, back to where, in a sense, it all began, some 3 ½ years before.

We are getting very close to the final preaching in Jerusalem; in fact, in John 13, we begin the last night, Passover night.

At the end of John 10, He went to the place where He could be spiritually rejuvenated or empowered, where He could do some deep prayer and get Himself geared-up for the end. The conclusion the people reached at that time was that He was even greater (at least these people said that) than what John the Baptist said.

That ought to be encouraging as well to you and me: He is greater beyond anything that we are able to think of in carrying out His responsibilities in His relationship to you and me as our High Priest, as our Mediator before God. He is greater than we think.