

VIGIL



“Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

~ I Peter 5:8

Vol. XXXIII-No. 4

July/August 2005

I AM

The True Vine

Ashley Kizer

Many adjectives have been used in the inspired text to describe Jesus Christ. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah described Him as “despised and rejected,” but he also called Him “Wonderful” and “mighty” (Isaiah 53:3; 9:6). Another prophet, John the Baptist, reiterated the description of His might in Matthew 3:11. God the Father called Him “beloved” (v. 17), and He referred to Himself as “meek and lowly” (11:28).

In other scriptures, we notice that the Spirit vividly describes the Son’s incredibly multifaceted nature by using nouns, such as: Counselor, Prince, Savior, mediator, and others (Isaiah 9:6; Acts 5:31; Hebrews 12:24). Many of the nouns, such as bread and light, are allegorical in nature, and seem to express a great deal of truth with very few words (cf. John 6:35; 8:12).

Perhaps the most revealing descriptions of Christ are those that are composed of both an adjective and an allegorical noun. Such is the case with His explanation of Himself in John chapter 15: “I am the true vine...” (John 15:1). In this part of the country, most of us are more familiar with tomato vines than the grape vines to which Jesus was most likely

referring. Tomato farmers usually use some type of framework to hold up their vines so that they will not grow along the ground. A common way of supporting one of these plants is to tie the largest stem to a wooden stake so that it will grow relatively straight. The branches that grow off of this vine do not need to be tied down because they draw their support from “the true vine.” Jesus is saying to us that He is that vine and we are the branches that rely on His strength.

Notice that our Lord is “the true vine.” The modifying adjective implies that there are other vines, but they are false. The word “true” is translated from the original Greek word, *alethinos*, which *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* claims, “denotes true in the sense of real, ideal, genuine...” (1170). Though there are others who offer salvation and truth, Jesus is the only authentic Savior and Master. He warned His disciples on a separate occasion, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24). Paul warned the Galatians about heeding another

gospel, which, he said, “is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Galatians 1:7). There is most certainly only one “true vine.”

Much can be said about the verses in John 15 that refer to the true vine and the branches. In order to organize these thoughts, let us focus on three alphabetical points. Jesus extends at least three commands to His church in the aforementioned passage. Consider them briefly as we relate them to the figure of the true vine.

“**Abide in me...**” (v. 4). Christians have become such because they have “put on Christ” by being baptized (Galatians 3:27). We have been “baptized into Jesus Christ” (Romans 6:4, emphasis mine - A.K.), and now we are commanded to abide in Him. According to W.E. Vine, this word can also be translated, “continue” (2). John wrote that we are to “walk in the light, as he is in the light” (1 John 1:7). Christ Himself told the church in Smyrna, “...be thou faithful unto death...” (Revelation 2:10). This should be the extent of our abiding in Christ; that we would serve Him to the point of death.

Continued on page 34

The "I AM's" of Christ Ronnie Hayes

In this issue of the *Vigil* we will be dealing with the "I AM's" of Christ found in the book of John. Christ said, "I am...the bread of life" (John 6:35), "the light of the world" (John 8:12), "the door" (John 10:9), "the good shepherd" (John 10:11), "the resurrection" (John 11:25), "the way" (John 14:6), and "the true vine" (John 15:1). These statements are significant regarding the character of Christ. The implications and teachings of each of these statements must have been enraging to the Jews. They were constantly seeking to discredit or kill Him (cf. John 5:16-18; 7:1,11-15). To those who seek the truth, these statements stand as beacons in the night. With this in mind, let us look at what Christ meant, when He said, "I Am the light of the world" (John 8:12).

When we look at the proclamation of Christ, we see both the exclusive and inclusive nature of the statement. Christ said, "I AM" the light of the world. This would exclude any other way. Christ is spoken of as the only savior. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). John said of Christ, "...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). We are told that He is the only begotten son. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). There is only one who met God's approval as His son on the Mount of Transfiguration. "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him"

(Matthew 17:5). Not only was Christ the only begotten Son of God, but He was also the sinless Son of God. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Christ is the only one who could be "the light of the world," which shows the exclusive nature of this statement. On the other hand, we see Christ is the light of the WORLD, which shows the inclusive nature of His statement. The light is for all. Christ stated, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15,16). The Lord wants all to be saved. "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). He will deliver us from darkness when we are willing to seek the light. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:13). What will we do with the light?

Light presented the presence of God. David Lipscomb wrote in his commentary, *The Gospel according to John*:

"Light was considered as an accompaniment of the presence of God. Moses saw the burning bush in Horeb. When he returned from the presence of the Lord on Sinai his face was shining with heavenly radiance. The pillar of fire that lighted Israel on their journey was the emblem of the presence of God. Now Christ, in the presence of both friends and foe, makes a more stupendous claim and affirms that 'I am the light of the world,' not to the Jews only, but to all nations that will embrace his claims" (123,124). Oh, how this must have infuriated the Jews! They certainly didn't want Him to be the Son of God! They would not want Him to associate Himself with light. At His mock trial the high priest asked, "...Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed" (Mark 14:61)? When Christ responded, "I am" (Mark 14:62), the high priest

went hysterical. "Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death" (Mark 14:63,64). They could hang Him on the cross, but they would never extinguish the light. Those who are Christians still reflect this light.

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world, A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:13-16).

Light performs many different jobs. Light gives direction. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalms 119:105). "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psalms 119:130). "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (Proverbs 6:23). All would do well to give heed to the direction found in the light. Light also provides comfort. To the child that is afraid of the dark, a night-light provides all the comfort he/she needs. The child of God can find the solace they need in the light. In the fear of death, the Psalmist said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalms 23:4). What comfort!

Christ said, "I am the light of the world." Do you have the light?

4207 Veterans Memorial Dr.
Adamsville, AL 35005

The Good Shepherd

Kerry Richardson

Among the many beloved passages in the Old Testament is Psalm 23:1-6. Quoted in settings like funeral services and lessons dealing with the problems of life, the idea that the “Lord is my Shepherd” is one that brings a hearer hope, comfort, and encouragement. While many may never have considered the idea, careful Bible students have likely noticed that this idea is found in the *Old Testament*. Specifically, it was penned during the “Mosaical Dispensation” when the children of Israel followed the Mosaical law in order to be saved from sin. According to passages such as Ephesians 2:14-15, Hebrews 8:6-13, etc., we clearly understand that the ordinances of this time period have been abolished. As a result, the principles that were penned during this era would no longer provide authority for beliefs and practices of those living in this era. Therefore, we might ask this question: “Today, do God’s children have a shepherd similar to the 23rd Psalm?” In the Mosaical era the Children of God were privileged to have such a shepherd. What about those living under “the better covenant” (Hebrews 8:6)? Do we have a shepherd? And if so, who is the shepherd and what is the nature of his activities on behalf of his “sheep?”

In John 10:1-18, we discover an answer to our initial question as Jesus states “I am the good shepherd” (verse 11). The comment, according to John 9:41, was included as Jesus addressed some of the Pharisees. Earlier in this chapter, Jesus had healed a blind man on the Sabbath Day (9:14). As a result, the blind man was interviewed by the Pharisees with the outcome ending in the man being cast out from them (9:34). Upon hearing of the fate of the healed man, Jesus counseled with him regarding His identity and indicated that He had come into the world to bring both spiritual sight and spiritual blindness (9:35-39). It was

this latter idea that caught the attention of some Pharisees that accompanied the man (9:40). Their question to Christ: “Are we blind also?”

By the time of Christ, the Pharisees had become very influential among the citizens of the Jewish nation, possessing authority that frequently exceeded that of the civil courts of Palestine (Smith’s Bible Dictionary; Barbour; 1987: p. 243). In fact, since Jesus testified to this fact in Matthew 23:2 (“the scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat”), it seems very likely that the Pharisees had become the greatest religious leaders among the Jews. Thus, along with the priests, this sect of the Jews had assumed responsibility for “shepherding” the people of God. Yet, as Christ repeatedly claimed (i.e. Matthew 23:1-39), this sect of Jewish leaders did not discharge this responsibility in an acceptable manner. With regard to Christ, they were spiritually blind (John 9:41). Because of this “blindness,” they were not (in turn) acceptably shepherding the “sheep of Israel.” In the passage of the “Good Shepherd,” Jesus addressed both of these concepts (note: while several conclude that the events of 9:1-41 and 10:1-18 are totally unrelated, the comments of John in verses 19-21 seem to indicate that this is a continuous story; verse 19- “there was division again”).

In exposing the Pharisees as “strangers” (verse 5), “thieves and robbers” (verse 8), and “hirelings” (verse 12), Jesus clearly emphasized the fact that He was the model keeper of the sheep. And in doing so, there are four ideas that relate to the nature of activities done on behalf of all who follow in His steps. **First**, Jesus indicated that He *knows* His sheep (verse 14). The first century shepherd, a respected figure in society, was intimately familiar with his sheep. In order to successfully

separate his sheep from those of another fold or recognize a sheep was missing, a shepherd must know each sheep belonging to his fold. Christ, the shepherd of God’s flock, knows every sheep so intimately that He knows the numbers of hair upon our heads (Matthew 10:30) and our basic needs (Matthew 6:32). **Second**, Jesus indicated that He *leads* His sheep (verses 3-4). One of the primary responsibilities of first century shepherds was to lead his flock on a daily basis. Whether to food, drink, rest, or safety, sheep were totally dependant upon the leadership of their shepherd. Similarly, the sheep within the fold of God would completely rely on the guidance of Jesus (Ephesians 5:23-24). **Third**, closely associated with the idea of leadership, Jesus also indicated He *provides* for His sheep (verse 9- “find pasture”). Those who follow Christ will find both physical and spiritual provision (Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 9:8, Philippians 4:19). **Fourth**, Jesus indicated He *protects* His sheep (verses 12-18). When danger approached, the loyal first century shepherd would protect sheep in danger, often putting himself in harm’s way to do so (cf. 1 Samuel 17:34-35). Christ, as the loyal shepherd for God’s children, placed Himself in harm’s way by accepting God’s mission to suffer and die for the sins of all people (Philippians 2:5-8). Though He sought an alternative way (Luke 22:42), He willingly sacrificed his life in order to protect His sheep.

Today, if we are faithful children of God, Jesus is the shepherd who knows us, leads us, provides for us, and protects us. However, being able to say “the Lord is my shepherd” is a privilege... reserved only for His sheep. Today, are *you* counted among His sheep?

1710 Hwy 69
Jasper, AL 35501

I Am The Way, The Truth, And The Life

John 14:6

Randy Medlin

Jesus had just told His disciples of His imminent departure and promised to return. He also told them that when He returned, He would take them back with Him when He reascended. He then said, "And where I go you know, and the way you know." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way" (John 14: 4-5)? Jesus responded with the words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (v.6).

Words originally intended to comfort and instruct have in our time become a call to arms in a pluralistic society. Religious multiculturalism asserts that not only do all religions have the right to exist, all are equally valid. Christians, Muslims, Jews and every member of all religious bodies are assured that each and every path is the path to salvation, however salvation may be defined.

Note that our Lord did not say He was a way or a truth, but that He was (and is) the way and the truth and the life. Christianity by its very nature is exclusive. If the gospel is correct, and it is, there is no other way to salvation than through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

The problem with that statement is that it is not politically correct. People today, it seems are no longer as concerned about truth as they are for inclusion and tolerance. In Peter's sermon recorded in Acts 4, he stated: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is not other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (v.12). That bold declaration is not elitist, but it is exclusive. Modern Jews, for example, must deal with John's inspired annunciation that "Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either..." (1 John 2:23). That is, you cannot have one without the other. In

order to claim fellowship with the Father, one must accept and follow the Son.

In the movie a *Few Good Men*, Tom Cruise plays a Navy lawyer who questions a marine colonel, played by Jack Nicholson about the murder of one of Nicholson's men. The courtroom scene turns into a shouting match as Cruise accuses Nicholson of being complicit in the murder. The exchange ends with Nicholson shouting, "You can't handle the truth!"

We are a society that demands truth in virtually every area of our lives. We demand the truth from loved ones, doctors, stockbrokers, courts, employers, and airlines. We also expect to be told the truth when we pick up a reference book, read an article or watch a news story. We insist on truth from advertisers, teachers and politicians. In fact, we demand truth for almost every facet of our lives that affects our money, our relationships, our safety or our health.

Despite our unwavering demands for truth in those areas, many say they are not interested in truth when it comes to religion or morality. In fact, many downright reject the idea that any religion can be true. When it comes to these matters, we are now being told there are not absolute truths.

Surely you have noticed, there is a huge contradiction here. Why do we say, "that's true for you but not for me" when we are talking about morality or religion, but we never even think of such nonsense when we are talking to a stock broker about our money or a doctor about our health?

Although few would admit it, rejection of religious and moral truth is often on volitional rather than intellectual grounds. Many just don't want to be held accountable to any moral standards, or religious doctrine.

Perhaps Augustine was right when he said that we love the truth when it enlightens us, but we hate it when it convicts us. Maybe Nicholson's character was right; maybe we (as a society) can't handle the truth.

So, what is truth? Very simply truth is "telling it like it is." When the Roman governor, Pilate asked Jesus nearly 2000 years ago, "what is truth?" he did not wait for Jesus to respond, instead Pilate immediately acted as if he knew at least some truth. Concerning Jesus he declared: "I find no fault in this man" (John 18:38). That was certainly true and it meets our definition. By exonerating Jesus, Pilate was "telling it like it is."

Truth can also be defined as "that which corresponds to its object," or "that which describes an actual state of affairs." Jesus really was innocent and Pilate's acknowledgement of that constituted truth. Contrary to what is being taught in many school systems, truth is not relative but absolute. If something is true, it is also universal, that is, it is true for all people, at all times, in all places. All truth claims, therefore, are absolute, narrow, and exclude their opposites, even religious truths.

The truth about truth is this: false ideas about truth lead to false ideas about life. If you can kill the concept of truth, then you can kill the concept of any true religion or any true morality. Many in our culture have been attempting to do this over the past forty years. Religious and moral decline trumpet their success.

The bottom line is truth exists. It cannot be denied. In the end religious truth is embodied in our Lord Jesus. When He stated, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He was stating a universal truth upon which the eternal destiny of us all hangs.

5315 Atlanta Hwy,
Montgomery, AL 36109

I Am The Bread of Life

Ben Wright

The “I Am” statements found in John are an amazing study. What we see is Jesus describing Himself to us. He uses seven different statements to reveal to man who He is. If a person is entirely truthful, the best way to get to know him or her is to ask them questions. Jesus wants us to know Him, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent.”(John 17:3). To know Jesus is to love Him for all that He has done for us and we show our love by keeping His commandments (John 14:15).

The first self-description of Jesus is found in John 6:35, where it is recorded, “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” This statement falls on the heels of having fed thousands the previous day with only five loaves and two fishes.

As we look at this statement we must understand, first and foremost Jesus is saying that He is deity. “And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you” (Exodus 3:13-14). The Jews held the name of God in extreme reverence. The words “I am” were rarely uttered by a Jew for fear of breaking the commandment to not take the Lord’s name in vain. When a scribe was translating from one scroll to another and came to the name of God he would stop, get up, wash and then change pens, and resume writing. He would do this every time he came to God’s name in the text.

When Jesus said “I Am,” He was saying He was deity and His listeners understood that. John makes it very clear that the purpose for his gospel account is: “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:30-31). John wanted his readers to know that Jesus was the Christ. Jesus wanted His audience to know that He was the Christ, so He used these “I Am” statements to make His point.

Those whom Jesus had fed the previous day wanted to make Jesus king of a physical nation (John 6:15). Because of this, Jesus left them and went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. The next day, the people began to look for Jesus and when they found Him, they asked how He got there. Jesus, knowing their true selves, addressed their problem, not their question. These people were not seeking Jesus for spiritual nourishment but for physical nourishment. They said some good sounding things here, and Jesus gave them some work to do. Is this the work of faith only and do we not have to do anything else? I challenge you to read this verse. Here Jesus plainly says that belief is a work.

Their reply is a sad one: “...What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What does thou work?” (John 7:30). What more does Jesus have to do to get them to see who He is?! He has just used two fish and five loaves to feed a vast multitude. Who else had done that or anything close to that?

To this Jesus replies that He is the bread of life. There is nothing physical about this Bread. This has to do with spiritual nourishment. Their

physical stomachs would not be filled, but their hunger for righteousness would be met. Their craving for God would be met. The problem the people had was that they could see Him but did not believe in Him. We might ask the question here, “What does the term ‘bread’ mean?” It means the same as in verse 27, “Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.” It is not physical bread, because it is contrasted with manna, which was physical (John 6:49). It is the teaching that Jesus is the Son of God. If you do not believe this you cannot be filled. This is not the Lord’s Supper as some suppose.

This bread is said to do some wonderful things; It gives life (verses 27, 33, 40, 47, 51, 54, 58); it allows us to never thirst or hunger (verse 35); it ensures that we will participate in the resurrection (verses 39, 44, 54); it puts us in the care of the Father (verses 32, 37-39, 44-46); it puts us in fellowship with the Son (verse 56; John 14:21); and enables us to life by the Father (57).

These are great and wonderful things the Bread of Life does for us. Have you partaken of this Bread? Do you continue to partake of this Bread? You must in order to continue accessing the blessings found through it. Several times the word “eateth” is found. This indicates a continual partaking of this Bread, not a once in a lifetime activity. If we want to continue living by Jesus then we must continue to eat of the Bread of Life through a study of God’s Word.

20636 Hwy 78
Carbon Hill, Al 35549

The Resurrection

Chuck Webster

In a very real sense, there are only two types of funerals. Though both kinds are sad, the grief in one is mitigated by an unseen reality, while the mourning in the other is untempered, leaving the bereaved to suffer uncontrollably. What lessens the former's grief has little to do with the age of the deceased or with the cause of his or her death. It has nothing to do with the impact the departed one had on the trivialities of life. Rather, the lessened grief has everything to do with the fact that it is intermingled with an expectation only available to those who know Jesus Christ: hope. That confidence caused Paul to urge the Thessalonians not to grieve in the same way unbelievers do, who "have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Christians have the unshakeable conviction that death is a transition, not an end. It is a doorway, not a destiny.

This conviction is grounded in a statement that Jesus made on His way to attend a funeral of a good friend nearly two thousand years ago. To Lazarus' grieving sister Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John. 11:25). He then walked to the tomb and demonstrated His power over death by raising Lazarus from the grave, which itself was only a precursor of His own resurrection and ultimate triumph over death. The Lord was assuring Mary and Martha that the loss they had experienced in their family was soon to be forgotten; in their case, of course, it was almost immediate. In our situation, the hope is more distant but no less real. Consider these thoughts:

The Lord conquered death through His resurrection. The reason we can approach death with optimism is we can remember His promise just before He turned Lazarus' funeral into a celebration: ". . . he that believeth in me, though he

were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25). And we know that He provided confirmation of that promise when He walked out of His own tomb a short time later. Since that time believers have had confidence that they too will be resurrected. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29). Many hearts have been comforted as those words were read beneath a canopy at a grave-side. Death has no finality with Christians; the Lord's empty tomb provides hope.

The Lord validated Christianity through His resurrection. It is striking how much early preaching focused on the resurrection of Christ. Peter's sermons recorded in Acts 2:24-36 and 3:12-26 had the resurrection as their central emphasis. Its emphasis was so pointed, in fact, that it grieved certain Jews and motivated them to begin persecuting Christians (Acts 4:1-3). Paul used a considerable amount of space in a lengthy discussion of the resurrection and its implications (1 Corinthians 15). Sometimes Christians are asked, "What about Christianity distinguishes it from other world religions today?" The answer is quite simple: the tombs of Muhammad, Buddha, Confucius, and every other religious leader are occupied, while the Lord's remains empty. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, all it would have taken in Jerusalem to have stopped Christianity in its tracks was a fifteen-minute walk to the tomb Joseph of Arimathea loaned to the Lord for one short weekend. The enemies of Christ were powerless to find Jesus' body, of course, and this fact led to the growth of the early church. Two thousand years later it still gives meaning to the Lord's

statement: "Except ye believe that I am he, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24).

The Lord offers assurance that forgiveness is possible through His resurrection. In his lengthy discussion of the resurrection, Paul argues that forgiveness has an integral relationship with Jesus' resurrection: "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17). The apostle also shows the importance of both the death and the resurrection of Christ in Romans 5:10. Notice the distinction: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." The blood Jesus shed for our reconciliation was validated by His resurrection. In other words, had there been no empty tomb, the blood of Christ would have been impotent to save.

From one perspective we live in a cruel world . . . a world that is permeated by sin, sickness, and death. If the grave were the end of our existence, life's disappointments would be terribly formidable, making it difficult to face them with any sort of resolve. Thankfully, there *is* hope. When two women approached Jesus' tomb early one Sunday morning, what they found surprised them . . . and has been shocking the world ever since. Jesus' absence meant that He had proved Himself to be exactly who He claimed to be: the Son of God. When His followers realized that, they embraced a new hope, and the message they began to preach was validated. Now—two thousand years later—we find a new, "lively hope" as we look back to Jesus' resurrection. It also gives us confidence to look past our own death to the immortality promised by the risen Lord.

3248 Lorna Rd.
Hoover, Al 35216

Jesus Is The Door

Dale Hubbert

There are many descriptions used to help define the roles Jesus fills in our lives. It is both comforting and amazing to recognize the many ways Jesus enriches and enables us. A door provides opportunity and entrance. Jesus is that spiritual door. John 10:9 reveals these words of Jesus: "I am the door." Jesus properly declares himself to be the passage way to the most important areas of life. He maintains a position appointed by God. There is no other capable of taking this place and providing the benefits that are accessed by entering the door.

Jesus is the door to the Father. Access to God is conditional upon our relationship with Christ. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Our sins separate us from God: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1-2). We are rendered incapable of reconciliation to the Father apart from Jesus. Jesus truly is the door to the Father.

Jesus is the door to the church. The church that Jesus built (Matthew 16:18) has only one door of entrance. The addition of members to the church (Acts 2:47) is directly connected to the Blood of Jesus. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether **we be** Jews or Gentiles, whether **we be** bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1Corinthians 12:13). Baptism is the activity wherein our sins are washed in the blood of Jesus

(Revelation 1:5). Not only does the church bear the name of Jesus, she is washed and bought by his precious blood. Jesus truly is the door to the church.

Jesus is the door to forgiveness. "What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." Sin demands a penalty (Romans 6:23). Our sinfulness can only be absolved by the shedding of the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 9:14). Initially in the waters of baptism and daily by walking in the light (1 John 1:7) we are brought into sweet union with the Father and have entrance by means of Jesus blood.

Jesus is the door of the sheep. "Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the **door** of the sheep" (John 10:7). All of our needs are met through Jesus. Psalms 23 points out the wonderful attributes of the good shepherd. Jesus proclaims himself to be the good shepherd (John 10:11) opening the door to the sheep. Jesus truly is the door of the sheep.

Jesus is the door to hope. Everything we long for beyond this life is accessible because Jesus is the entrance to eternal paradise. The hope that anchors the soul (Hebrews 6:19) exists because Jesus lived, died, and rose from the tomb. Hope burns bright for a better life now and a better life beyond the grave because Jesus is the prince of peace. Jesus truly is the door to hope.

Jesus is the door to green pastures. "I am the **door**: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John 10:9). Food for the soul and good

spiritual health are made possible at the bidding of Jesus our Savior. He not only promises to save us but to meet our needs and fill our hearts with those things that are both needful and satisfying (Matthew 5:6). Jesus gives us the bread of life (John 6:48) and living water (John 7:38). Jesus truly is the door to green pastures.

Jesus is the door to eternal life. From sin to salvation, from sadness to gladness, from hurting to healing, from ruin to riches; Jesus is the door. He came for the purpose of opening the door to eternal life for sinful mankind (John 10:28). Sins are pardoned and faith acquired in obedience to the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. All that make it to heaven will enter through Jesus the door. Truly Jesus is the door to eternal life.

Because Jesus is the door to so many incredible areas, we should give caution and attention to the blessings Jesus offers. "Behold, I stand at the **door**, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the **door**, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). It is up to each person to accept this grace by faith and obedience. We are wise to accept this personal invitation. There will come a time when the door is shut forever more and opportunity is no more.

God be thanked that Jesus is our door. May our lives ever reflect such gratitude. May we live in such a way as to appropriate the blessings of the King of kings upon our souls.

3206 Hudson St.
Jasper, AL 35503

ADAMSVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST
4207 Veterans Memorial Dr.
Adamsville, AL 35005
(205) 674-5659 or 674-8273
www.acoc.org/ e-mail acofc@bellsouth.net

Non Profit US
Postage Paid
Permit #80316
Anniston, AL

I Am the True Vine by Ashley Kizer -----continued from page 26

“...**Bear much fruit...**” (John 15:8). This will be the result if one abides in Christ. The Master Teacher is not necessarily talking about evangelism here, although such fruit-bearing Christians would certainly facilitate church growth. Galatians 5:22, 23 seems to be a good commentary on this passage: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance...” Jesus said, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit...” (John 15:8). We judge the value of tomato vines by their produce, and those branches that are unproductive are worthy only to

be cast into the fire (cf. vv. 2, 6). Further evidence of Jesus’ meaning of fruit is found in verses nine through seventeen where Jesus focuses on the first fruit of the Spirit, “love.”

“...**Continue ye in my love**” (v. 9). According to Jesus, the way to continue in His love is to keep His commandments (v. 10). That is how the Son of God abided in His Father’s love (v. 10). He “became obedient,” and so should we (Philippians 2:8). He encouraged us by saying; “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John 15:14). One of these commandments that must be kept is that we “love one another” (v.

12). He called it a “new commandment,” and it is certainly an important one because it identifies us as disciples of Christ (13:34, 35).

This passage of scripture is both humbling and edifying. Our Master reminds us, “...the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine...” (15:4). However, there are great blessings in branching off of the true vine. Jesus includes this promise for those that abide in Him: “...ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (v. 7).

4207 Veterans Memorial Dr.
Adamsville, AL 35005

**WORKS BY FRANKLIN CAMP
AND BOBBY DUNCAN**

Redemption Through the Bible, Preacher’s Class, Sermons on CD in MP3 format *Redemption Through the Bible* is a series of Bible studies through the entire Bible that was studied primarily at the Adamsville congregation. The entire set is now available and contained on a total of 44 CD’s in MP3 format. We now have available his Preacher’s Class and Sermons. The Preacher’s Class has a total of (12) and his sermons are contained on (2) CD’s also in the MP3 format. Each CD’s cost is \$5.00 plus tax and shipping..

We now have available three books: *The Work of the Holy Spirit In Redemption (\$14.95)*, *A study of the Book of Colossians (\$3.95)*, and *A study of the Book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon (\$3.95)* by Franklin Camp. and *The Gift of the Holy Ghost (4.95)* by Bobby Duncan (Add tax and postage.)

You may order these books or CD’s by calling (205) 674-5659 or e-mailing Brothers Inc. at acofc@bellsouth.net. (Please include your address and phone number.)

VIGIL is published under the oversight of the elders of the Adamsville Church of Christ
Ronnie Hayes, Editor, and **Ashley Kizer**, Associate Editor.