

## **SERMONS OF CHRIST**

*Abstract.* This session samples Christ's sermons, those teachings done apart from parables (Session IV) and after His baptism and anointing of the Holy Spirit and His temptations (Session II). These sermons declare His intrinsic Deity and His Messiahship for the Nation; and they call Elect Israel to repentance and submission to Him as the Redeemer of Israel and the Guarantor of her future ethnic empire as declared repeatedly in the Prophets. Throughout His sermons, constant appeal is made to the Law, Writings, and Prophets as understood by the normative hermeneutic, while He disregards and condemns the distorting traditions of the scribes and rabbis. Further, these sermons are reinforced by His parables (Session IV) and His many miracles (Session V) as the Father's Witness, thus affirming the "charges" against Him before the Sanhedrin: sorcery [miracles] and leading Israel into apostasy [opposition to the scribes] [Sanhedrin, folio 43a]. His teachings, their Biblical accuracy, their freedom from rabbinical tradition, their confirmation by miracles, all provoke Second Generation Israel to a murderous rage that results in His crucifixion and the persecution of the 12 and their ministry to Israel and the Nations and of Paul and his ministry to the non-ethnic Body of Christ.

### *General Outline of Session III:*

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  - B. Sits With Sanhedrin At Age 12
  - C. Teaching Ministry In The Nazareth Synagogue
  - D. Baptism By John
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  - F. Christ Manifests Reprobation Of Sanhedrin Feigning Belief—They Attempt To Stone Him

### **I. Training During Childhood And Early Manhood (Sessions I and II)**

**Session III: Sermons of Christ**

- A. Trained By The Holy Spirit In Nazareth (Session I)
- B. Debates With Sanhedrin At Age 12 (Session I)
- C. Teaching Ministry In The Nazareth Synagogue (Session I)
- D. Baptism By John (Session I)
- E. Unction of the Holy Spirit (Session I)
- F. Temptations In The Wilderness (Session II)

**II. Sermon In The Synagogue At Nazareth (Luke 4)**

A. History Of His Ministry At Nazareth (Verses 16–17)

1. **As His custom was.** Christ had throughout his early manhood functioned as Methurgeman, Reader, Rabbi (Darshan), probably since age 12.
2. **Stood up for to read.** The middle part of the synagogue service where the reading cycle was performed. The scribes intended the entire Law, Writings, and Prophets to be read in a year's time. The Scriptures were read standing, for God Who was seated was speaking and His disciples were to stand while being taught—see Section V.B of Session I (*Lineage, Birth, Childhood of Christ*) of this conference for documentation that before the destruction of the Temple, the teacher sat while the students stood. So Christ as the Reader acting on behalf of the congregation, stands to read the Word of God. Now to do so, He wrapped Himself in His tallith, for such was always done when a male was of age and the Scriptures were read or discussed—see our outline *Head Covering and I Corinthians 11*.
3. **Delivered unto Him the scroll of Isaiah ... unrolled the scroll.** What a marvelous aspect of God's foreordination that the selection of the reading cycle for that day—Is. 61—was precisely a passage part of which was being fulfilled in those very days. Christ wraps Himself, the chazzan of the synagogue brings over the scroll, they roll the scroll back and forth to find the exact location for the assigned reading for that day.

B. Extremely Short Reading (Verses 18–20)

1. He reads Is. 61:1,2a ONLY, cutting off Verse 2 right in the middle of a development. This was highly unusual for two reasons:

"Not less than ten verses [of the Torah] should be read in the synagogue." [Megillah, folio 21b]

"He that reads in the Prophets ought not to read less than one-and-twenty verses." [cited in Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*, Volume 3 (Luke, John), p. 68].

"[Rab] was of opinion that any verse which Moses has not divided, we may not divide, whereas Samuel held that we may divide." [Megillah, folio 22a].

This unusual action is given explanation below.

2. He rolls up the scroll and returns it to the chazzan for safe keeping.
3. **Sat down.** Now He teaches, so that He sits down, but is still wrapped in His tallith.
4. **And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fixed in Him.** There are several reasons for this.
  - a. His extremely short reading.
  - b. His cutting Verse 2 in two.

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- c. His prior fame in teaching and working miracles in neighboring cities (Verses 14–15).
  - d. His having served as Reader and Methurgeman and Rabbi for many years previous in this very synagogue (Section I and Session I.V.C).
- C. Messianic Fulfillment Of Short Reading By Christ (Verses 21–22)
- 1. **This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.**
    - a. He is referring to what they had heard of His miracles in neighboring towns.
    - b. His purpose in going to His home synagogue on that Sabbath was to read that portion of Scripture and declare its fulfillment in His ministry. He is telling them plainly that the extraordinary things they have been hearing—**in your ears**—are true and the fulfillment of prophecy concerning Messiah—**the Lord has anointed [chriw] Me.**
    - c. He stops the reading of Isaiah at 61:2a *because only 61:1–2a had been fulfilled in His Messianic ministry.* The next phrase of Is. 61:2—**the day of vengeance of our God**—is not fulfilled in the Second Generation, but at the conclusion of the Third Generation of Israel yet to come.
  - 2. **And all bare Him witness ... wondered at the words of this grace ... and said, "Is this not Joseph's son?"**
    - a. These people must know of Daniel's sabbaticals and that by now the Messiah must have been born and come to manhood.
    - b. These people know that Christ was born in Bethlehem and moved to their town and have known Him since He was about 6 months old.(Session I, Section III.C).
    - c. They have witnessed the sheer miracle of His existence and development (Session I, Section V), and that by the age of 12, He was a perfect and complete master of the entirety of the Hebrew canon.
    - d. They have sat under His perfect teaching ministry since He was 12 years old.
    - e. They know that He is now 30 years old, the age at which official service begins for the priests and Levitical ministers.
    - f. They have since His baptism and anointing by the Holy Spirit heard of His miracles performed in Galilee. They KNOW Him, that He is the One.
    - g. His reading of Isaiah and His claim to its fulfillment they know to be true even without any specific miracle being performed in their village. They have had YEARS of exposure to Christ as the miracle. No instantaneous miracle can compare with that.
    - h. Christ knows these people perfectly and the hardness of their heart. He has observed and ministered to them for years.
    - i. **"Is this not Joseph's son?"** is a legal technicality, appealing to the fact that Christ was the legally registered son of Joseph (Session I, Section IV.A) in order to hide from, and reject submitting to, what they have known Him for years to be—they have had 30 years to resolve Who He is and the fact that Joseph is His registered father. In their case, their question is an insincere rejection of the truth.
    - j. The above comments help explain His stern reaction to their question.
- D. Manifesting Reprobation Of Nazareth Congregation (Verses 23–27)
- 1. **Physician, heal Thyself.** The original Aramaic may well have been as the following parable of the sages:

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"Physician, heal thy own lameness" [Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, Volume 3 (Luke, John), p. 72].

Christ explains the point of citing this parable, namely why did He not work any miracles in His own village. But His point is that they already know Him and they have been given 30 years of evidence already, which they have rejected.

2. Therefore, no miracles will be worked in Nazareth, and He compares the people of Nazareth, who never honored Him, to reprobate Israel of Ahab (in the days of Elijah) and to reprobate Israel of Jehoram (son of Ahab in the days of Elisha), to whom God refused miracles.
  3. The purpose of Christ's comments is to make their Adamic hatred of Him plain or more "honest". Their disrespect/disregard of this Person is really murderous, but it is masked by the question "**Is this not Joseph's son?**".
- E. Congregation Attempts To Murder Him (Verses 28–30). The result of Christ's comments is that what is implicitly murderous in their hearts is made explicit and they attempt to murder Him with their bare hands by trying to throw Him over a cliff on the edge of the village.

**III. Sermon Against Unscriptural Rabbinical Traditions (Matthew 15 / Mark 7)**

- A. Fundamental Principle. The rabbis and scribes, in particular, the Great Sanhedrin, sat in Moses' seat to legislate as genuinely needed, where the Law left a gap, within the framework of the Law and consistent with that Law, and were charismatically empowered to do this job. This sitting in Moses' seat was distorted, as is demonstrated below.
1. Jewish leadership sat in Moses' seat: Neh. 8:4,8, Matt. 23:2–3.
  2. Jewish leadership were charismatically empowered to do this job.
    - a. They were empowered to organize the priesthood into 24 courses and the Temple into 24 courses: I Chron. 24:1–; 25:1–, Luke 1:8,23.
    - b. They were empowered to cast out demons: Matt. 12:27, Luke 11:19.
    - c. They were empowered to organize the Passover meal (see Session II of TGF 2001 Conference) and Christ recognized this arrangement and followed it (Session III of TGF 2001 Conference), as a proper correlation of Luke 22, Matth. 26, Mark 14, John 13 demonstrates when compared with ancient rabbinical practice in Talmud before the destruction of the Temple.
  3. Jewish leadership were to legislate precisely where Moses Law did not specify and precisely where there was a genuine need. They were not to rule on frivolous and unimportant matters.
    - a. By David's day, there was a real need to organize the priesthood and the Temple singers, especially since Solomon would shortly build the Temple. (I Chron. 24:1–, 25:1–, Luke 1:8,23). These divisions were not made by Moses.
    - b. Mosaic Law made no provision for casting out demons, so the leadership dealt with this matter (Matt. 12:27, Luke 11:19).
    - c. Only ingredients, preparation, day, and time of day of Passover are specified by Mosaic Law. But this was Israel's only national meal to be prepared in the same way and eaten at the same time, and it therefore needed to be eaten in the same manner. Thus the ancient rabbis had a need to specify the actual arrangement and structure of Passover, which Christ expressly followed at the Last Passover.

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4. Rabbis and Jewish leadership must rule within the constraints of Mosaic Law, which was to be the framework for all rulings.
    - a. Moses himself so commanded: Deut. 4:2.
    - b. This is implicit in stating they sit in *Moses' seat*.
    - c. They were not to contradict Mosaic Law, which in fact they often did: Matt. 23:13–36; 15:1–20, Mark 7:1–23. See discussion below.
  5. Modern rabbis have no authority whatsoever: there is no Israel before God today—by Paul's gospel there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, male nor female.
- B. Rabbinical Attitudes Toward Ritual Washing Of Hands
1. *The necessity of ritual washing of the hands stemmed from demonic contamination [Ta'anith, folio 20b], and not from issues of hygiene:*

"Some say he [R. Huna] knew from tradition a medicine for that disease *Sibetha* [the demon attacking those eating food with unwashed hands], and he would suspend a jugful of water and proclaim, 'Whosoever needs it let him come [and wash his hands] so that he may save his life from danger.'"

"*Sibetha* is an evil spirit which sits upon men's hands in the night: and if any touch his food with unwashed hands, that spirit sits upon that food, and there is danger from it". [citation in Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, Volume 2 (Matthew, Mark), p. 225].

Thus even if one's hands were physically clean before the eating, ritual cleaning was necessary for spiritual reasons.
  2. *The ritual washing of hands was (re)instituted by Hillel and Shammai* (recall Hillel was Nasi of the Sanhedrin when Christ was born and when He sat with the Sanhedrin, and Gamaliel—rabbinical grandson of Hillel—was Nasi when Christ was on trial, also when Peter and John were on trial):

"Hillel and Shammai decreed concerning the washing of hands. R. Josi ben Rabbi Bon, in the name of R. Levi, says, 'That tradition was given before, but they had forgotten it.' These second stand forth and appoint according to the mind of the former." [citation in Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, Volume 2 (Matthew, Mark), p. 223].
  3. *Rabbis debated and stipulated precise rules for how this washing was to be done.*

"[R. Shesheth asked the Exilarch:] 'With whom do they commense the washing of the hands before the meal?' He replied, 'With the senior one [senior rabbi].' 'Is then the senior one to sit still and watch his hands [guard them against impurity] until they have all washed?' He replied, 'They bring a table before him immediately.'

"'With whom do they begin the washing after the meal?' He replied, 'With the junior one present.' 'And is the senior one to sit with greasy hands until all have washed?' He replied, 'They do not remove the table from before him till water is brought to him.'"

"R. Shesheth then said, 'I only know a Baraita [doctrine], in which it is taught: "What is the order of reclining? When there are two couches in a set, the senior reclines first, and the junior takes his place below him. When there are three couches, the senior takes his place first, the second next above him, and then the third one below him. Washing before the meal commences with the senior one; washing after the meal, if there are five, commences with the senior, and if there are a hundred, it commences

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with the junior until five are left, and then they start from the senior one. The saying of grace is assigned to the one to whom the washing then reverts.""

"This supports Rab; for R. Hiyya ben Ashi said in the name of Rab: 'Whoever washes his hands first at the end of a meal has the right of grace.' Rab and R. Hiyya were once dining with Rabbi. Rabbi said to Rab, 'Get up and wash your hands.' R. Hiyya saw him trembling and said to him, 'Son of princes, he is telling you to thing over grace.'"

[Berakot, folio 46b].

4. *Ritual washing of hands is part of what justifies one before God and guarantees one a part of the kingdom to come.*

"Whosoever hath his seat in the land of Israel and eateth his common food in [ritual] cleanness and speaks the holy language and recites his phylacteries morning and evening, let him be confident that he shall obtain the life of the world to come."

[citation in Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, Volume 2 (Matthew, Mark), p. 223].

5. *Setting aside the ritual washing of hands was grounds not only for excommunication by the Sanhedrin, but for having one's coffin ceremonially stoned by members of the Sanhedrin (in effect, being stoned after death):* [Berakot, folio 19a]:

"R. Joshua ben Levi said: 'Whoever makes derogatory remarks about scholars [the scribes] after their death is cast into Gehenna ...'"

"R. Joshua ben Levi further said: 'In 24 places we find that the Beth din [house of judges = Sanhedrin] inflicted excommunication for an insult to a teacher, and they are all recorded in the Mishnah [oral tradition].' R. Eleazar asked him, 'Where?' He replied, 'See if you can find them.'"

"He went and examined and found three cases: one of a scholar who undervalued the washing of hands, another of one who made derogatory remarks about scholars after their deaths, and a third of one who made himself too familiar towards heaven."

"What is the case of treating with contempt the washing of the hands? ... Whom in fact did they excommunicate? It was R. Eleazar ben Hanoch [Hazar in Lightfoot's citation, *op. cit.*, Volume 1 (Matthew, Mark), p. 223], who raised doubts about washing the hands, and when he did the Beth din sent and had a large stone placed on his coffin, to teach you that if a man is excommunicated and dies in his excommunication, the Beth din stone his coffin."

- C. Rabbinical Attitudes Toward Rabbinical Traditions. Note the following citations from [Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, Volume 2 (Matthew, Mark), pp. 222–223]:

1. "The words of the scribes are lovely above the words of the Law: for the words of the Law are weighty and light; but the words of the scribes are all weighty."

"He that shall say, 'There are no phylacteries', transgressing the words of the Law [cf. Deut. 11:18], is not guilty; but he that shall say, 'There are five Totaphoth', adding to the words of the scribes, he is guilty."

2. "The words of the elders are weightier than the words of the Prophets."

"A Prophet and an elder, to what are they likened? To a king sending two of his servants into a province. Of one, he writes thus, 'Unless he shew you my seal, believe

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him not'; but of the other thus, 'Although he shews you not my seal, yet believe him'. Thus it is written of the prophet, 'He shall shew thee a sign or miracle'; but of the elders thus, 'According to the Law which they shall teach thee'."

3. To say that the scribes and the elders outrank the Law and the Prophets is to say that they outrank all of the Hebrew canon.

D. Correlation Of Matthew 15:1–14 And Mark 7:1–15. We use Mark as the main reference.

Matthew 15:1–14

Mark 7:1–15

Verse 1: Same as Mark 7:1.

Verse 1: The Sanhedrin sends an official delegation from Jerusalem for the express purpose of checking Christ and the disciples on the creedal doctrine of ritual hand washing.

No counterpart in Matthew's account.

Verses 3–4: Rabbinical doctrines concerning ritual washings of hands, pots, various utensils, and beds (not "tables").

Verse 2: Same as Mark 7:2,5.

Verses 2,5: The delegation finds fault and accuses Christ of not following the rabbinical ritual traditions.

Verses 8–9: Same Mark 7:6–7.

Verses 6–7: Christ rebukes them from Is. 29:13, which in context condemns Jerusalem of the Third Generation for her apostasy stemming from her refusal to know of the Scripture. Thus the sins of the Second and Third Generations are linked, and Christ is again the Model for the true saints of the Third Generation (cf. Peter's admonition to the Third Generation saints in I Pet. 2:21 (Greek text)).

No counterpart in the Matthew account.

Verse 8: Christ now condemns their whole doctrine of ritual washings.

Verses 3–6: Same as Mark 7: 9–13.

Verses 9–13: Christ documents how their traditions set aside the Scripture in the example of taking care of one's parents being superceded by dedicating their livelihood as a gift to the Temple.

Verses 10–11: Same as Mark 7:14–16, except the phrase "**he who has [been given]**"

Verses 14–16: Christ declares to the people that the real cause of spiritual defilement is not the demonic spirits hovering on one's

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ears to hear will hear" of Mark 7:16 is missing (and disputed by some manuscripts).

hands or one's food, but the depraved sinful nature inside the man. Remember, the issue here is NOT hygiene, as our citations of the rabbis above proves and as Christ's answer proves.

No counterpart in Mark's account.

Verse 12: This verse reveals the significant information that the delegation from the Sanhedrin **were offended, were caused to stumble (skandalizw (σκανδαλιζω)**, the root of our word **scandal**, transliterated as our modern word **scandalized**). The delegation was **scandalized, shocked** at Christ's repudiation of their corruption of the kingdom program and gospel, especially at the statement that the root of the evil in their life is in their own hearts, and not in demonic spirits to be warded off by ritual baptisms.

No counterpart in Mark's account.

Verses 13–14. Christ pronounces that those insisting on holding with the delegation from the Sanhedrin are **REPROVED** in the strongest language. Both the rabbis unrepenting of these traditions and those unrepentant that follow the rabbis are condemned.

Verses 17–23. Christ makes the point clear to the disciples that one's sin nature is the root of defilement, and not demon spirits covering one's hands or foods, or even the occasional germ for that matter.

Verses 15–20. Same as Mark 7:17–23, except Peter is specifically named as the one requesting an explanation of what has been said.

E. Summary And Additional Comments

1. This ritual washing of hands is a frivolous issue, since it is not hygienic in nature *and* since it does not address a genuine need arising from a gap in Mosaic Law. Therefore, it could not be a matter for Moses' seat to rule on—it could not be a matter for the rabbis and Sanhedrin to rule on, and it was therefore an abuse and distortion of their office to rule. Thus their ruling was *ab initio* sinful and anti-biblical.
2. This ritual washing of hands was motivated by unbiblical, demonic reasons. Therefore the whole issue is one of sin and rebellion against the Scriptures and the God of the Scriptures and against the holy angels.
3. This ritual washing of hands is part of their alleged justification by works before God, and is therefore anti-biblical at its core, violating Is. 64:6 (cf. Lev. 15)..



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4. The Sanhedrin had ruled that the ceremonial washing of hands was a creedal issue and sufficient grounds for the severest form of excommunication, including the stoning of the excommunicant's grave.
  5. The Sanhedrin has sent an official delegation to report on what Christ says and does in regard to the ritual washing of hands.
  6. Christ rebukes them according to the format of Prov. 26:4,5. See the correlation above of the Matthew and Mark accounts.
    - a. **Answer not a fool according to his folly.**
      - i. Christ cites Is. 29:13. The Sanhedrin claims to honor God, but their doctrine and conduct are otherwise.
      - ii. In mandating ritual hand washing, the Sanhedrin has violated its office of sitting on Moses's seat. This is doctrine is therefore not of God, but of sinful man, though they claim otherwise.
      - iii. Ritual hand washing is just part of the corrupt baptism schemum of the Sanhedrin, each of these baptisms being a violation of their office for the same reasons we have given above for ritual hand baptism.
      - iv. Not only is ritual hand baptism part of a corrupt baptism schemum, but it is part of an overall anti-Biblical attitude in which they corrupt their rightful office in opposition to the Scriptures, as we documented extensively above from the sages themselves. Thus Christ affirms what is the root issue.
      - v. Christ supports His declaration with an additional class of examples: refusal to support parents. Whenever a parent asks for support, the rabbis claim it is appropriate for the son to say that whatever the parents are asking for has already been dedicated to the Temple.
    - b. **Answer a fool according to his folly.**
      - i. Christ then addresses the real source of spiritual contamination in man, namely his Adamic nature, and not demonic spirits or some dirt on the food.
      - ii. When Christ answers them according to their folly, then the delegation from the Sanhedrin is offended, indeed scandalized.
- F. Parallels With Debates Against Those Holding Traditions Against Paul's Distinctive Law And Gospel.

IV. **Sermon On His Essential Deity (John 8).** We make the preliminary comment that when John refers to either the Pharisees and scribes or to the Jews, particularly in the context of the Temple, that he is in fact referring to the leadership, i.e. the Sanhedrin—this is also Lightfoot's opinion [*op. cit.*, Volume 3 (Luke, John), p. 343]; and that this sermon/discourse is in the presence of the Sanhedrin.

- A. Christ Had With Sanhedrin When He Was Twelve From Session I of this conference, we have that Christ appeared in public forum before the Sanhedrin when He was 12 during Unleavened Bread, and then sat with them for three days after the Feast in the Hall of Hewn Stones. Further, we recall:
1. It seems impossible that all the Sanhedrin members alive at His Birth at the visit of the Magi were dead 12 years later.
  2. It seems impossible that all the Sanhedrin members alive when He sat in their midst at age 12 were dead 18 years later when He began His public ministry.

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3. It seems impossible that the oral and collective memory of the Sanhedrin would not know that the Babe inquired of by the Magi, the 12 year old who sat with them, and the Man before them constantly in His ministry are the same Person.
- B. Christ Inherently Superior To Rabbinate/Sanhedrin
1. On one hand, the rabbis claim Messiah is the Light of the World, i.e. of the Kingdom Order.  
  
"R. Biba Sangorius saith, 'Light is the name of the Messiah. As it is written, "Light dwells with Him [Dan. 2:22]." ' ' [Lightfoot, *op.cit.*, Volume 3 (Luke, John), pp. 330–331]  
  
Note that the reference to Dan. 2:22 is logically consistent only if Messiah is the Logos Incarnate, for in context this Scripture refers to Jehovah Who speaks and reveals dreams (the occasion being Nebuchadnezzar's colossus dream).
  2. But on the other hand, the rabbis claim to be the Light of the World, i.e. of the Kingdom Order.  
  
"Herod then said, 'I am Herod. Had I known that the rabbis are so circumspect, I should not have killed them. Now tell me what amends I can make.' He [Baba ben Buta] replied: 'As you have extinguished the Light of the World [for so the rabbis are called], as it is written, "For the commandment is a light and the Torah is a lamp", go now and attend to the [remaining] Light of the World [which is the Temple, of which] it is written, "And all the nations become enlightened by it".' " [Baba Bathra, folio 4a]  
  
"One taught: His name was not R. Meir, but R. Nehorai. Then why was he called R. 'Meir'? Because he enlightened the sages by halakhah. His name in fact was not even Nehorai but R. Nehemiah or, as others say, R. Eleazar ben Arak. They why was he called 'Nehorai'? Because he enlightened the Sages in halakhah." [Erubin, folio 13b].
  3. Christ declares Himself before the Sanhedrin to be the Light of the Kingdom Order: John 8:12. He does this not only because He is the Creator and Messiah, but because it expressly violates the pretentious and portentous claims of the rabbis and Sanhedrin to be such.
  4. The setting appears to be the days immediately following the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7) in the treasury of the Temple in the Court of Women (8:20), where the 13 chests for Corban were placed, an interesting link to the debate over rabbinical traditions and ritual washings in Matt. 15:1–20; Mark 7:1–23 discussed in Section III above. In the center of the Sanhedrin's province, Christ declares His Messiahship and Deity.
- C. Role Of Works Attesting His Sonship And Deity (John 8:13–18)
1. The Sanhedrin object to His claim of being the Light (John 8:13); hence they understood His claim and know it is true.
  2. The Sanhedrin attempts to base their objection on the requirement of the Law that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every thing should be established: Deut. 17:6; 19:15.
  3. Christ has already dealt with this issue at length in the Temple before the Sanhedrin: John 5:17–47 (especially 31–38). Therefore their objection in John 8:13 is without excuse. Further, they have known Him since He was a Babe and a youth of 12.

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4. Christ repeats with longsuffering the same lesson in John 8:14–18 that He taught in John 5.
  - a. Christ does witness of Himself, yet His witness is true because of Who He is, which they are unable to recognize.
  - b. The Sanhedrin is unable in their Adamic nature to judge anyone.
  - c. Christ absolutely does not judge no one (double negative in the Greek) in this way.
  - d. Since in fact He judges, His judgment is true since it is also the judgment of His Father.
  - e. Christ bears witness of Himself and the Father bears witness of Him through His works; and according to the Law, they confirm each other and are therefore both trustworthy.
- D. Sanhedrin's Refusal To Know Christ And The Father (John 8:19–24)
  1. The Sanhedrin very well knows Who Christ is—each of them has known Him or known of Him since His birth, His evaluation of them as a 12 year old, and His ministry up to that point. As a corollary, they know Who His real Father is; and this means they know the witness of both is true.
  2. The Sanhedrin refuse as a debating tactic to acknowledge Who His Father is. In their sinful nature, they are throwing up questions as a delaying action, hoping to fluster Christ, but knowing already that it cannot work. They already hate Him because of He has (in their minds) broken ranks with them over many creedal things, including the all-important ritual hand-washing (apparently the preceding year).
  3. Christ asserts that they know neither Him nor His Father. They know of Christ and therefore know Who His Father is. **Know** in this context means to know intimately and to submit oneself to.
  4. Christ asserts that He is not of this world, i.e. that He is the Memra and was virgin-born of the Holy Spirit.
  5. Christ asserts that the Sanhedrin will die in their sins (the believers on the Sanhedrin notwithstanding, such as Nicodemus). Hence they will not be with Him in Israel's Kingdom to come.
    - a. **You-all will yourselves die in your sin-nature** (Verse 21) uses the future indicative middle voice of the very with the articulated singular of **sin**, indicating **the sin-nature**. This means the Sanhedrin will die in this state and cannot be with Christ in His Messianic Kingdom.
    - b. **You-all will yourselves die in your sins** (Verse 24) is as before, but with **the sins** in the plural indicating their acts of sin for which they are judicially accountable before God forever.
      - i. Note that the matter to be believed is Christ's claim to be the **I AM**.
      - ii. Note the interesting occurrence of a condition of the third class expressing reality, i.e. it is really a first class, even though the antecedent is in the subjunctive: **since you-all would not believe that I AM, you-all will yourselves die in your sins**. This is confirmed by Verses 21 and 24, which both have the unconditional assertion which is the consequent of the conditional of Verse 24.
- E. Sanhedrin Claims Not To Know Christ (John 8:25–29)
  1. Given what was said above, the question **Who art Thou?** is simply not sincere—they have known Him all His life.

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2. Christ answers them that He is the same as He claimed **at the beginning**. Many puzzle over this. It seems to me a confirmation of the position taken here that they had known of Him for many years; namely, this refers back to what He told them when He was 12 years old. Recall on that occasion, there was discussion in the public forum, followed by three days of closed door discussion in chambers (Hall of Hewn Stones). This is the beginning of which He speaks. They are without excuse.
  3. Christ affirms that He is the I AM, commissioned by the Father as His Icon, and always doing those things pleasing to the Father.
  4. Even though the Sanhedrin does not assess Christ fairly, He will judge many things of them.
- F. Christ Manifests The Reprobation Of Those Sanhedrin Feigning Belief (John 8:30–59).
1. **Many believed into Him** (Verse 30) *vis-a-vis* **the Jews having believed Him** (Verse 31).
    - a. The former occurs in Verse 30 and the subject is **many**. **Many** observing this public debate in the Temple **believed into Christ**. The Greek preposition **eis** in this construction denotes **submission to, to become a slave of**. See the citations of the papyri by Deißmann given in Dana & Mantey [*A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 104–105] showing this in contemporary Greek usage. The **many** were true believers submitting themselves to Christ as their Messiah.
    - b. **Believed Him** is very different and the is the **Jews** [= Sanhedrin].
      - i. This refers to those members of the Sanhedrin who had intellectually assented sufficiently to what He was saying that they were willing to listen further. These Sanhedrists viewed themselves as objective and neutral and willing to decide on the facts. They were evidentialists; they claimed autonomy. The problem is that the Person of Christ as Messiah of Israel (or as Head of the Body) cannot be self-consistently a neutral Person, an object of mere intellectual curiosity—how can one assent to Christ being the Icon of the Father and not submit to Him as the Messianic Redeemer?
      - ii. Thus their assenting to Him or trusting what He was saying was ultimately insincere and a self-contradiction. These Sanhedrists are **lukewarm, neither hold nor cold** (cf. Rev. 3:15–16) They intellectually assent, **pisteuw**, so they are not cold, but they will not **pisteuw eis—believe into**, so they are not warm. They are in between, so are self-deceived—they are really cold, but do not know that in themselves yet.
    - c. Christ's purpose is to make the insincerity of the so-called believing Sanhedrists plainly evident, to manifest them as being the same as the Sanhedrists who have been challenging Him up to this point, to manifest them as reprobates. He does by focusing on these points: their need to submit to Him, their need to acknowledge their own sinfulness and helplessness before God, their need to acknowledge their own hatred of Him.
    - d. Christ is going to do to the assenting Sanhedrists what Apollos later does to the rabbis in Ephesus—**diakatalegomai** (Acts 18:28), TO RESOLVE THE MATTER.
  2. **If you-all would abide within My word, [then] you-all are My disciples indeed.**
    - a. A written condition of the third class, but in fact a condition of the FOURTH class in context for the following reasons:

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- i. Christ KNOWS they will not abide in His word since He has already told them they will die in their sins and is about to tell them that they are liars and murderers and is in the very process of exposing them. Therefore, the antecedent is already known to be FALSE.
- ii. No optative of **menw** occurs in the Greek N.T., so it is my view that the subjunctive (with **ean**) is used instead.
- iii. This is a conditional sentence that in context is merely "academic"—**if one were to abide in My word, then they would be true disciples**. But academic conditionals are precisely the purpose of fourth class conditionals.
- iv. The indicative in the consequent plays no role in these grammatical decisions [Dana & Mantey, *op. cit.*, pp. 286–291].
- b. Thus I translate it: **if you-all were to abide in My word, then you-all would be truly My disciples**.
- c. Christ deals with the issue of SUBJUGATION to Him in two ways in John 8:31.
  - i. **Abide within My word**. **Within (en)** plays the same role of **eis** in Verse 30 and conveys therefore the notion of servanthood.
  - ii. **Disciples** conveys servanthood.
3. The assenting, but unsubjected, Sanhedrists cannot be His servants because they are in bondage to sin and their sin natures whereby they deny the need for a Messianic Redeemer and Savior. They deny this by claiming physical descent from Abraham.

"Abraham begat Ishmael, Isaac begat Esau, [but] Jacob begat the twelve tribes in whom there was no taint whatsoever." [Shabbat, folio 46a]

- a. Verse 32—**And you-all shall know the truth and the truth will make you-all free**—is a continuation of the consequent of the condition of the fourth class begun in Verse 31. The complete fourth class sentence should be rendered in English as follows:

**If you-all were to abide in my word, then you-all would be true disciples and you-all would know the truth and the truth would make you-all free.**

It is ALL academic, and the Greek construction in context is clear that it is all academic. Will the Sanhedrists acknowledge the principle that not only is His word truth (intellectual assent) but that abiding within it, hence believing into Him and becoming His slaves, implies freedom from sin and the sin nature?

- b. The Sanhedrists claim *spiritual* freedom from bondage by being Abraham's *physical* seed (literally **sperma**). Their claim shows their abject sinful rebellion against the Scriptures at every turn (Ps. 14, 53, Is. 64:6, etc). Christ refutes this by asserting that those who practice sin are in spiritual bondage—and will the assenting Sanhedrists claim they do not practice sin? Their very objection is the practice of and commitment to sin. In contrast to this the Son abides forever in the House of Israel, while those in bondage do not despite their genetics.
- c. Another written condition of the third class in Verse 36—**if the Son would free you-all, [then] you-all shall be free indeed**—which must be taken as condition of the FOURTH CLASS for a set of arguments isomorphic to those given above for Verse 31. Thus this conditional sentence should be read in English as:

**If the Son were to free you-all, [then] you-all would be free indeed.**

POINT: We are just now discovering that Christ often uses written first and third class conditional clauses to express what in fact are conditions of the FOURTH CLASS as compelled by the context. This is not only the case here in John 8 as being noted in this session, but also the case repeatedly in Matt. 11:20–24 (see Session V). It would seem that this is in fact Heterosis of the Mood of the Verb as classified in [E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, pp. 513–517]. The point seems to be that Christ, as the omniscient Logos-Incarnate, uses these various classes to express academic propositions or principles, which in fact means they are conceptually conditions of the fourth class. In other words, to Christ, it is either ACTUAL or HYPOTHETICAL (academic); so no matter what the construction means for ordinary men, to Him it is first or fourth class. Further, on a case by case basis, it appears that He expresses conditions of the fourth class with first or third class constructions and their stronger verbs to emphasize the reality of the logical proposition under consideration; at the meta level, there really is a stronger class—since such and such conditional statement is really true, here are real consequences in this situation (via Modus Ponens or Modus Tollens).

- d. Christ declared that their real motive is to kill Him. This is in fact their real motive (Verse 59). Declaring this plainly, in the face of their initial assent to Him, helps strip away their self-deception and lukewarmness. We can see this is their motive since they challenge His statement concerning their need to be free.
4. The Sanhedrists now claim spiritual sonship, even merit from Abraham, for the sages so speak:

"The Gehenna cried out before the Holy One, Blessed be He, Sovereign of the Universe! 'I am faint [with hunger]!' [To which He replied], 'These [the potential meal] are the seed of Isaac. Wait! I have whole companies of heathens whom I shall give thee.' " [Shabbat, folio 104a].

"The merits of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ceased from the days of Hosea the Prophet." [citation in Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, Volume 3 (Luke, John), p. 334]. The inference is that there was grace transferred from these Fathers to Israel until a certain time.

- a. Christ's answer in Verse 39, **if you-all are/were children of Abraham, [then] you-all would do the works of Abraham**, is either a condition of the first class—following one collection of the manuscripts—or a condition of the third class—following another collection of the manuscripts. It simply does not matter which one it is because in context this is yet another logical principle (Heterosis of the Mood of the Verb), namely a condition of the fourth class. In English, it should therefore read:

**If you-all were to be children of Abraham, [then] you-all would do the works of Abraham.**

- b. Christ reiterates (Verse 40) that they are seeking to kill Him, something Abraham did absolutely-not (strong Greek negative), even while rejecting what God gave Christ to say. Therefore they are not spiritual children of Abraham.
- c. Christ reiterates (Verse 41) that they are doing (continuous present) the works of their spiritual father.

5. The so-called assenting Sanhedrists now accuse Mary (and presumably Joseph) of cohabiting outside of marriage (Verses 41).
- a. This charge is insincere:
    - i. They know Him and the circumstances of His birth and His childhood, as we have pointed out before. They also know Mary and Joseph and His family.
    - ii. Even IF Mary had been in physical contact with Joseph, there is no sin: she was betrothed to Joseph (Matt. 1:18, Luke 1:27–38) and though not encouraged, intercourse between betrothed before a "wedding"—if there ever was a "wedding"—was not forbidden under Mosaic Law; for betrothal was legally binding and was the marriage contract between the families in question (very different from Western practice). Cf. Gen. 24:61–67.
  - b. Christ's answer:
    - i. **If God were your Father, you-all would have loved me [with self-sacrifice].** Another condition of the fourth class, this time expressed with a complacent form (the verb **hn** could be any of the indicative, subjunctive, optative); and note the verb **agapaw** means **self-sacrificial love**. A proposition is being stated, hence the fourth class. Clearly the consequent is violated. Hence (by Modus Tollens), the antecedent is also violated. They do not love Christ with commitment and self-sacrifice, and therefore they do not have God as their Father; and so they are spiritually opposed to the Father.
    - ii. **For out-of God I came out-of and am come.** A most emphatic construction in the Greek text emphasizing His Deity, that He is the Second Person constantly being born out of the Father's essence—and hence the Logos (the Sayer speaking for the Father) and the Eternal Son. To repeat, this clause is not directed at why He is the Son of God in His humanity, but is directed at why He is the Son of God IN HIS DEITY, i.e. His eternal Sonship within the Godhead.
      - 1) The translations misrepresent the periphrastic verb tense!! How dare they!! This mixed verb tense is a literary device meaning a process that is always happening.
      - 2) The double use of **ek** is the device of Pleonasm or Redundancy for emphasis.
      - 3) The total effect is the following:  
**I have been, am now, and will be truly coming out of the very essence of God.**  
But through Solomon, Christ as the Logos or Wisdom of the Father, sang (Hebrew text of Prov. 8:22–) of His eternal Sonship in the Divine Essence and His taking the form of the Ancient of Days sitting visibly on the throne of heaven:  
**Jehovah possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old.**  
**I was poured out from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.**  
**When there were no depths, I was birthed [= travailed], when there were no fountains abounding with water.**

**Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was birthed [= travailed].**

It necessarily follows that since He is the Son of God in His Deity, then He is the Son of God in His Humanity and He is One Person with two natures, one divine and one human. And it further follows that He was born of Mary apart from Joseph, completely answering their charge. As John recorded elsewhere by the Holy Spirit (Greek text of John 1:1–3, 14, 18, 5:37; 14:6,9):

**In the beginning was the Logos [=Sayer], and the Logos was with the God [=Father], and God was the Logos. The Same was in the beginning with the God. All things came into being through Him, and without Him came into being not even one thing which has come into being.**

**And the Logos became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**

**No one has seen the God [= Father] at any time; the Only-Begotten God Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has DECLARED Him. You-all have neither seen His [the Father's] shape nor heard His voice. I am the way and truth and life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me. He that has seen Me hath seen the Father.**

This is in keeping with Christ speaking through Isaiah the prophet (Is. 48:12,13,15,16, Hebrew text) and Moses (Deut. 6:4, Hebrew text) the following two of many Scriptures of the Hebrew canon:

**Hearken unto Me, O Jacob and Israel, my called: I am the First, I also am the Last.**

**Mine hand has also laid the foundation of the earth and My right hand has spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together.**

**I, even I, have SPOKEN; yea, I have called him [Israel]. I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous.**

**Come you-all near unto Me, hear you-all this. I have not SPOKEN in secret from the beginning. From the time it was, I AM, and now Master Jehovah [Adon Jehovah = Father] has sent ME and His Spirit. Thus SAYS Jehovah thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.**

**Hear O Israel: Jehovah our Elohim [tri-plural] [is] composite-unioned Jehovah.**

iii. These supposedly believing members of the Sanhedrin are in fact sons of Satan in their spiritual state. Hence:

1) In their sinful state, they are UNABLE to understand and hear = heed Christ's words. Cf. John 6:44,65—

**Absolutely no one is able to come unto Me unless the Father Who sent Me compels him, and I will resurrect him at the last day. Absolutely no one is able to come unto Me unless it is given to him out of My Father.**



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- 2) As spiritual sons of Satan they are liars and murderers and want to murder Him.
6. The less and less assenting Sanhedrists now charge Him with being a Samaritan and having a demon [= being demonically possessed] (Verses 48–51).
- a. They are wrong on both charges:
- By human lineage, Christ is of the House of David of the tribe of Judah.
  - By birth place, Christ is of Bethlehem of Judaea.
  - By location of upbringing, Christ is Galilean.
  - By unction of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3: 16, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22, John 1:29–32). Christ has THE Spirit. The charge of demons by the Sanhedrin (Matt. 12:24, Mark 3:22, Luke 11:15) was a frequent charge, even in their official records:  
  
"It was taught: On the eve of Passover Yeshu the Nazarene was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, 'He is going forth to be stoned because he practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Anyone who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf.' But since nothing was brought forward in his favor, he was hanged on the eve of Passover!—Ulla retorted: Do you suppose he was one for whom a defense could be made? Was he not an enticer, concerning whom the Scripture says 'Neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him.' With Yeshu, however, it was different, for he was connected with the government [or royalty]." [Sanhedrin, folio 43a (Manuscript M)].
- b. Christ's answer: He does not have a demon; He honors the Father and seeks only to honor the Father's glory, though they dishonor the Father. Then He gives another condition of the fourth class expressed as a condition of the third class:
- If anyone should guard My word, he should absolutely-not not [double negative, Greek text] taste death into eternity.**
  - Death in this conditional sentence refers to that in eternity, i.e. condemnation.
- c. The motivation behind the charge of a demon is that He teaches contrary to the Sanhedrin, He has miracles, and so He is supernaturally wrong.
7. The now absolutely-opposed Sanhedrists, who are now one with the other Sanhedrists that opposed all along, now say Christ has a demon because He claims power over death and therefore claims superiority over Abraham and the Prophets and therefore makes Himself to be something (Verses 42–56). Christ answers:
- Christ ignores the charge of a demon, because He already answered it.
  - He IS superior to the Abraham and the Prophets, not because He promotes Himself, but because He knows the Father and the Father so honors Him in His miracles.
  - If Christ were to deny His perfect knowledge of the Father and hence His position over Abraham and the Prophets, He would be a liar like the Sanhedrists opposing Him.
  - Finally, Abraham KNEW that Christ would be of his seed in Isaac, that this Christ would be his redeemer, and he rejoiced in this promise. Indeed, Abraham on many occasions met Christ before His incarnation and worshipped Him. An example from Gen. 18:1– :

**And Jehovah appeared unto him [Abraham] in the plains of Mamre; and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day.**

**And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the ground and said, My Adonai, if now I have found favor in Thy sight, I pray thee, pass not away from Thy servant.**

**Let a little water, I pray you-all, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under this tree. And I will fetch you-all a morsel of food ... and they did eat.**

**And they said to him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, In the tent.**

**And He [Jehovah] said, I will certainly return to thee according to the time of life; and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it ...**

**And Sarah laughed within herself and said, After I am grown old shall I have pleasure, my master being old also?**

**And Jehovah said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I surely bear a son, who am old? Is anything too hard for Jehovah? At the time appointed I shall return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not, for she was afraid. And He said, No, but thou didst laugh.**

**And Jehovah went His way, as soon as He had finished communing with Abraham [about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah], and Abraham returned to his place, and there came two angels to Sodom at evening.**

8. The enraged Sanhedrists essentially reply (Verses 57–59) that Christ was not yet 50 years and could not have seen Abraham (which is insulting since Christ said that Abraham had seen Him!!)
  - a. The issue of 50 years is somehow related to the requirement of Mosaic Law that priests and Levitical ministers serve between 30 and 50 years of age (Num. 4:3,23,30,35,39,43,47). In essence they are saying that Christ is not yet of retirement age.
  - b. Christ's reply is emphatic, that He is Jehovah Incarnate:

**Truly, truly I say unto you-all, Before Abraham was, I AM.**

He is not only prior to Abraham, but to Moses, and indeed all creation. His answer is that He is the Self-Existing One in the flesh, specifically that Person of Jehovah Who speaks for Jehovah, i.e. He is the Logos (Sayer). This is clear from Moses seeing Christ at the burning bush in Sinai (Ex. 3:2– :)

**And Messenger Jehovah appeared unto him [Moses] in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire and the bush was not consumed.**

**And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why this bush is not burnt.**

**And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him from the midst of the bush, and said, Moses. Moses. And he said, Here am I.**

**And He said, ... I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.**

**And Moses said unto God, Behold when I come unto the sons of Israel and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers has sent me unto you, and they shall say unto 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 sons of Israel, I AM has sent me unto you.**

9. The Sanhedrists opposing Him are now not only enraged, but murderous (Verse 59) and attempt to stone Him on the spot (at the Treasury in the Court of Women in the Temple).
  - a. Could stoning take place within the courts of the Temple? Normally no. But we know that building was still continuing in the Temple compound in the days of Gamaliel the Elder who was Nasi at this very time; and indeed there were stones aplenty for stoning Christ to death at this time [Lightfoot, *op.cit.*, Volume 3 (Luke, John), pp. 256–261,337].
  - b. The murderous reaction of the Sanhedrin shows that they understood perfectly that He claimed to be Deity Incarnate, that He claimed to be Messiah, and that He claimed that they were in bondage to their sinful natures and that on their own could therefore never stand before God.
  - c. The corrupt leadership had murdered the prophets throughout Israel's history (Matt. 23:29–37).
  - d. They would now murder (if they could) the Prophet of the Prophets.