



June 25, 2023

“Objective vs Subjective Truth”

SS 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

News:

★Church Camp August 24-27★

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Three responses to Jesus’ initial comments following Judas’ departure to betray Him.

1) Peter

2) Thomas

3) Phillip

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

Three extremely misunderstood and therefore controversial statements made by Jesus.

Verse 6

Verse 12

Verses 13&14

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Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

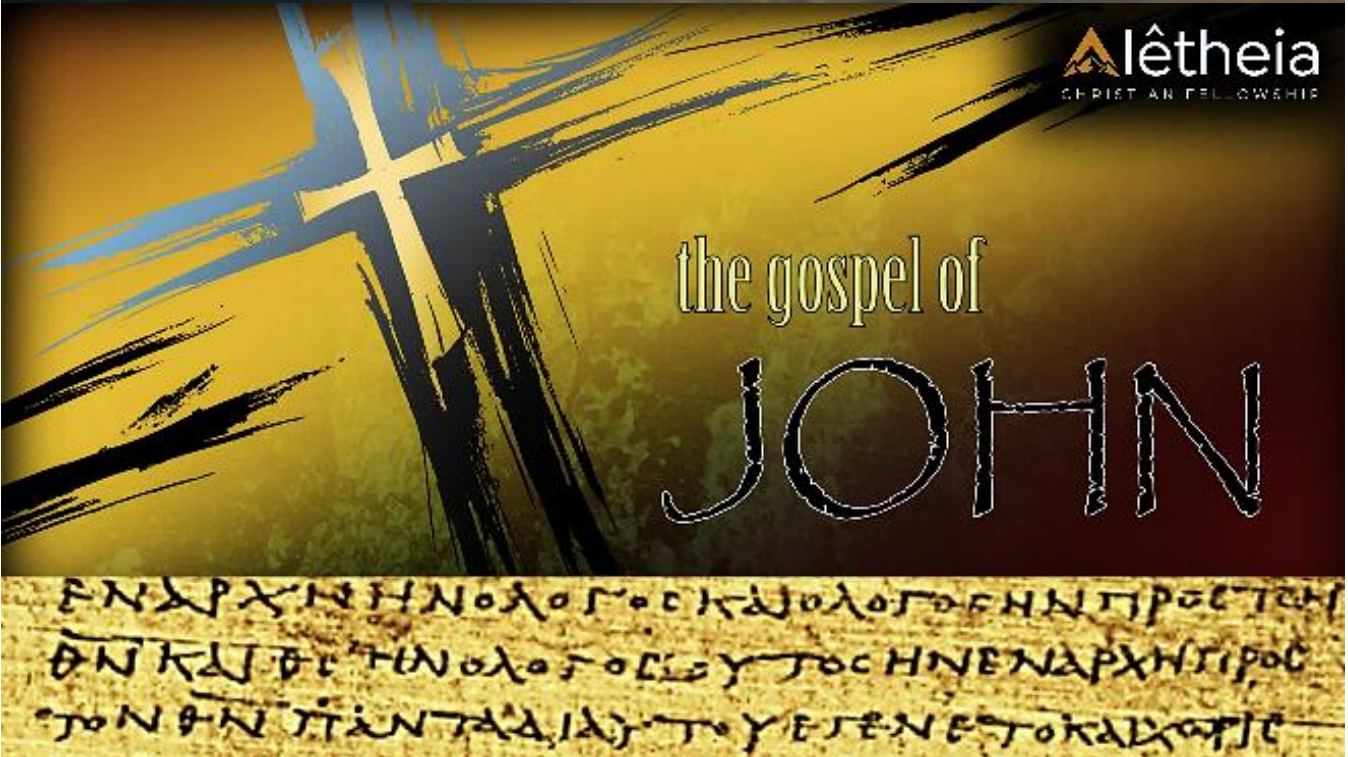
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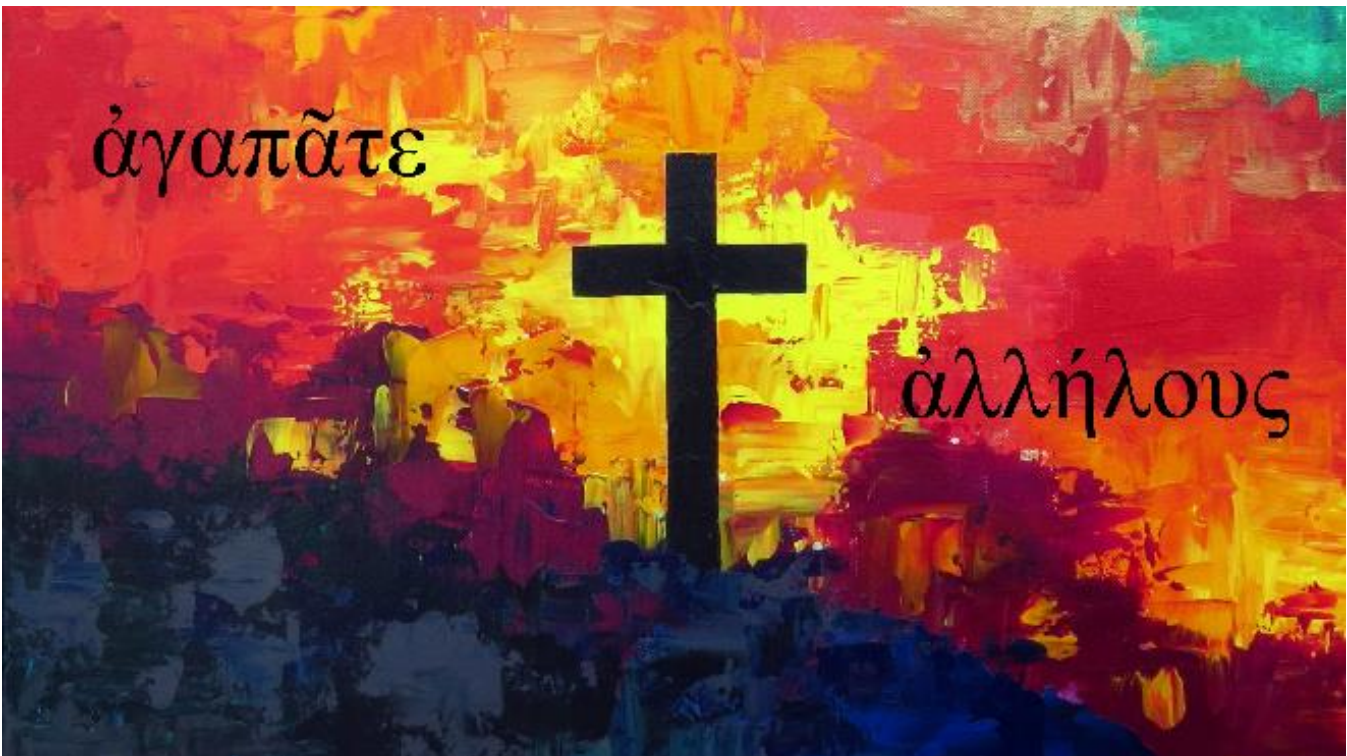
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



Today we are going to be in the last few verses of John chapter 13 and the beginning of John chapter 14 in order to look at three responses to Jesus' initial

comments following Judas' departure to betray Him. The first 1), Peter's, will be a review; the second 2), Thomas', will be an amplification; and the third 3), Phillip's, will be an introduction.

In addition to that, we will examine three extremely misunderstood and therefore controversial statements made by Jesus. We've already looked at the first one a bit - it came in verse 6. We'll see the other two later. What you'll notice in all three cases is that it is our human disposition, or our human sensibilities, which cause the trouble.



The last time we were together we took a closer look at Peter's reaction to the Lord's command "Love one another." How Peter, the outspoken leader of the

Apostles, responded to his marching orders given to them bluntly, boldly, and concisely, by Jesus, on His final night on earth in a human suit. “Love one another.” ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους, just two words, in the imperative, given as a commandment, ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους, “Love, one another.”

We saw how Peter’s response is also our response.



It’s the typical reaction of a child not wanting to do what his or her parent commands. No, I don’t want to eat my broccoli, why can’t I eat cake instead? No, I don’t want to go to bed, why can’t I stay up late with you? Or in this specific case, no, I don’t want to self-sacrificingly love my brothers and sisters, why can’t I come with You now?

Bottom line, I don't want to trust that You have a good reason for commanding me, and that in Your directing of me, that you know best. So instead, I'll question your intelligence, question your wisdom, question your seriousness, question your authority, and question your resolve, because I want to do what I want to do and what you've commanded me to do, doesn't fit my program.

Please note the underlying attitude. I think, as a human being, that what I think, what I believe, and what I desire... in other words, how I judge that things should be and how things should go, is correct, appropriate, valuable, and important. So, what I want, is at least worthy of serious consideration by others, including serious consideration by God Himself. We will see this mindset again and again.

A dark, moody landscape with a bird in flight against a cloudy sky. The scene is dimly lit, with a low sun or moon creating a soft glow on the horizon. The bird is silhouetted against the lighter sky.

Think for yourself and
question authority.

Ingrained in every American from birth.

It is the human condition, but it has been exacerbated by the modernity-born spirit of the ascendancy of the individual above all else. The zeitgeist of independence that has led us to the belief that our personal opinion on everything matters, whether we know anything about the subject or not. We were taught by our founding fathers to trust no one, to question authority, and to think for ourselves. In many ways this was a good thing, even though we've taken it way too far, but it was never a good thing when it comes to God.

Then we saw Thomas' reaction to the operation.



Jesus had comfortingly told them that He would never abandon or forsake them, but that He was going away from them, temporarily, in order to prepare a place for them, and that since that was so, He would return to get them and take them to that place. The kicker was Jesus' final phrase in verse 4, "And you know the Way where I am going." That has an odd flow, doesn't it? It's literally, "And where I am going, y'all already know the Way." Because that phrasing is intentionally awkward it gives us a couple of interesting nuances. I just want to touch on one of those aspects today.

The "where," that Jesus was going, was into the Heavenly Father's presence. That was made very clear

previously. What Jesus then said was that the guys have already known the Way to the Heavenly Father's presence for some time and because they have known this in the past, they presently know it now.

The verb to know is οἶδα (oy-dä), and here it is in the perfect tense. That stresses the current knowing of a thing based specifically on the fact that it was known in the past. In this case, it is "the Way." This is very important in order for us to understand the flow. Look at the verse carefully. Jesus was not saying that once He showed them the Way in the future, then they would know the Way - He was saying that they already knew the Way because they had already come to know the Way in the past.



Thomas essentially said, “Lord, how in the world can we know the Way, past or present, when we don’t even know where?” It functions as a double rebuke of Jesus. We cannot know the Way because we don’t know the destination.

Jesus responded with the incredibly profound “I AM the WAY.”



The reason Jesus said more than those four words was to fully answer both of Thomas’ objections. Jesus was saying that, not only is it true that He is the one and only Way, but that the destination is the Heavenly Father’s eternal presence. Since He was clarifying that, He also went on to further clarify what was implied by that. Basically, He said, while we’re at it, boys, just in

case you're too dull to properly comprehend the ramifications of what that means on your own, let me spell it out for you. There exists no other Way for anyone to ever enter the Heavenly Father's eternal presence. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

That single statement is completely straightforward and unambiguous - there can be no doubt whatsoever about what it means. The three elements of Way, Truth, and Life, stand as co-equal existential realities. Jesus is all three of those things separately, but here we see how each one of them functions together as well.

The reason that Jesus is the one and only Way is because He is also the one and only Truth Who can perfectly reveal God. In addition, He's the one and only Life generating and sustaining force for both physical and metaphysical life with God.

This is also the first of our grossly misunderstood and therefore controversial statements. It starts with an incredibly unusual Greek construction which is rendered in English as "I AM." I don't really want to belabor it today because we've talked about it many

times. What I will tell you is that any reasonable person reading John's Gospel, in context with the whole of Scripture, would easily affirm that Jesus was claiming pure timeless existence as the descriptors that follow, Way, Truth, Life. In other words, Jesus was claiming the divine Covenantal name of God for Himself with those two words.

That's the first issue, the second one follows from it... By saying that He eternally exists as the Way it eliminates any other possible Way. No need to take my word for it, Jesus went on to make it explicit by bluntly saying "No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Some object to the idea that Jesus claimed the Covenantal Name of Almighty God for Himself due to the ramifications of such a claim. Some likewise reject the consequences of Jesus as the Way, especially with the explicit follow up excluding everyone attempting to find another Way.

It's not because there is any ambiguity in the verse, it's entirely about human sensibilities being violated by the plain meaning of the verse.



That causes people to attack the verse and oftentimes all of Christianity because they are offended. There are only two choices. A person can either be offended and so insist that the world around them adapt to make them comfortable... in this case, they can force the Bible to conform to their sensibilities. Or a person can be offended and recognize that their offense is due to a lack of understanding on their part and so pray that God would conform them to the Bible. These are the only possible choices in this matter.

I indicated that being offended by the Bible specifically, or by God more generally, is due to a lack of comprehension of what is really going on theologically.

The reason that Christ is the only Way, is that He is the only Truth and the only Life, as we've already seen, but what does that mean practically speaking for the human person?



It means that the Way is really a mode of existence. I'll let you ponder that for a moment. The Way is a mode of existence, not a goal to be sought.

What I mean is the Way is not like a gateway or a checkpoint that one must pass through to get to the other side, nor is it a particular footpath that one must find and follow until reaching the end. Those are metaphors to help us understand, but what they point to is the reality that the Way is Christ Jesus Himself and to pass through Him as the Door, or to follow Him

on the Narrow Road, is to be alive in Him walking together with Him in His Truth. It is to be born again, once and for all, as a Christian child of God.

It is to be in right-relationship with Almighty God, embraced forevermore as a son of the Heavenly Father through the agency of Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. That right-relationship begins at the moment of acceptance and blasts right through the transition from the physical into the realm of the eternal. It is a relationship once begun that never ends.

Jesus is the only God Who came and paid for our sins - there is no other name by which men must be Saved. There is no other way to be in right-relationship with the God of the Bible.

Of course, Jesus is the only Way into the Father's presence, but we go wrong when we think of that as admission into Heaven. In Christ we enter the Father's presence and will never leave it.

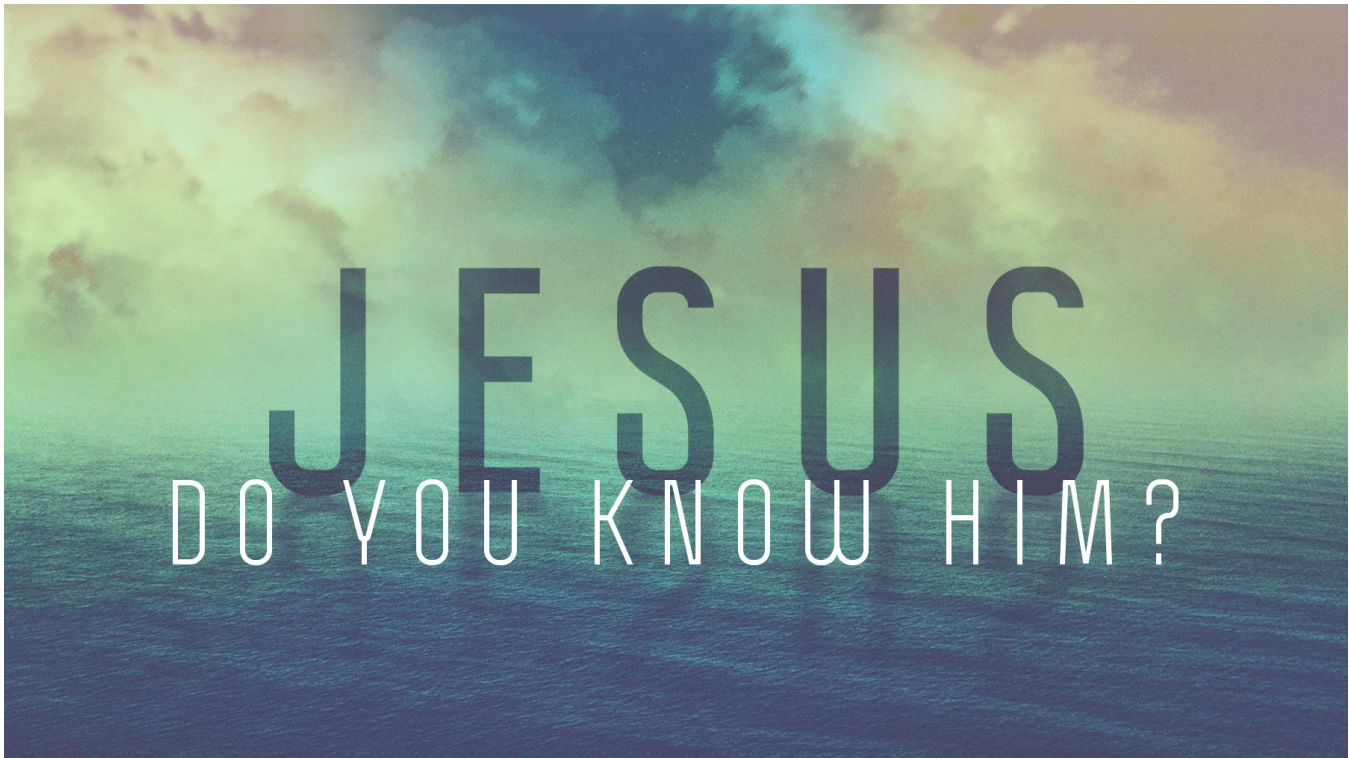


God is diverse and inclusive, not limited and exclusive. You're thinking of a Country Club.

Finally let me point out that God said to Adam, “Look dude, I’ve created this massive, beautiful, abundant, garden full of all kinds of food. You may eat from any tree, bush, root, shrub, whatever in the entire place except this single, lone, tree, in the center. Eat till you burst from all that I have created here but leave that one little ole tree alone.” What did Eve hear?

Jesus said, “no one comes to the Father except through Me” And what do people hear? People hear rejection, they hear prohibition, they hear denial. What’s really going on is Jesus didn’t stop with “no one comes to the Father.” Jesus went on to say, “except through Me.”

It takes what seems like it was going to be exclusionary and made it entirely inclusionary. Right-relationship with God and being currently alive in the Father's presence is open and available to all people without any exception. Anyone who believes in the name of Jesus will be Saved.



For Jesus conducting the Last Supper in the Upper Room after so long in ministry with His Apostles, His guys should have easily grasped the fact that Jesus Himself was the Way to the Heavenly Father's eternal presence. Jesus then went on to further explain.

John 14:7, "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."

In claiming to be the only Way into the Heavenly Father's presence, because He is the Truth of God and is the Life of God, He must necessarily be the perfect revelation and expression of the reality of God.



The effulgence of the sun is the light and heat that we see and feel. Without that, assuming that we were safe in some sort of space station on earth, we wouldn't even know that the massive star at the center of our solar system was there. We would not be able to see or feel the sun. It is the effulgence of the sun that makes it known to us. Jesus as the Truth of God is by very definition, the perfect manifestation of God. To look at Jesus is to look at the Father, or the Holy Spirit, or the totality of the Godhead, Three in One.

This verse is a rebuke of Thomas' response but is directed to the group - they were all thinking it, Thomas was just the one who voiced it. Jesus was saying "IF," "IF," "IF," you guys had known Me for Who I AM, you would have understood that you were in God's presence all along.

He went on to confirm for them that since He had now explained that Truth, they could now grasp it. Well, hold on a minute...



John 14:8, Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

We're all thinking it... I wish that it were true that we would have done better.

John 14:9–15, 9Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?
10Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own, but the Father, as He remains in Me, does His works.



11Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. 12Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and

greater works than these he will do; because I am going to the Father. 13And whatever you ask in My name, this I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. 15“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

There's a lot there. Let's just take it one bite at a time. Jesus has now rebuked the group for the third time by addressing Philip's request. It's all fairly straightforward as Jesus incredulously asks, how after all that they've been through together, the guys still don't get it.

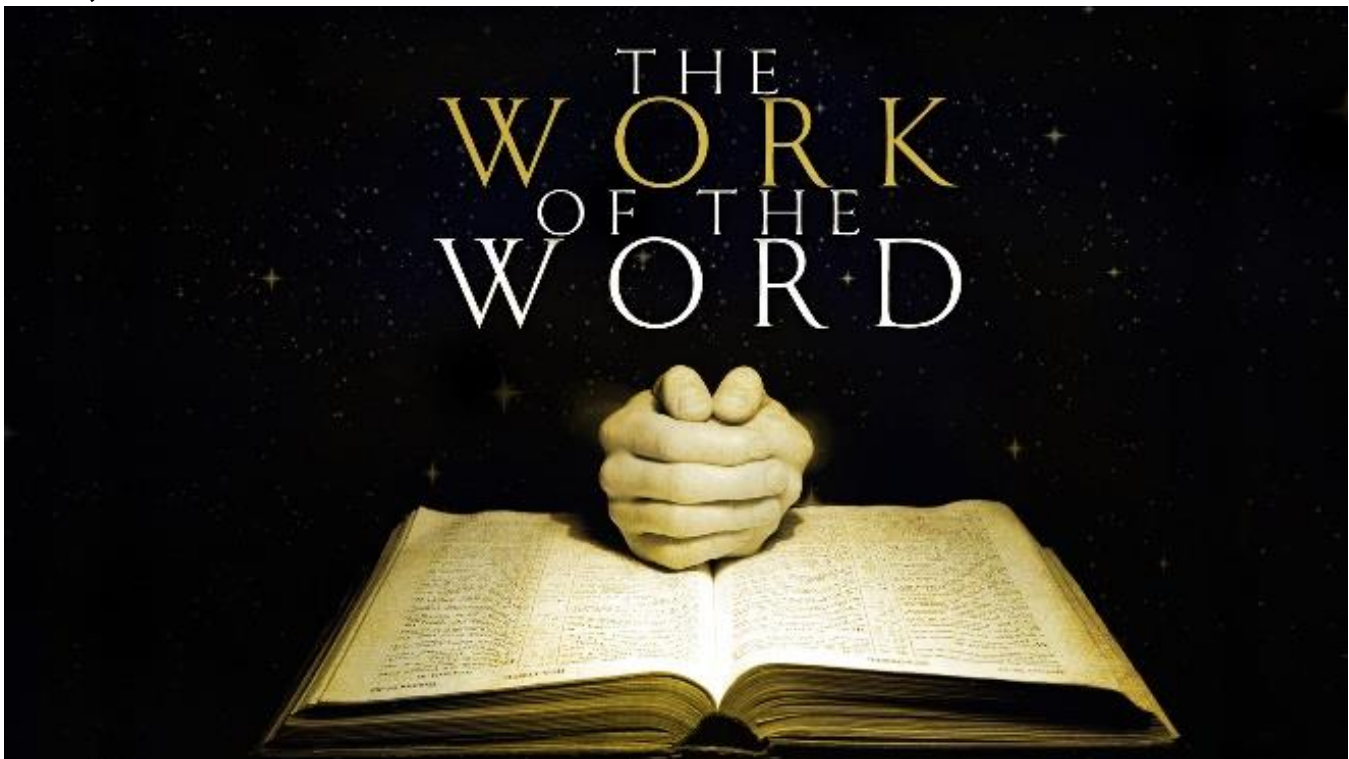
It's a lack of faith issue. The reason the Apostles were so dull and so lacking in understanding was because they kept seeing things with human eyes rather than with the eyes of faith. Jesus said on more than one occasion that it was their lack of faith that caused them to be so lacking in spiritual perception.

I hope you recognize that we still have the same problem and we, unlike them, have the full revelation available to us as well as the indwelling Holy Spirit. Yet, we, like them, continually misunderstand and constantly question God. We so easily revert to our

human physical understanding instead of trusting in our Lord Who has proven faithful over and over again.

We've seen all of these elements before and so here in response to Phillip, we get it all again to make it explicit that Jesus and God are in such perfect harmonious union that they are One. There is only One God and He exists in a relational unity.

Then Jesus said to the Apostles what He had earlier said to the Jewish religious leaders, if you don't believe Me, at least believe the works that I have done.



In John's Gospel Jesus talked often about the "Works." He called them "The works of God" (9:3), "The works of Him Who sent Me" (9:4), "The works that I do in My

Father's name" (10:25), or simply "the works of My Father" (10:37). He repeatedly said that the entire purpose of His "Works" was to provide proof of His claims that God sent Him in order to Save mankind.

What are the works specifically? They are quite literally the intervention of God into our physical reality as the Will of God the Father manifested through Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. They are instances of Trinity working in unison to bring about a supernatural event in the natural world. They are all designed to point to Jesus as the Way.

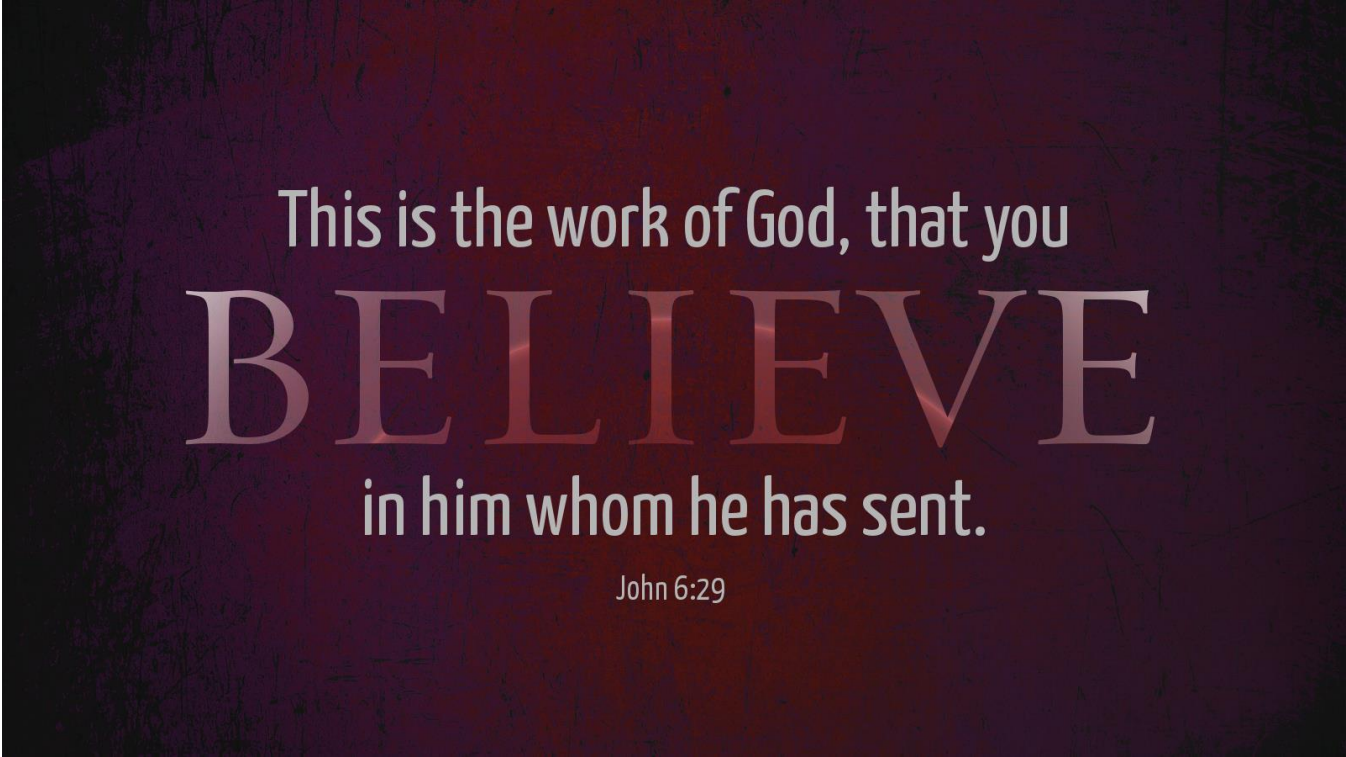
By far, the most significant of them all and really the one that stands as being greater than all of God's working throughout time combined, is the Incarnation. That is to say, the act of the eternally existent, fully divine, Word of God, taking on human flesh, frailty, and mortality, and dwelling among us as one of us.

Truly, "God so loved the world that He gave up and handed over His most precious Son," so to speak. That intervention by the divine into the mundane is greater than all other supernatural interventions combined. That was the ultimate work of God.

As God made flesh and blood, Jesus then carefully did precisely what was willed by the Father, no more and no less. Therefore, the works that Jesus performed on earth were precisely what the Father willed and so were an exact revelation of the Father and His character. Jesus said that He “could do nothing apart from the Father.”

In the passage, John chapter 5, verses 18 through 30 we catch a glimpse of that dynamic. In that passage, the “Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.” Jesus told them over and over that He was not acting on His own accord but doing only what the Heavenly Father had given Him to do. In verse 20 of that chapter Jesus said, “For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will be amazed.” Jesus then went on to explain that the greater works revolved around eternal life. The Judgment resulting in eternal death as a result of Jesus and the passing out of all Judgment into eternal life as a result of Jesus. Therefore, the Salvation of a human soul is the greatest work possible.

It might not seem obvious as we look at the person of Jesus, but it becomes easier when we think of Jesus as the Word of Truth and then extrapolate to the written Word of Truth - the Holy Bible. The Bible as the written Word of Truth, has only one purpose, and that is to point people to Jesus in order for them to be Saved all to the great Glory of God.



This is the work of God, that you
BELIEVE
in him whom he has sent.

John 6:29

That's God's work through Jesus. What is God's work through you and me? Jesus said that "The work of God, is that you believe in Him whom He has sent" (John 6:29). To believe in Jesus is doing the work that God requires - it is God working through you and me. That faith in the completed work of God through Jesus on our behalf, is God's work through us. That is what it

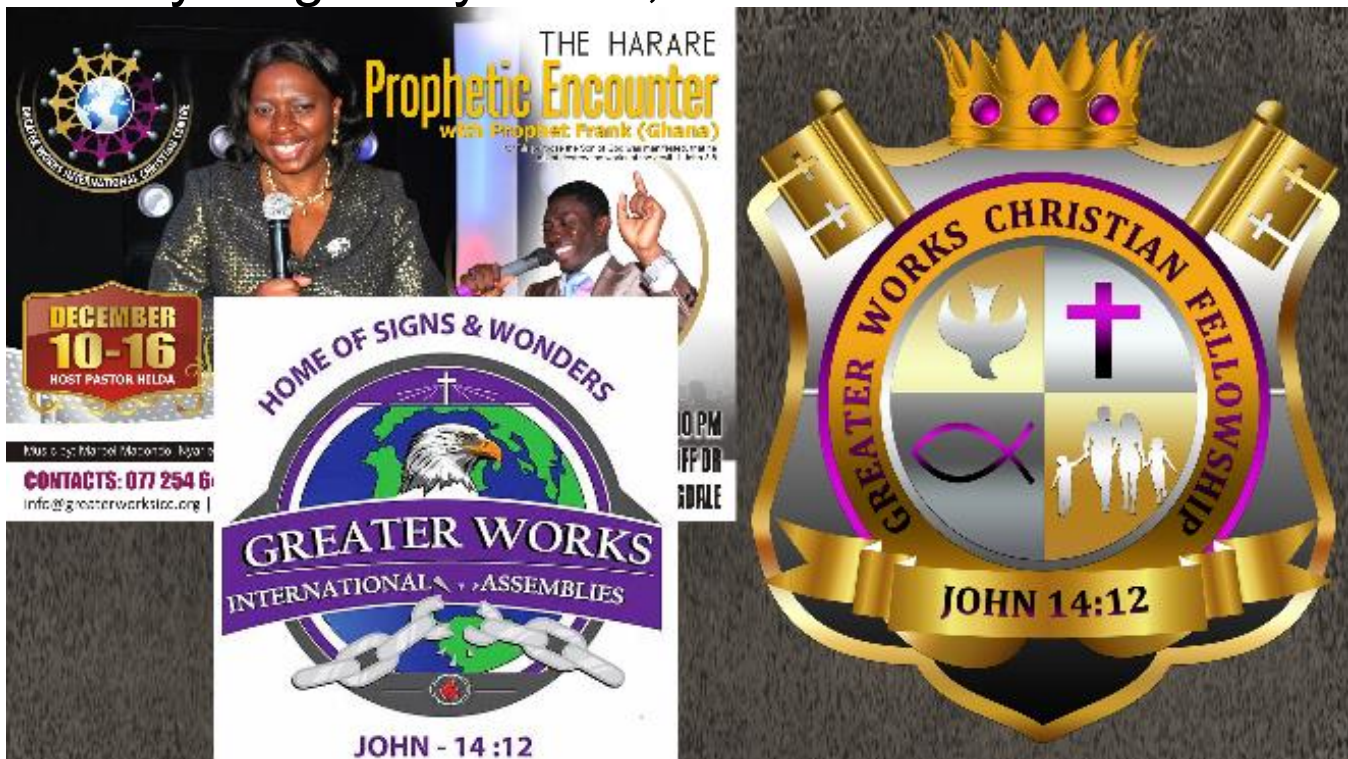
is for the human child of God doing the work of God. Please get that, believing in Jesus as the Way and the Truth and the Life, having faith that His grace is sufficient for you, trusting that He has you and that obeying Him is the most sensible thing that any person can do... That is doing the work of God.



If that work of faith is done, then in a very practical way the command of Christ is simultaneously done. It is only faith in Christ that can and does enable a person to love the other. To love God, to love His children, and to love the lost, that is loving what is other. That is what God does - He loves what is other.

After that transitional verse 11, Jesus spoke in-depth about works and in so doing, He gave two of our three

controversial statements. We have verse 12, “Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do.” We have verses 13 and 14, “whatever you ask in My name, this I will do. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.”

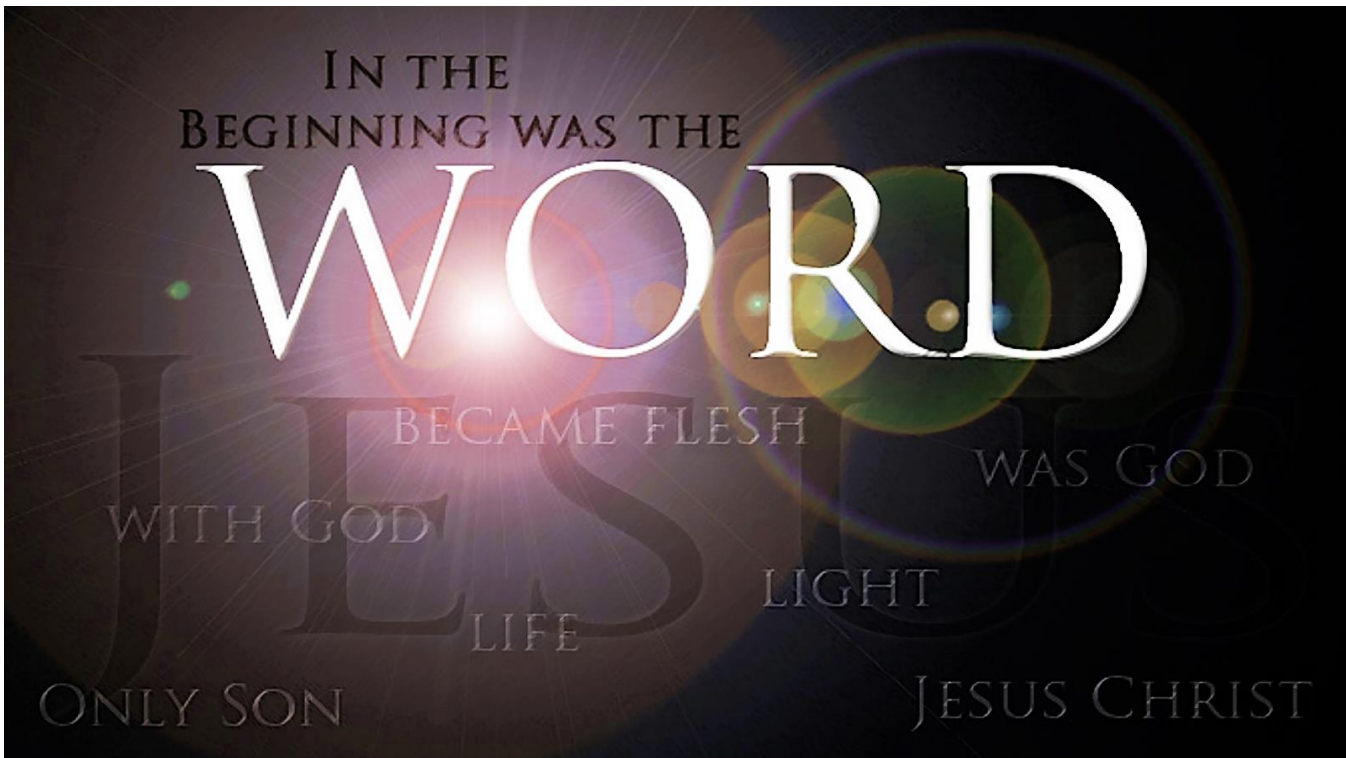


This is the Prosperity Gospel’s Holy Grail. You might have noticed that I didn’t read all the words in verses 12 through 14, nor did I read verse 15, and then we’ll also forget the previous context and arrive at the commonly-held notion that verse 12 means that we Christians will do greater miracles than Jesus Himself did while He was on earth. Then we are free to see verses 13 and 14 as proclaiming that anything we desire is a simple prayer request away.

You've probably already guessed that neither of those ideas are even close to correct. Yet they're both ubiquitous. The reason that they are so widely held is because it resonates. The ideas are conjured up from a human disposition that desires them to be true. It gives human beings and therefore the individual person control over the chaos all around.

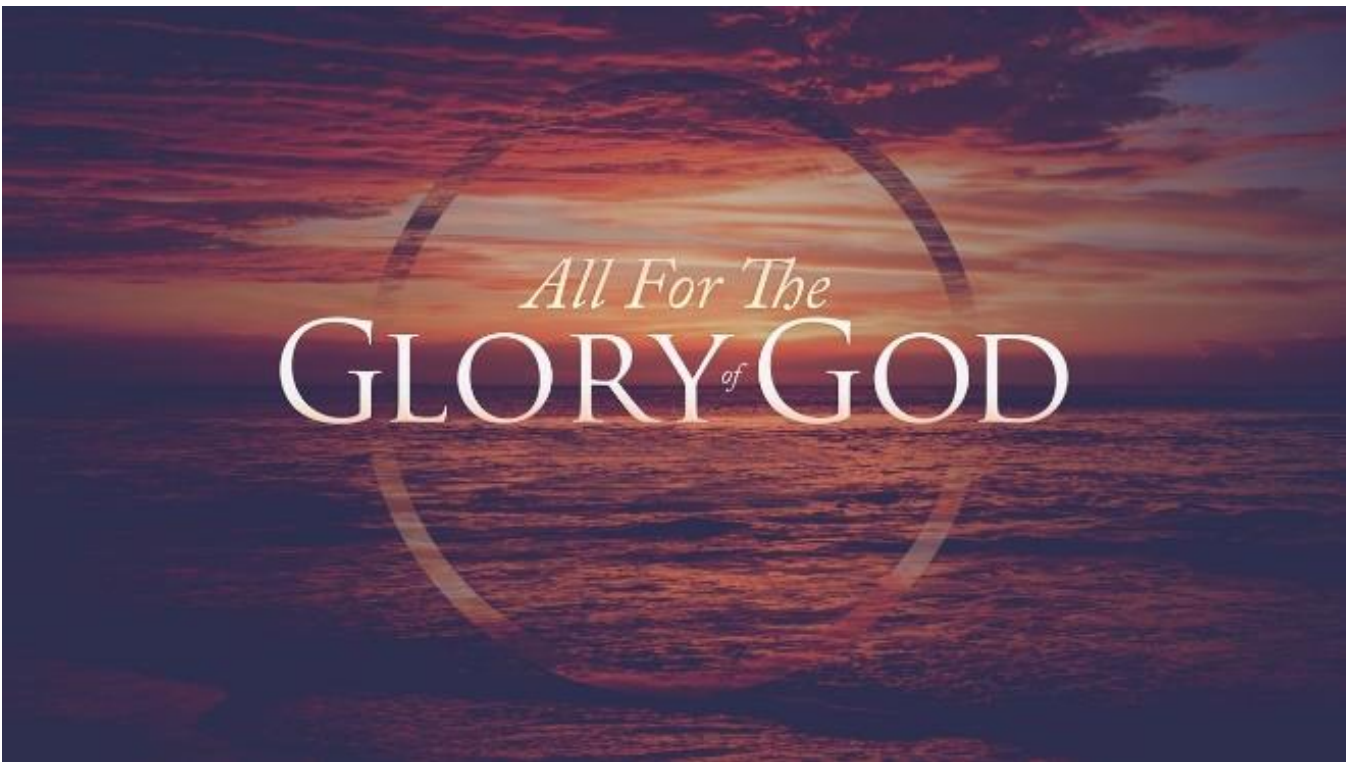
These are real so-called ministries, but it doesn't need to be this extreme to be in the same category. I am certain that everyone in this room has dabbled in this arena. Dabbled with trying to be more powerful than you are, dabbled with trying to get your will done in Heaven.

We miss the very plain and obvious Truth when it doesn't suit us. Verse 12 tells us that we "will do greater things" but it starts out with "the one who believes in Me," and ends with "because I am going to the Father." The point is that Jesus did nothing that was not directed by the Father, which is another way of saying that everything that Jesus was, that He said, and that He did, was the Father acting through Him.



That's what it means to be the Logos, the Word or more correctly the Message of God. Jesus is the agent through Whom God works. The Father was able to perform the work He willed to be done through physical Jesus - that's why what Jesus did, He called the Works of the Father. Jesus was now going to be with the Father again and so the disciples of Jesus would become His Message. Jesus works through us.

It is never that we can do greater things than Jesus did as though it were a competitive comparison, it is that Jesus can do greater things through His people than He could do as one man on earth. He went away so that the Holy Spirit could be sent and now the Body of Christ is ostensibly billions of agents strong.



Verses 13 and 14 similarly get shortened into something we prefer, but what the statement actually says is that the purpose of doing whatever we ask is specifically to “glorify the Father in the Son.” Then Jesus twice said that the asking was “in His name.”

We’ll take the second thing first since Jesus stated it twice. To ask in His name means to literally ask precisely, and I do mean exactly, what He Himself would ask. It is to be in perfect conformity to Jesus and His will, which is identical to the will of the Father and the will of the Holy Spirit. It is God’s will done on earth, never our will done in Heaven.

The first part is the purpose of asking and it is very specific as I said. To glorify the Father in Jesus. That means Salvation of human souls. That is the way in which the Father is glorified for handing over His precious Word to be the ultimate sacrifice for human rebellion.

Taken together what does it mean? It means that prayer is the single-most important part of the life of the Christian person because prayer is where God conforms us to His will.

Our Father who art in Heaven
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen

We constantly get it wrong and it's usually okay because God certainly understands and He does want us to confide in Him and share our heart with Him, but

what prayer is truly for is to help us trust His will even though we don't understand.