

G R A C E

Reformed Baptist Church

Soli ♦ Deo ♦ Gloria

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

Peter's Confession

John 6:66-71

June 19, 2005

- The remainder of Chapter 6 marks the end of Jesus' ministry in Galilee [in the Gospel of John]. From Chapter 7 onward, the Evangelist [John] focuses on Jesus' Judean ministry [leading up to His crucifixion].

Verse 66

- “**As a result of this**” [NASB] could also be translated “**From this time**” or “**After this**” [ESV]
- If this proper translation is “As a result of this”, then “this” would be referring to the “difficult” sayings of Jesus [Verse 60: “Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this* said, “This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?””]
 - The “disciples” here state, “This is a *difficult* statement; who can listen to it?”
 - The Greek word, here, for **difficult** is *skel(ay)ros*, σκι ηροϛ [also in Matthew 25:24; Acts 26:14; James 3:4; Jude 15]
 - *Skelayros* does NOT mean “hard or difficult to understand”; rather, it means “harsh” or “offensive.”
 - Given the context of this chapter, there were several reasons why the words of Jesus offended the “disciples”:
 1. They cared more about their physical needs being met [physical bread/food, physical messiah/king, self-serving miracles, etc.] than their spiritual needs [John 6:15, 34]
 2. Jesus claimed superiority to Moses [6:32-35]

3. As the “Son of Man” Jesus claimed a ‘heavenly origin and heavenly glory’, stating that He “came down from heaven” [John 6:42, 53-56]
 4. Jesus emphasized the sovereignty of God [and the inability of man] in the work of salvation [“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day”] [John 6:44]
 5. Jesus implied that eternal life was contingent upon His actions [specifically, His obedience to the Father in His death on the cross] [John 6:51]
 6. Jesus stated that He had the authority and ability to preserve all that the Father had given Him until the last day. [John 6:44]
 7. Taken literally, Jesus’ words concerning eating His flesh and drinking His blood clearly violated Old Testament Law forbidding such practices [John 6:53-56]
- NOTICE: Jesus never alters or softens His message to be more inclusive of those who were offended by His statements of truth.
 - John states that **many** of His disciples “withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.”
 - Literally, this phrase states that His disciples “went away to the things they had left behind.”
 - One scholar [Godet] states that this passage implies “more than simple defection; they denote the return of these people to their ordinary occupations, which they had abandoned in order continuously to follow the Lord.”
 - “What they wanted he would not give; what he offered, they would not receive.” F.F. Bruce
 - “These Galileans thus joined the earlier Jerusalem followers who failed to pass the test of unqualified allegiance and perseverance grounded in grace-prompted faith.” D.A. Carson
 - In short, His disciples had had enough of Jesus’ harsh and offensive language. They weren’t going to take it anymore, so they abandoned Him.
 - NOTICE: These are **not** “backslidden” or “carnal” Christians [such descriptions, especially the latter, are foreign to biblical Christianity]; rather, they were never true Believers [in the Lord Jesus Christ] in the first place.
 - These “disciples” had followed Jesus for self-serving reasons, **not** because they believed He was the long-awaited Messiah.
 - This scenes illustrates the truth of the Parable of the Sower and the Soils [**Matthew 13:1-23**]

Verse 67

- Jesus challenges **the Twelve**, “You do not want to go away also, do you?”

Matthew 10:2-4	Mark 3:16-19	Luke 6:14-16	Acts 1:13
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
Andrew his brother	James son of Zebedee	Andrew his brother	John
James son of Zebedee	John brother of James	James	James
John his brother	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip.	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James son of Alphaeus	James son of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus
Thaddeus	Thaddeus	Simon the zealot	Simon the zealot
Simon the Cananean	Simon the Cananean	Jude of James	Jude of James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	

- Grammatically, the form of this question expects a negative response.
- It appears that of all the “disciples” that had followed Jesus throughout Chapter 6 [following the Feeding of the 5,000], perhaps only “The Twelve” remain.
- This is the first time John uses the phrase “The Twelve” [besides John 20:24, this is the only passage where John uses the phrase “The Twelve”]
- Of course, since Jesus knew “what was in man” [i.e. He knew their hearts, John 2:25], He knew what the response would be.
 - Jesus asks this question for the benefit of “The Twelve”...not for His benefit.
 - In this challenge, Jesus, now, draws the line in the sand.
 - It is as though Jesus is asking His disciples, “Now that you have heard my ‘offensive’ and ‘harsh’ teachings, do you still wish to follow me?”
 - Read also **Luke 14:25-33**

Verses 68 – 69

- Peter appears to be the spokesman for the Twelve Disciples here.
- “He [Simon Peter] is impetuous, ready sometimes to jump to conclusions, and capable of incredible ineptitude. But he is also capable of reaching astonishing heights.” Leon Morris

- Peter begins by addressing Jesus as “Lord.”
 - The term, “Lord,” [kuri oς, *kurios*] can be simply a respectful title, such as “Sir.” It can also mean something greater, such as “Master,” or it can be the appropriate manner in which one would address deity. Given the context of this passage [it introduces Peter’s confession of Jesus as the ‘Holy One of God’], most certainly Peter is addressing Jesus as “Lord” in the highest sense.

- Peter is stating here, **“What other alternative do we have? For, You have words to eternal life.”**
 - It is as though Peter is asserting that now that they know who Jesus is, they realize that nothing else will satisfy them.
 - Peter’s statement here harkens back to Jesus words in 6:63, “the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”

- Peter then states, “We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.”
 - The words “believe” and “know” are in the perfect tense.
 - This gives the words of Peter their full, intended meaning:

“We have come to a place of belief in You and continue there. We have entered into knowledge of who You are, and retain it [continually].”
 - “You” here is emphatic – “Peter stresses Christ’s place and person” – His character, nature, and status – **the** Holy One of God.
 - “The Holy One of God” is not a common title for Jesus. It is used in only one other place in the New Testament – when the demon-possessed man addresses Jesus in the synagogue at Capernaum [Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34]
 - The phrase is also not common in the Old Testament. It is used of Aaron in Psalm 106:16 and “your Holy One” is used in Psalm 16:10. However, the phrase “The Holy One of God” is quite similar to the title “The Holy One of Israel” which is used quite often in the Old Testament. [See **Isaiah 12:6**]
 - Although the expression “The Holy One of God” is not a typical messianic title in Judaism, it most definitely messianic in this context.
 - Vincent Taylor, in the book *The Names of Jesus*, states, that “while the expression does not appear to have been an accepted Messianic title, it is used by Peter as a Messianic designation.”

- Further, as one scholar [Schnackenburg] explains, “Holy expresses the closest possible intimacy with God, a participation in God’s deepest and most essential being.”
 - Only God is holy – it is His very nature. Men are holy only when regenerated, justified, and sanctified by the work of the triune God.
- There is definitely a parallel between Peter’s confession, recorded in the Synoptics, at Caesarea Philippi, and this confession at Capernaum. However, the two are most likely separate events.
 - Matthew 16:16 “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
 - Mark 8:29 “You are the Christ”
 - Luke 9:20 “the Christ of God”
- NOTICE: In the Synoptics, the confession is concerned with Jesus being “the Christ”...that is, “the Messiah.” However, this is not the concern of Peter’s confession, here, in John 6.
- “Here [unlike in Peter’s confession at Caesarea Philippi] the challenge is addressed directly to their sense of personal loyalty, and the confession is a confession of a consciousness of personal indebtedness. There the challenge relates to the place that they were prepared to assign to their Master in the working out of the purpose of God for the nation and the world.” Murray
- “the Holy One of God points to the spiritual character rather than the official status of the Messiah. That [the official status of the Messiah] will be affirmed [in the Synoptics] at Caesarea Philippi.” Temple
- Further, Peter declares this confession in light of the “harsh” and “offensive” teachings of Jesus earlier in the Chapter.
- It is as though Peter is stating, “Jesus, your words, at first glance, may seem offensive, yet, I know who You are as the Holy One of God, and I know that you have words of eternal life. Therefore, I accept what you have said as truth, and trust that I will, at least one day, fully understand these statements.”

Every believer must [spiritually] arrive at the place where Peter is, here in John 6:68-69. Peter expresses an unswerving confidence in who Jesus Christ is, and it is this confidence in the character and nature of God, that allows Peter to trust, believe, and embrace even the most “difficult” or “harsh” teachings of Jesus.

In other words, we believe all [not just a part of] of God’s Word NOT because it makes sense to us [for, at times, it will not initially], but because of who God is [His character,

nature, attributes]. Therefore, we must conform our beliefs and our convictions around what the Scriptures say, not the other way around. Then, and only then, does Scripture truly become the sole authority, rule, or canon in our lives.

Further, it becomes clear, because of who Jesus Christ is (and what He has done for us), as the one who has the “words of eternal life” and “the Holy One of God”, that no sacrifice is too great to follow Him.

Verse 70

- Jesus, then, addresses the Twelve, “Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?”
 - Some have suggested that Jesus Christ’s choosing of the Twelve corresponds to God’s choosing of the twelve tribes of Israel (Deuteronomy 10:15; 1 Samule 12:22).
 - This may be the case, but, as Leon Morris asserts, “Jesus’ words serve to remind Peter and his associates of the origin of their calling in light of the slightly arrogant nature of Peter’s statement.”
 - Yet, Jesus states that one of the Twelve is a *diabolos*, or devil, also, in the Greek, meaning, “slanderer” or “false accuser.”

Verse 71

- John the Evangelist now adds his commentary, “Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.”
 - The term *Iscariot* is typically understood to be a place name, in Hebrew, meaning “man of Kerioth”
 - There are two possible locations of Kerioth:
 1. Kerioth Hezron in Judea, which is mentioned in Joshua 15:25, or
 2. Kerioth in Moab mentioned in Jeremiah 48:24.
 - If “man of Kerioth” is the proper understanding of *Iscariot* [which is probable], then Judas would be the only member of the Twelve who was not from Galilee.