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- II. Jesus Proven to be the Christ & the Son of God in His Public Ministry (1:19-12:50)
 - A. The Son of God Revealed (1:19-4:54)
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The Spirit Gives Life

Gospel of John, Part XXIII

John 6:60-71

Stuart W. Bryan

I. Why are you picking on me?

II. The Spirit Gives Life

A. Many disciples grumble (60 cf. 6:41)

B. Jesus challenges their unbelief (61-65)

Jesus has come *from heaven* to save His people; He will ascend back *to heaven* to rule over all the nations. So if they are stumbling now while He has humbled Himself to serve them, how will they possibly turn when He has been installed as their King?

It is the Spirit who gives life while fallen human reasoning, *the flesh, profits nothing*. As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 2:14, "*the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*"

And so Jesus insists on the absolute necessity of divine grace. If they are to believe in Him and understand His words, God must be at work in their lives.

C. Many disciples walk away (66)

D. Jesus challenges the Twelve (67)

E. Peter confesses their faith (68-69)

F. Jesus warns the Twelve (70-71)

III. Application

A. A Theology of Apostasy (cf. 1 Jn 2:19)

Matthew Henry writes, *Stella cadens non stella fuit*. A _____ star was never a star. *An apostate was never truly a Christian.*

"*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us*" (1 John 2:19).

- *They went out from us...*
- *But they were not of us...*
- *For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us...*

B. A Theology of Grace (cf. 2 Thes 2:13-14)

Jesus confirms again that salvation is a gift of divine grace not a result of human effort. *It is the Spirit who gives life, the flesh profits nothing.* As we confess in the Nicene Creed, the Spirit is the *Lord and _____*.

“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thes 2:13–14)

- First, note that Paul is giving thanks to _____ for their salvation.
- Second, note that this salvation *began with God*.
- Third, note that this salvation is applied to us *by the Spirit*;
- Fourth, we believed the Gospel because *He called us to it*;
- Finally, we are saved that *we might obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ...*

C. A Theology of Mystery (cf. Ps 145:3; Rom 9:19-21; 11:33-36)

John confronts us with the awesome Person of Jesus. Jesus is the Word of God in human flesh. Consequently, Jesus knows things normal human beings don't.

- 61 – *When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples grumbled...*
- 64b – *For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were...*
- 70 – *Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?*

Here's the dilemma that John's exalted view of Jesus thrusts upon us: if Jesus knew all these things ahead of time (v. 61, 64, 70), how are these folks still responsible for their actions? Further, if faith is a gift from God (65), then why does Jesus still hold them accountable for their unbelief (64, 70)? Paul raises this question in Rom 9:19ff.:

“You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?” But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, “Why have you made me like this?” Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?”

Note that Paul does not directly answer the question; he rebukes the questioner by pointing to the greatness of God. When wrestling with the tension between God's sovereignty and human responsibility, Paul insists that we must bow before the Infinite Majesty of God and confess this _____.

Herman Bavinck notes that, *“God can be apprehended; he cannot be comprehended.”* As Augustine writes:
We are speaking of God. Is it any wonder if you do not comprehend? For if you comprehend, it is not God you comprehend. Let it be a pious confession of ignorance rather than a rash profession of knowledge. To attain some slight knowledge of God is a great blessing; to comprehend him, however, is totally impossible.

IV. Conclusion