

GOSPEL OF YOHANAN

Chapter 5

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There are some passages in the Scriptures that are light and easier to read, while others are solemn and carry with them much weightiness, like the passage that we are about to see today. Beyond this seriousness we see, one more time, a God that is so willing to save man.

Here we are at a crucial point in the ministry of Yeshua, where He is accused and treated as a rebel, even as a sorcerer. Yet, in His response, He justifies Himself in front of His accusers. Here is the Word that was made flesh, the Creator of the universe, who justifies Himself in front of His creation.

How is it that the Messiah came to the point of giving explanations to these men, in order to validate His person and ministry? What we are actually seeing here is a full demonstration of the word *grace*, which is an unmerited favor or kindness. Yeshua could have put an end to all this right there and then, but His love compelled Him to proceed and respond to His accusers.

In fact, right in the midst of the dispute, He tells them He was doing these things so that they may be saved. We see this in **John 5:34**, speaking of one of His witnesses He says:
Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.

In His defense, He proceeds to present to them a series of witnesses to support His claim as Messiah. Yet, I am not sure that these men—as many of our day—realize that His responses are double edged. The sad thing is that if they reject these witnesses, which are meant to bring them to their salvation, these same witnesses will then be used for their judgment.

The Gospel of John is still with us today and the words contained therein—especially this passage—are still speaking loudly. In fact, in the Gospel of John, the word *witness*, in its many forms, outnumbers its total usage in the rest of the New Testament. Furthermore, the word *believe* is also used a lot in this Gospel; it occurs one hundred times in John—one-third of all New Testament appearances. These words are addressed to all men and women, of all time. In **John 5:18**, after being accused of breaking the Sabbath and making Himself equal with God, Jesus presents four main witnesses: John the Baptist, the miracles He performed, the Father, and the Scriptures.

In **Romans 1**, after presenting the witness of nature, Paul says that *they are without excuse*. If there is no excuse, after receiving this single witness, what excuse can we have after being given the witness of the Father Himself and of the Scriptures? Yeshua presents us these witnesses with such grace and mercy.

It was A.W. Tozer who said: “Grace is the good pleasure of God that inclines Him to bestow benefits upon the undeserving... Its use to us sinful men is to save us and make us sit together in heavenly places to demonstrate to the ages the exceeding riches of God's kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”

Before we look into the witnesses presented by the Messiah, let us examine the context of **Verse 18**. It brings us in the midst of a situation that is very tense—in fact, it was building up for a while—and John is bringing us right to the heart of the debate. Looking at the other Gospels, one realizes that it is not only because He had healed a paralytic on the Sabbath that He was accused of rebelling against the Mosaic Law; many other things had happened between **Verses 17 and 18**. Matthew, Luke and Mark speak of many other disputes concerning the Sabbath—disputes that widened the gap between the religious leaders of Israel and the Messiah of Israel.

Matthew's report of Yeshua's Sermon on the Mount clearly shows the break between the religion, which had developed at the time, and the Scriptures. The main point of the lengthy Sermon on the Mount is seen in **Matthew 5:20**

For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

That was the final blow for any remaining links between rabbinical Judaism and the Scriptures. The people were called to see the difference between religion as made by man and the Word of God. This calling is also still in effect. Many turn away from the faith, and seek the comfort of manmade religion, falling into the illusion of permanency, with the backup of history. But nothing is more permanent and enduring as the Word of God.

It is during this period of time that Yeshua was said to be working for Beelzebul—that is for Satan. It was during this gap of time between the healing of the paralytic man and **John 5:18** that the unpardonable sin was pronounced and that the parables of the Kingdom were first introduced, because the rejection was final.

The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit continued even after the destruction of the Temple in AD 70. At around AD 95, we read that a rabbi named Eliezer ben Hyrcanus of Lydda, who recognized Yeshua's miracles, said that He was a sorcerer using magic arts.

It was in this interval that John the Baptist was murdered. This is where we find ourselves when we read **John 5: 18**.

Therefore the religious leaders sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

These leaders were now planning to kill Him because they understood that He made Himself equal with God. Yeshua, then, starts his defense. What He was about to say, eventually added fuel to their anger. But that does not matter; these things needed to be said. The bullying of some religious heads could never veto the truth of Scriptures.

In fact, this section of the Gospel leads us to another period of fierce conflict as we see from **John 7-11**. Hostility toward the Messiah grew to the point that it brought the leaders to call for His death.

As these leaders started to plot for the death of the Messiah, we see that even the multitude that followed Him gradually forsook Him. They slowly realized that He was not going to let them make Him King, because He came to die first.

John 6: 15, 66

Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

Verse 66 says *disciples*, not just followers. These were studying with Him, yet they forsook Him.

This misunderstanding regarding the Messiah's First and Second Coming caused much division among those who were following Him. We later read in **John 7:12**

And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, "He is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary, He deceives the people."

It is that uncertainty that provided an opportunity for the leaders to arrest Him.

John 7:32

The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him.

But the time had not come yet, because we read in **John 7:44**

Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

Yes Yeshua came to die first, and things happened as He allowed them to happen. Speaking of His life, He later said to them in **John 10:18**

"No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

As we are about to study this passage, it is my prayer that we will all be touched, especially by the grace and mercy of our Lord.

It was Donald Grey Barnhouse who said: There have been many definitions of grace, and I thought that the best of these definitions was simply "unmerited favor," or the biblical line, "the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man"

Thus we have this acronym:

- G=God's
- R=Righteousness
- A=At
- C=Christ's
- E=Expense

Let's look at **John 5:18** again.

Therefore the religious authorities sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

Here, they brought two accusations against the Messiah of Israel. With regard to the first accusation of breaking the Sabbath, He had told them that the Father works on the Sabbath in **John 5:17**.

How was the Father working on the Sabbath? Originally, God rested from His work after the seventh day of creation. We read first in **Genesis 1:2** that the earth was "Tohu Ve Bohu" which means devastated and ruined. This disturbed God's rest, so He created order and could finally rest. But consequent to the sin of Adam and Eve, His rest was broken and He has been working ever since, seeking and saving the lost. This is why God is always at work.

The Sabbath was made for man so that he may ponder on God's grace and promise of rest, but now the Sabbath is used against the Son of God. In fact, the notion that God worked on the Sabbath, preserving and upholding the universe with His power, was a point of discussion between Rabbis. They came to the point of asking themselves why God worked on the Sabbath.

We read of four well known Rabbis who discussed this issue near the end of the first Century: Rabbi Gamaliel II, with whom Paul studied before coming to faith, Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah and Rabbi Akiba, the one who pronounced Bar Kochba as Messiah. They all concluded that even though God works constantly, He cannot rightly be accused of "breaking" the Sabbath.

This is what we read in **The Midrash Rabbah, Exodus 30:9**

"It is related of Rabban Gamaliel, R. Joshua, R. Eliezer b. 'Azariah, and R. Akiba that they went to Rome and taught there: The ways of God are not as those of man, who makes a decree enjoining others to do a thing whilst he does nothing; God not being so. There happened to be a sectarian there, who accosted them as they were going out with the taunt: 'Your words are only falsehood. Did you not say that God says a thing and fulfils it? Then why does He not observe the Sabbath?' '2 They replied: 'Wretch! Is not a man permitted to carry on the Sabbath in his own courtyard?' He replied: 'Yes.' Whereupon they said to him: 'Both the higher and lower regions are the courtyard of God, as it says, The whole earth is full of His glory (Isa. VI, 3)..."

Now, try to understand what is happening here: as they did with Jesus, they do it here with God. That is, even in their thinking, they came to the point of silencing the Word of God by their own law—God can only be God if he only abides by their laws. This is why they disregarded the last miracle and the one about the man born blind; it was done on a Sabbath.

The second accusation was that Yeshua made Himself equal with God. Instead of reminding themselves of the many passages in the Old Testament that speak of the nature of the Messiah, they rejected the whole thing. They must have fully understood this from **Verse 17**, when Yeshua

called God “*My Father*,” not “*our Father*.” If Yeshua is the Son of God, then He must be God as well.

Now see how beautifully Yeshua proceeds to answer them:

John 5: 19, 20

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.

First, Yeshua shows them His complete dependence on the Father and that His relationship with the Father is a very special and unique one. Gradually, He shows them that this relationship goes much further. Because of the love of the Father for the Son, the Father grants Him two things: to have life in Him and to have all judgments.

Having life and having the right to pronounce all judgment are God’s prerogatives; this tells us that the Son and the Father are One. They rightly understood His claim to deity, and Yeshua does not deny it, but further demonstrates it to the point of saying in **Verses 23-24:**

that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

We have seen the same dichotomy in **John 1:1**, the Word being with God and being God. Also in **Isaiah 9:6**, where a Child is born and is called Everlasting Father—Both are One.

The same dichotomy is shown when He says: *that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father.*

Let’s look at these things more closely. By having life in Him, Yeshua was then given the power of resurrection and here He takes this opportunity to speak about four different resurrections. When one speaks of the resurrection, one speaks of the afterlife and brings the person to consider his position regarding life in eternity. First, He speaks of a spiritual resurrection; the resurrection of sinners into eternal life, which was in effect right there and then.

John 5: 24-25

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.

The moment people recognize Jesus and make Him Savior and Lord of their lives, they are resurrected. That means that they can never die spiritually again and that they are saved from any judgment, as we are told in **Romans 8:1**

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

The second resurrection mentioned is the resurrection of our Lord Himself.

John 5:26

For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,

Jesus is the Firstfruit. In fact, His resurrection occurred during the feast of Firstfruits.

1Corinthians 15:20

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

He is the first one to have resurrected, never to die again. Other resurrections in the Old Testament show that those who experienced a resurrection died again. We are told in **John 1:4** that “*In Him was life.*” He died and raised Himself from the dead, because He had life in Him. We see this in the same passage of **John 10:18** when He says: “*No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.....*”

Therefore, Yeshua is the only One who can save, because He died and resurrected, never to die again. So, He is able to save you.

The third resurrection is seen in **John 5:28-29**

Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth---those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

First, there will be a resurrection of the saved one *to the resurrection of life.*

This is what we are told in **1Thessalonians 4:16**

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

The dead in Christ will be resurrected *first*, that is, before those who will be taken up at the Rapture, which will mark the third resurrection spoken of here.

Paul speaks of that sequence in **1Corinthians 15:23** when he says:

But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

The fourth resurrection He mentioned is the resurrection of the unsaved, which is for the judgment.

John 5:29

and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

This will take place after the Millennium and just before Jesus Christ ushers in the new heaven and the new earth. Those will resurrect unto condemnation.

The fact that Jesus has the authority to raise the dead is proof that He is equal with the Father. Because resurrection is something that only God could do. We are told that, at that time, they used to believe that God held the three great keys: the key to open the heavens and give rain (Deuteronomy 28:12); the key to open the womb and give conception (Genesis 30:22); and the key to open the grave and raise the dead (Ezekiel 37:13).

By speaking these Words, Yeshua spoke of His deity. Furthermore, the resurrection of the dead held an important place in rabbinical beliefs. The tenth chapter of the Mishnah, in the book of Sanhedrin, begins as follows:

Sanherdrin Chapter XI: 27-29

All Israel have a portion in the World to Come, for it is written, Thy people are all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever.

These people believe that all will resurrect and will have a portion in heaven. This goes in contradiction to Yeshua, who separates the people into two camps. He says in **John 5:29** ... *...those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

In fact this is a quotation of what we read in **Daniel 12:1-2**

.....And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.

In some religious sects of Judaism, the idea of reincarnation is now more prominent. This is an invention that is foreign to the Word of God. Others in Judaism today, such as the Reformed movement and the Reconstructionist movement, removed statements affirming resurrection from their prayer books.

They had become a community center, no more a place where God could be found. No wonder the words of Daniel and of Jesus did not mean anything to them.

And along with having life in Himself, including the power of resurrection, Yeshua also has the power to judge. This is seen in **Verse 22**

For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,

To have the power to judge was the prerogative of God only. Abraham spoke of God as the *Judge of all the earth* in **Genesis 18:25**.

Psalm 75: 7 says *But God is the Judge.....*

Furthermore, we have the title “Son of Man” in **John 5:27**. This is taken from **Daniel 7:13-14** and was a well known title for the Messiah. It is used twelve times in John’s Gospel and over eighty times in all four Gospels. The people understood its meaning at that time. There is one thing we notice about our Messiah; He spoke very openly, no matter what the cost was. His main

concern was the salvation of the people. I would love to think that many of them were touched by His Words and were saved; for the Word of God never comes back in vain, as it is says in **Isaiah 55:11**.

Before Yeshua presents them with the first witness, He starts by saying to them in **John 5:31**

If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.

The witness of only one man is not fully admissible. The Old Testament Law required the testimony of two or three witnesses. We see this in many portions of the Torah; for example, we read in **Deuteronomy 19:15**

One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.

Our Messiah met that requirement by giving three trustworthy witnesses. But many were quick to report the apparent contradiction between **John 5:31** and **8:14**.

John 5:31

If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.

John 8:14

Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true,

How can one understand that? There is a great truth here, as there usually are in such apparent contradictions. In **John 5:31** we have the witness of the humanity of Jesus, but **John 8:14** does not deal with His humanity but with His divinity. There are no higher courts than God but God Himself to serve as a witness. This is why He says here *if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true*.

In fact the context of **John 8** speaks of Yeshua as the light of the world. He says in **John 8:12** *"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*

He, being the source of light and light needs no authentication; it validates itself.

The same Pharisees of **John 5** came back to the charge and said in **John 8:13**

"You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true."

But again, what is shown here is that the humanity and deity of the Messiah are put one against the other.

The first witness is the witness of John the Baptist.

John 5:33- 35

You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.

Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.

He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.

John's witness is more than a one man witness, because he leaves a trail where all Old Testament prophets stood, with Moses at their head. In **Luke 16:16**, we read: "*The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.*"

John the Baptist represented the whole of the Law and the Prophets. He represents Moses and links the witness of history with the present. But they disregarded this witness.

The Second witness is the witness of Yeshua's works, that is His miracles.

In **5:36** we read:

But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.

No one has ever done miracles like those Yeshua performed. He healed a leper; He cast out a demon from a mute and deaf person; He restored sight to a man born blind. Even the ordinary people saw Him as a great miracle worker.

John 9:32–33

Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind.

If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.

Even Nicodemus, one of the chief rabbis of the time, said in **John 3:2**

Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.

Yet this was not enough of a witness for them.

Remember that, in the Gospel of John, the Spirit of God selected seven of Yeshua's miracles as proof that Yeshua is the Son of God so that the people would come to a saving knowledge of Him.

John 20:30-31

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;

but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

The third witness is the witness of the Father Himself.

John 5:37-38

And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.

But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.

Three times the Father spoke to confirm His love for His Son. First, at His baptism the heavens were opened; the Spirit of God was seen descending like a dove and the Father's voice was heard saying:

Matthew 3:17

And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

A second time, on the Mount of Transfiguration, the Father said:

Matthew 17:5

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

And later on in **John 12:28** when Jesus said:

"Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."

Three times the voice of the Father was heard from heaven to confirm His witness. Some might argue and say that the two last ones could hardly be seen as a witness since merely a few people were present at the Mount and only Jesus was present at the prayer. But there are two other witnesses that are not spoken of in this section that would answer this objection. There is the witness of the disciples, and that of the Holy Spirit of God. Both of these witnesses would have guided the searching heart to know these things.

The witness of the disciples is seen in **John 15:27**.

And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

These disciples were eyewitnesses of these things and they will be called to testify as well. The whole Gospel of Luke was written from these eyewitnesses. This book starts by saying:

Luke 1:2

.....those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us,

The content of this witness was the Sonship of the Messiah, who had come to be the Savior of the world as John later said in **1 John 4:14**

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.

The other witness, not spoken of here, is that of the Holy Spirit. This is an ongoing witness of Him. Yeshua said in **John 16:8**

And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

It is the Spirit that would convey all these facts and work them in the hearts of man.

The last witness mentioned in this section of John is the witness of The Scriptures. See what Yeshua says here in **John 5:39**

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

In referring to the testimony of the Scriptures, He was speaking of the Old Testament with all the prophecies and types contained therein. There are many types of Yeshua in the Old Testament. For example, Aaron the High Priest was a type of the Messiah, in that he could enter the Holy of Holies only one day a year. Other types are found in:

- The Brazen serpent (**Numbers 21**), where the people were healed instantly.
- The sacrifices in the temple, whose blood covered the sins of the Israelites.
- Isaac who was to be sacrificed by his father.
- Moses who fulfilled the function of priest, king and prophet.
- Moses who, being from the tribe of Judah, wore the High Priest garments when the Ark of the Covenant was entering Jerusalem.
- Joseph who was rejected by his brothers yet became not only their savior but that of other nations who came to him for bread.
- The Paschal Lamb whose blood saved Israel from the judgment.
- The veil of the tabernacle that was torn at His death.

What about the hundreds of prophecies concerning His birth, His ministry, His death, His resurrection and His glorification? They are seen throughout the whole of the Old Testament.

This is why Jesus tells them in **John 5:46-47**

*For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me
But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"*

The irony is that the very book that they own and thought they knew is the one that speaks of the One they reject. So were these people, and many today, who hope to attain eternal life by the observance of the law; but it is this very law that testifies of Yeshua and that will judge them.

John 5:45

Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you----Moses, in whom you trust.

They take refuge in Moses but Moses, like John the Baptist, points to the Messiah.

We also see that it is possible to study and search the Word of God without understanding it. These people were diligent; Yeshua even recognizes that they *search the Scriptures*.

This is not new in history; God had complained of this in **Jeremiah 2:8**, where we read:

The priests did not say, 'Where is the LORD?' And those who handle the law did not know Me; The rulers also transgressed against Me; The prophets prophesied by Baal, And walked after things that do not profit.

But the sad thing is that one can learn and search the Bible without attaining any worthwhile knowledge. Like Paul said in **2Timothy 3:7**

always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

But how is this possible? Why didn't the Word of God work in their hearts?

John 5:38, 40

But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

He is the key that opens up the access to God. It is not knowledge that you need, even though that definitely helps, but it is willingness to accept the Lord. Your lack of willingness to accept Him stops the salvation offer.

What does not recognizing Yeshua signify? See **John 5:42**

But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.

Accepting or refusing Jesus as the Messiah is not a question of seeing the facts; it is a question of love. To refuse Yeshua is to refuse the love of God. Again, the irony is that the very Scriptures that they used to defend their religion would one day bear witness against them.

There is something else that Yeshua says here about those who reject Him—something that has an eschatological implication. See what He says in **John 5:43**

I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.

Who is this “other” that Yeshua is speaking about here? This is a prophecy whose final fulfillment will be reached with the False Prophet of the Tribulation times; the one who will come at the end, in his own name and will be accepted by Israel. This is also a prophecy referring to the many false messiahs that appeared throughout history, starting at the time of Yeshua.

God has spoken of this “other” false shepherd in **Zechariah**. Chapter 11 of Zechariah speaks of the time preceding the Second Coming of the Messiah. Chapter 12 speaks of the Day of the Lord and it is in Zechariah 12:10 where Israel will finally recognize the One whom they have pierced.

God asks Zechariah to symbolically stand for Him as the good shepherd in **Zechariah 11**. In **verse 4**, we read:

Thus says the LORD my God, "Feed the flock for slaughter,

Zechariah carried out the drama by symbolically depicting God asking those He came to shepherd what they felt He was worth to them. In a mocking response, the leaders offered thirty pieces of silver, which was the amount of compensation paid for a slave gored by an ox.

Exodus 21:32

If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

What we see is that the Good Shepherd was sold for thirty pieces of silver. It is the price of a

dead slave. This is how much they valued the Messiah.

Zechariah deals with the attitude of the religious leaders toward the Good Shepherd. It would have been better if they offered him nothing than to pay this amount. This was fulfilled when the leadership of Israel took out thirty pieces of silver and paid it to Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus. They deliberately chose thirty pieces of silver as the price to show their contempt for Jesus' claim to be the Messiah.

Matthew 26:14–16

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.

So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

Because the true Shepherd was rejected, the Lord then sends them a false one. Both Zechariah and John follow the same sequence.

The false shepherd is spoken of in **Zechariah 11:15-17**

And the LORD said to me, "Next, take for yourself the implements of a foolish shepherd.

For indeed I will raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in pieces.

Woe to the worthless shepherd, Who leaves the flock! A sword shall be against his arm And against his right eye; His arm shall completely wither, And his right eye shall be totally blinded."

In **verse 15**, we have the character of this shepherd; he is *foolish*. In **verse 16**, we see his works; as a false shepherd, he will not care for the flock but seek his own. In **verse 17**, we are told of his punishment; he shall completely wither—this will happen at the Second Coming of the Messiah.

This is the *other* spoken of in **John**, but before it reaches its fulfillment in the **book of Revelation**, this prophecy will be realized in the life of Israel.

It is only at the First Coming of Yeshua, in the first century, that a Messianic interest was in the heart of people. There was then an upsurge of Messianic expectation. Feinberg, a Messianic commentator, remarked that “This was undoubtedly the work of God in getting His people ready to receive their Messiah, and King.”

We understand that they also had the prophecy of Daniel, who prophesied of the exact coming of the Messiah. After they rejected Yeshua, the Israelites were left with nostalgia of better days, and an emptiness left by their distancing from the word of God; this brought them to be easy prey for the many pseudo-messiahs that followed this period of time. Of those we hear of in AD 132 there was Bar Kokbah who brought much havoc and many deaths in Israel. This man who was so named by a yet revered rabbi – rabbi Akivah –who is, today, highly respected in modern Judaism. Other false messiahs and false prophets followed. In 720, for instance, there was one called Serene; in 750 another called Obayah Abu-iss of Isfahan. Another in 1147, called David

Akrit who waged a suicidal war against the Persians; he intended to lead an army to Jerusalem. Another is Solomon Molcho who was burnt at Mantua by the inquisition, in 1530. In the mid-1600s, we hear of one whose name is Shabbetai Zevi who succeeded in forming one of the largest messianic movements; to add insult to injury, this one finally converted to Islam. Imagine the deception of the people. These pseudo-messiahs even reached our times. A few years ago many in the Lubavitch movement declared their chief rabbi, Menahem Shneerson and are waiting for his resurrection. This belief bluntly goes against the Word of God. Among the many other things, this rabbi was not born in Bethlehem but in Nikolaev, Russia and this disqualifies him of being the Messiah (Micah 5:1-2).

But the last false messiah is yet to come. In **Revelation 13:11**, we read:

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.

And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

In contrast with the first beast, who came “out of the sea” (Revelation 13:1), the second beast came out of the earth, or the land—the land of Israel. He has two horns, like a lamb, but he is not a lamb. He is the one who will promote the antichrist and bring many of Israel to trust the antichrist—he is the “other.” As wise and smart as this man and his predecessors were, God says of them in **Zechariah 11** that they were, nevertheless, foolish.

We saw the grace of God in His response to His accusers, and we can learn from His humility. The life and death of Yeshua are a standing rebuke to every form of pride. Like someone has written, it rebukes the:

Pride of birth: "Is not this the carpenter's son?" (Matthew 13:55)

Pride of wealth: "The Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Matthew 8:20)

Pride of personal appearance: "He hath no form or comeliness." (Isaiah 53:2)

Pride of reputation: "Made himself of no reputation." (Phil. 2:7)

Pride of superiority: "I am...as he that serves." (Luke 22:27)

Pride of ability: "I can of mine own self do nothing." (John 5:30)

Pride of will: "I seek not mine own will." (John 5:30)

Pride of resentment: "Father, forgive them." (Luke 23:34)