

That You Might Believe

◆ A STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN ◆



"These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in His name." John 20:31

A 'Tuesday Night at the Crescent' Series

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TUESDAY, 15TH MARCH, 1994

Subject: 'Exposing Legalism' (John 5:1-18)

1. The structure of John 5 and 6:

- a) Chapter 5 is about Christ: the source of life (5:26).
- b) Chapter 6 is about Christ: the means of life (6:35).

2. Background to this section: The law of the Sabbath:

- a) It was a reminder that God is the source of creation and life (Ex. 20:8-11) and of redemption (Deut. 5:12-15).
- b) It was an invitation to rest in His finished work (Ex. 20:11) and his infinite power (Deut. 5:15).

3. The main teaching of this passage:

- a) The man's problem: he had no strength in himself.
- b) The man's difficulty: his weakness made him incapable of using the means for his cure.
- c) The man's mistake: supposing that the means was indispensable (v7).
- d) The man's discovery: a man who was the source of life and healing (v12 cr. vs17-19).

4. Exposing legalism which denies the grace of God, exalts self and promotes pride:

- a) The Jews perverted the Sabbath and made it into a meritorious religious work through which they hoped to obtain eternal life. They were classic legalists, adding their own traditions to God's Word and judging people by them. They added at least 39 categories of their own to the laws of the Sabbath!
- b) They treated the Bible as if it were a source of life instead of a means to lead a person to the source (v39).
- c) They treated Christ as if he were only a 'means' and not the source (v16-18).
- d) We must oppose legalism with truth (Gal. 2:14, 4:16) and conviction (Gal. 2:11-14) and overcome it with grace.

"Here is an example of an extra Sabbath law, added by the legalists: If a man removed his finger-nails by means of his nails or his teeth, and so, too if (he pulled out) the hair of his head, or his moustache or his beard; and so, too if a woman dressed her hair ... such a one (rabbi) Eliezer declares liable (to a Sin offering) (Shab. 10:6). So much for biting your nails or fixing your hair on the way to the synagogue!"