

10292U

MANITOULIN BIBLE SCHOOL - 2003

THE FOUR FACES OF CHRIST IN THE GOSPELS

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Study #5: Four Faces and Four Commissions

Good morning brethren and sisters. Good morning! it's nice to be here! it is morning, yes, it's nice to be confirmed on these things!

This morning then, we're going to look at the subject of four faces and four commissions. We're going to start by coming firstly, if you would, to 2 Corinthians 3; in 2 Corinthians 3 at the end of the chapter the apostle says this concerning our relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ in verse 17. 'Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord'. Now what we're being told here, b&s, is that in contrast with the unconverted, enslaved and veiled Israel, all those in Christ have the liberty of beholding His face in the gospels. That unlike the Jews, whose look or whose gaze was veiled, that we are able to gaze in an unobstructed way into the face of our Lord Jesus Christ and what Corinthians promises us in verses 17 and 18 is that as we begin to look upon the face of Christ, we're changed. We begin to be transformed, in fact, we begin to be transfigured into the same image of the face that we're looking on. You'll probably know that in James 1, you know how there was reference to the man who looks at his own natural face in the mirror and goes away unchanged. But says James, 'whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, this man shall be blessed in his deed; and what doth man see when they look into the perfect law of liberty? but the face of our Lord Jesus Christ. So what Corinthians is saying is, that we're privileged to be able to gaze upon the face of Christ in the gospels, and that as we do so we will be changed and we will continue to be changed, so we become like Him. The wonderful thing, b&s, about the reality of this is, that the more we gaze upon the face of Christ in the gospels, the more we will become like Him! That's why the gospels then are so important, aren't they? in developing the spirit and the character of Christ in our lives, is that as we gaze upon the face of Christ we will become more like Him. But the thing is, you see, what we've discovered is, there isn't just one face to look upon! there's 4 of them and we've got to look at all four and as we look upon all four, b&s, we will begin to manifest **all four faces in our lives.** That's the objective! changing from glory to glory to become like Him, to be transferred and transfigured into the very image of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now in keeping therefore, with that idea, you see, the fact that there are 4 faces, we

ought not to be surprised therefore, that when we come to the gospel records, what we're going to do now in our studies is to look at the 4 closing commissions that our Lord gives to the disciples. We're going to find that in each of the gospels, the commission that our Lord gave to the disciples is totally unique to the face of that gospel. If up to this point of time, b&s, you may have been uncertain about the faces we've seen thus far, I hope that as we look at the commissions this morning (because this is now the Lord instructing His disciples to go forth and to **manifest His face.**) So whatever the Lord might commission His disciples to do will be very much related to the face that He intends them to reveal. I believe, that each of the gospels is totally unique in terms of that commission that the Lord grants unto His disciples.

Now where do we go for marking all this into our handbooks today? Well, what we need to do is come back firstly to page 7, because you'll notice that there was a gap there and the gap on page 7 is to do with the commission and the close of the gospel of Matthew. So against that first little dot at the top of the page you can write the reference Matthew 28 verses 16 to 20 because that's the conclusion of the gospel of Matthew. In fact, alongside each of those verse references, you can now write 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 and the space is provided for us to walk our way through these closing verses of the gospel of Matthew, as we try and examine the spirit of the commission that Jesus Christ gives to His disciples that they might manifest Him in this particular gospel.

So here we are in Matthew! So Matthew 28 verse 16 says, 'Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them'. They went away into Galilee, and do you know, b&s, that they'd been told 3 times to go to Galilee in this gospel. In chapter 26 verse 32, in chapter 28 verse 7, and now in chapter 28 verse 10, three separate occasions they have been instructed to go to Galilee. Now why does Matthew lay such stress upon the fact that the disciples were to go to Galilee, that they might see the Lord there? Well, I believe, that this is an allusion to Isaiah 9 verses 1 and 2 and 6 and 7, because Isaiah had said that in the land of Galilee, the Galilee of the nations, the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light and upon them that dwell in the shadow of death upon them the light hath shined. For unto us a child is born, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and of the increase of His government there shall be no end; upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom'. A light has shined in Galilee, says Isaiah 9 and it was the light of the king of David's throne, and Jesus says on three occasions in Matthew, I want you to meet me in Galilee, in Galilee, in Galilee. Because Isaiah 9 had said, 'Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be **no end**, then there will be a commission now given to **all nations** in Matthew 28 consistent with the scope and the extent of the government of the King.

Not only just to Galilee were they to go, verse 16, but specifically it says, they were to go into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them', a particular mountain. Do you know that every mention of Christ and a mountain in Matthew's gospel, has got something to do with His kingship. Every mention of Christ and a mountain in this

gospel has something to do with His kingship; in chapter 5 verse 1, He goes up on a mountain and gives the policy speech of the King. In chapter 14 verse 23, He goes into a mountain to make prayer after the people have tried to make Him a king. In chapter 15 verse 29, the Gentiles meet the King of Israel and they feel His power to heal. In chapter 17 verse 1, Jesus ascends into a mountain and is transfigured into the **royal majesty of His kingdom**; in chapter 24 verse 3, Jesus stands on a mountain and predicts not just the fall of Jerusalem, but His final coming as the King to separate the sheep from the goats; and now in chapter 28 verse 16, they will go to a mountain and He will give instructions concerning His future kingdom. **The King and the mountain** always related in the gospel of Matthew. Of course, I think there's a reason for that, because do you remember what the psalm said, Psalm 2? 'Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion', oh yes, the King is going to be upon a mountain, was the promise of the psalmist, so mountains are special in the gospel of the King.

Not just any mountain but the mountain, says verse 16, where Jesus **had appointed them**'. The Diaglott translation says, 'to the mountain where Jesus had ordered them'; the RSV says, 'to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them'. You see, He had **ordered them**, you must go to that mountain! now who gives orders, b&s, and directions in this way that others should obey? **but the King!** isn't that the spirit of a King that He would order His disciples as to where they should go and to be ready for Him at the appointed time.

So verse 17 says that , 'when they saw Him, they **worshipped Him**', so here's one of those key words, remember, in Matthew's gospel, proskuneo (4352), 'to prostrate oneself in homage'; who among men is worshipped in this way? and the answer is, why! the King. Zechariah 14 verse 16 says, 'that it shall come to pass, that everyone that is left of the nation, shall come up from year to year to **worship the King and keep the feast of Tabernacles**'. Psalm 2, the very psalm that we've made allusion to already, or that rather Matthew makes allusion to; Psalm 2, of course, says in verse 6 followed by verse 12, 'that the people of the earth will need to kiss the Son and bow before Him and render homage' (as the word means in the Hebrew), they're going to worship the King. Well, the disciples worshipped the Lord in verse 17 of Matthew because He is their King.

Verse 18 says, 'That Jesus came and spoke unto them and said, **'All power is given unto Me**, in heaven and earth'. All power, all 'exousia' (1849), all authority, b&s. Now **authority**, what office is notably associated with the exercise of authority and power? but the King!

'All power is given unto Me', says Christ; ah, do you know where that phrase 'given unto me' comes from? Well, hold your hand in Matthew 28; you see, that's Daniel 7. In Daniel 7, do you remember the promise of the Son of man being brought near unto the Ancient of days; 'all power in heaven and earth is given unto Me', says Christ, and I think that phrase '**given unto me**', comes directly from Daniel 7; it says there in verse 13, 'I saw in the night visions and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of days and they brought Him near before Him. And

there **was given Him**', ah there it is, 'there was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and **His Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed**'. So when the Lord said to His disciples, in Matthew 28 verse 18, 'all power is given unto Me', I think He was alluding to that which was given to the King in Daniel 7.

Verse 19 of Matthew 28 says, 'Go ye therefore', and therefore obviously means, (well, because I am the King and because I have the authority) 'go ye therefore and teach **all nations**'. You see, what had Daniel said about the extent of the kingdom? it said that 'His dominion is an everlasting dominion that **all people, nations and languages should serve Him**'. All people says Daniel, and so Christ says now, 'go forth and teach **all nations**'; that's from Daniel, you see. The kingdom of this King will be universal in its scope. 'And they are to be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit', and the only name that it can be, b&s, is the **royal name of Yahweh Himself**, who is the King of Kings of the heavens. All the nations of the earth are going to be baptized, brought in finally into the royal name of the Majesty of our God, so we all become a royal kingdom in the end. Go and teach them that, says Christ, to be brought into the name of My Father!

Then verse 20 says, 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I **have commanded** you;' who issues commands? why would He use the word 'commanded'? verse 20, because this is the language of a King, and the point of verse 20 is that the teaching of the King is, b&s, that citizenship in His kingdom is predicated on the observance of the King's laws. If you want to be a member of the kingdom, says Christ, then you must obey the King's laws! and I give them as a command, says Christ.

So now what would you say is the spirit of the commission of Christ to His disciples in Matthew 28? You see, to me the spirit of those verses is, **this is the King designate sending forth His ambassadors, to instruct the world in the laws of the King, that they all might become His subjects**. Is that how you read Matthew 28? that's how I see it, b&s, I can see the face of the King there; this is the King sending forth His ambassadors, is it not? The very terms and the language is all consistent with that idea; this is the face of the lion - Jesus says, 'go forth and show people the face of the lion'! Isn't that what He says in Matthew 28?

So let's now come to a different part of the book just for exercise, and now I'm going to ask you to come to page 27 and we're going to look at the face of the lion and just extract then a couple of exhortations before we move on. Now I've made room for three lessons from each gospel and I'm only going to give you two, because it's only fair and right and proper that I leave you space to write down one of the exhortations that impresses you the most, which, of course, might be different to what impresses me; so I'm going to give you two but leave space for you to write something else about the face of the lion and what you might think. So here are two lessons then, that we extract from the Lord's commission to His disciples as they go forth to show the face of the lion in

Matthew's gospel.

So here's the first lesson: **Learning to live the commandments!** That's got to be a lesson I think, out of Matthew's gospel, learning to live the commandments. You see, b&s, what Christ says is, 'go and teach all nations, teaching them to **observe** all things whatsoever I have commanded you'. Now how can we do that, b&s, unless we know the commandments of Christ. So I think a very practical idea, by the way, but do you know where the commandments of Christ are to be found in our literature? where do the commandments of Christ appear in Christadelphian literature? They're in the Bible Companion, and they're found in most ecclesial constitutions together with the Statement of Faith and they're also found in the Ecclesial Guide by brother Robert Roberts, so at least three things that most Christadelphian households will have copies of, in which are the commandments of Christ. Sometimes the lists are about 50 and sometimes the lists are about 100, so how are we ever going to teach **all the people**, b&s, unless we know them for ourselves? So how are we to know them? well, here's a suggestion! You right out the first commandment of the commandments of Christ in **LARGE LETTERS** on 3 pieces of paper (you'll notice by the way, that I do like the number **3**, I do think 3's a special number, you see. Somehow we seem to handle 3's very comfortably; it's a divine number!) So you write out the first commandment 3 times, and you put the first copy on your bedroom door, on the inside of the bedroom door, so that when you walk out each morning, you think, 'ah, there's the commandment of Christ!' (for this week you see) and you put the second piece of paper over top of your bed, so that when you come to your bed at night, you think to yourself, 'ah, there's the commandment of Christ for this week; and you put the third piece of paper, b&s, on the mirror, so that when you look into the mirror, instead of seeing your own natural face, you begin to see the face of Christ! which after all, is the one we want to see in the mirror, if we're going to change to be like Him. Then at the end of one week, b&s, without forgetting the first commandment, you take those down and write down the second on three pieces of paper and you put the second up, and if we did that for a year or two years, we would have done all the commandments of Christ. However are we going to be the ambassadors of the King, b&s, unless we learn His commandments? It isn't just learning them, b&s, because you see what Matthew says in chapter 28 verse 20, 'teaching them to **observe all things**'. How can we possibly ask other people to observe the King's commandments, until we've learnt to observe them ourselves. So learning to live the commandments, has to be a lesson, do you think not, b&s? that comes from the face of the lion, if we're going to be the King's ambassadors. If we did just that one thing, we would begin to manifest the face of the lion.

Well, here's another lesson from Matthew's gospel, and here's the second one! **Learning to practice true mercy.** Do you remember that that was one of the great themes of this gospel? that the mark of a great king is that he's merciful to others, even those who have no claim really on His care! We've got to learn about mercy, we've got to learn why mercy rejoices against judgment? why does mercy have to be married together with truth? We have to understand why the King would show mercy and when the King would show mercy. We have to understand that mercy still has objectives, that

mercy is not undiscriminating, that even the mercy of God leads to certain things which the Father desires. How best might we show the mercy of the King in our lives? That's part of the face of the lion, if we want to be like the King then we've got to live like the King and therefore, maybe one of the most excellent studies we could do, is just a simple study of the theme of mercy, and why, which gospel do you think? the gospel of Matthew - the face of the perfect King who shows that tender mercy to others! Isn't that how we'll make the face of the lion live in our lives? None of these things are difficult, b&s, are they? in terms of extracting wonderful and helpful things from the gospels.

Well now, what it is interesting about all this is, that the commission that Christ gives to His disciples in the gospel of Mark, is nothing like Matthew at all. I think we tend to think, ah, yes, the Lord gave a commission to the disciples at the end of the gospels, but I'll tell you what, b&s, when you come and look at them carefully, you'll find that they're utterly different in their style and in their scope. So come then to the gospel of Mark, and not just to the gospel of Mark but also to page 13 on your handbook, because now we're actually going to look at the close of the second gospel and we need to be on the right page. So it's page 13 of the handbook and at the top of the page, the reference to write is **Mark 16 verses 15 to 20.**

So now we've got the commission and the close of the gospel of Mark. The way we're going to look at it, by the way, in terms of the verse numbers, we're going to look at verse 15, verse 16, verses 17 and 18 bracketed together and then verse 19 and verse 20, which should fit comfortably into that little sequence on that page. So now we've got Mark's commission, and we're not in the face of the lion anymore, we're in the face of the perfect servant, aren't we? the face of the ox. Is the commission the same? and the answer is most certainly not, b&s. So let's pick up the record in verse 14, it says, 'After He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat (they reclined together at meat) and upbraided them'. I think that one of the reasons why He upbraided them, b&s, is because servants don't sit; they were reclining at rest, and the Lord upbraided them because what He's about to tell them to do, is that they had a work to do! This is the gospel of labour! and the gospel of service. There was no time to sit back and recline and eat meals together; the Lord wants to send them forth as the **ox**, straining at the yoke to perform His service.

So this is what He says, verse 15, 'He said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.' So you see, this was the work of the servant! If you go back to chapter 1 verse 38 that was the work of the servant from the very beginning of the gospel, He went forth to preach! 'He said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also for therefore came I forth'. Now the servants, well, Christ isn't the Servant anymore at the end of the gospel, because He's risen, isn't He? He's now the **Master**. Now the disciples are going to be the servants, so now He's going to instruct them to take up His labours. Just as the servant went about doing good in this gospel, so now He's going to ask His disciples to take up the **driving energy and zeal** that He showed in His service, to actually perform that on His behalf. They are now to be the servants of this gospel, they're to show the face of the ox in their labours.

Actually it's an interesting thing (I'll just give you these references), this is the gospel and they're to go and preach; now just look at these references later on, this is the gospel of Mark: chapter 1:15; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9; 16:15.

These are the references in the gospel of Mark to 'go and preach the gospel', well, presumably it's the gospel of this particular face? If you look at those passages in this gospel about the gospel, b&s, you'll find that it's invariably related to service and sacrifice. The very notion of the gospel is invariably related to service and to sacrifice; 'go and preach the gospel of service', that's exactly the gospel of this book.

Go and preach it, He says, to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned', verse 16. Now this is really interesting! Come back because I just want to show you a couple of places where that word 'condemned' (2632) is found in this gospel. In chapter 10 verse 33, 'he that believeth not shall be condemned' says Christ, well, have a look at that same word elsewhere in the gospel; in chapter 10 verse 33, Jesus says, 'Behold, we go to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall **condemn** Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles'. See that word, 'they shall condemn Him to death, it's the same word, so it's used in chapter 10 verse 33 about the sacrificial death of Christ. Now come to chapter 14 and verse 64, here's the same word again; 'They said you have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? and they **all condemned Him to death**'. So the word 'condemned' as it's been used in this gospel is about the sacrificial death of Christ. Now come back to chapter 16 verse 16, you see, I think what the Lord is saying in verse 16 is this, he that believeth, he that believeth not, I think what He is teaching His disciples is that if they accepted their commission, then they would be committed to living the same sacrificial life as He. But if they rejected their mission, then they would suffer the same sacrificial death as He. Shall I say that again? That if they accepted their commission then they would be committed to living the same sacrificial life as He, the gospel of the servant. But if they rejected their mission, then they would experience the same sacrificial death as He', he that believeth not shall be condemned. So He says, I want you to take up the spirit now, the spirit of the servant!.

So verse 17 says (now look at this, verses 17and 18), 'These signs shall follow them that believe'; when we were at school we were told that a verb was a 'doing word', do you remember that? a verb was a 'doing word', it's a word of activity and labour; I want you to see all the doing words in verses 17 and 18, because this is the gospel of the servant. 'These signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they **cast out** devils; they shall **speak** with new tongues; They shall **take up** serpents; if they **drink** any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall **lay hands** on the sick', you see, these are all the signs of the activities of service in the truth. Did you notice that? cast out, speak, take up, drink, lay hands, they're all 'doing' words because this is the gospel of the ox. Go out and get cracking! says Christ, you're the servants now! You must take up the labours of the servant, and therefore, you **will be full** of activity, and the signs that would follow them would be for the hearers, but would, of course, accompany the

preachers to authenticate the message. And all this was to be done, verse 17, **in My name**, the name of the Servant. The power of the ox to serve would be seen now in the transformed life of the disciples, who had seen the face of the ox and had seen His service and His sacrifice, and were now prepared to manifest that in their own lives. 'Go forth' He says.

So verse 19 says, 'So then after the Lord had spoken', after the Lord had spoken, oh! is that 'kurios'? Yes, that's 'kurios' because you see, He's resurrected now, He's not the servant any longer in that sense, is He? He's the Master now, 'the kurios'. So after the Lord had spoken unto them, 'He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God'. You know, b&s, I think that in that 19th verse, there was really an indication to the disciples of the promise of Isaiah 52 verse 13, because in one of the great Servant songs, Isaiah had said this, 'Behold, My servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high'. The promise was, that if the servants were faithful that they would eventually be rewarded with exaltation to the Father's side. 'My servant shall prosper and be exalted', well, says Christ, if you take up My spirit as the servant, then you also will ascend to the Father, like as I am now. Your faithful service will be rewarded if you follow Me! So they are now the servants! and He instructs His servants to go forth in the labours and business and the activity of the truth.

So verse 20 says, '**And they went forth** and preached **everywhere, the Lord working with them**', oh, do you see that word in verse 20, you see, even though He's the Master, His spirit of ministration continued even after He ascension to heaven. He's still **working**, b&s, because well, He's still sharing the face of the ox Himself. He worked with them, and they rushed out and manifested the energy and zeal of the servant by preaching everywhere and filling their lives with the activities of service in the truth. Don't you think that's the spirit of service in the truth? You see, this is not a King instructing His ambassadors, is it? these closing verses of Mark's gospel. These are servants sent forth to do their Master's bidding and in so doing to take up the spirit and the face of the ox.

So let's look at a couple of exhortations, shall we? out of the face of the ox then. So we've got to go back to page 28, so we can write our lessons in. So what do we learn then from the face of the ox that we might take away? Well, I think one of the first things is **learning to serve with zeal!** One of the tremendous things that impresses you when you read the gospel of Mark is the incredible zeal, the energy of the Servant in that gospel. We need to be busy in ecclesial service, b&s, so here's the challenge! You need to be able to write down 3 specific labours that you or I perform in the service of the truth, both in and for our ecclesia. Well, of course, it has to be 3 things, doesn't it? 3 things that you perform in the service of the truth in your particular field of ecclesial endeavour. You see, there are far too many people in ecclesial life doing nothing; well, one of the first things about ecclesial life, I think, b&s, is that we need to think what do we do and what can we do, and what ought we to do? We can't go through life never figuring out what our role is in ecclesial life. You need to define what it is and do it and we need to do it with zeal and with energy and with enthusiasm, so we take up the spirit

of the Servant of this gospel.

The second one is **learning to give an offering**. You see, ultimately the service of the ox in Mark's gospel leads to sacrifice, doesn't it? Service is a sacrifice, now sacrifice means, b&s, that we're going to feel the pain of it from time to time, that our labours in the truth will cause us to feel the pain of our endeavour. You know, one of the things that impresses me about Mark's gospel, remember, is that amazing cry on the cross; that a man upon the cross who cannot exhale, who has no breath, no wind, no air in Him, as if the Lord pulled Himself up for one final moment and He cried with a great cry. You see, He wasn't just going to die, b&s, even in His death He was going to give one final labour to the Father. He **gave up His spirit**, it didn't just go! He gave it, and He cried with a loud voice, and the centurion was mightily impressed by that, he had never seen that in his life before, he said, 'truly this man was the Son of God', because you see, Christ's life ended with an offering so powerful that even at that point of asphyxiation, He managed somehow to cry to His God with a loud voice. So we actually need to take up the spirit of service and to be **consumed in our labours**.

What does it mean to be consumed in our labours? so that what we do for the truth is actually an 'offering' after the manner of our Lord Jesus Christ in the face of the ox. You know, b&s, I think there's lots of stuff that could be done better in the truth; there are chairmen who have never gathered their thoughts to create the tone and spirit that the meeting needs, and therefore, it never does develop that tone and spirit. There are readers who stand up and who either stumble over words which sometimes happens to all of us, but more importantly, fail utterly to give the sense and meaning of the passage, because they've never even bothered to read it before they stood up to give the reading. They should have practised it several times, so the Word comes alive with the reading. Organists who haven't thought about the spirit of the day and perhaps what voluntaries they will choose to open and close the meeting, and for that matter, b&s, congregations who haven't learned to sit quietly through the voluntaries and realize it's part of the spiritual activity of our ecclesia. It's not the sign to zip up our bibles and pack our bags! Doorkeepers who fail to turn up on time, and who forget to lock up afterwards. Suppers that don't get prepared, classes that get read out of books because the brother couldn't actually get around to doing anything. There are lots of things in our labours, b&s, that are not done as an offering to Yahweh, and we've got to learn the face of the ox, we've got to go beyond what we sometimes have done, so that what we give in our service to the truth, is truly an offering to the Father and acceptable to Him! That's the face of the ox, is it not? and I think the commission of Mark's gospel is totally different to the commission of Matthew's; and then, what might you think of the closing commission then of Luke's gospel?

Well, it's not the same as these two, so we need to come now to Luke chapter 24 and page 19 of the handbook. Just as in Matthew's gospel we see a King sending forth His ambassadors, and in Mark's commission we see a Master sending forth His servants, who might we see in the commission and close of the gospel of Luke? Well, just have a look, b&s, (by the way, the passage you need to write at the top is Luke 24 verses 49 to

53.) So those verses will follow down in sequence 49 to 53. So just taking up the spirit before that, it says in verse 44, 'These are the words that I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets and in the psalms, concerning Me. He opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures'. By the way, who was it in Israel who was suppose to open up the scriptures so that people might understand? Malachi 2 verse 7 says, 'The priests' lips should keep knowledge and they that seek the law should seek the law at his mouth'. So Christ, of course, as that excellent priestly teacher was able to open up the scriptures so that His disciples might understand.

So now we come to verse 49, 'And behold, He says, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be **endued** with power from on high'. **Endued**, now that word 'endued' in the Greek (1746), is the word 'endure', so not difficult to guess where the English comes from, it's 'enduo', but do you know what the Greek word means? b&s, it actually means 'to invest with clothing, to array in clothing'. Now what's interesting about that is, if you can hold your hand in Luke 24, let me just show you a couple of places in the Old Testament where that word is used, it's the very same word in the Septuagint translation found in Exodus 29 about clothing, and not just any clothing! b&s, but about the clothing of a particular group of people in Israel. Who do you think that might be? who were to be endued with their clothing, arrayed or invested with their special clothes. Exodus 29 verse 5 says, 'Thou shalt take the garments and clothe them 'enduo' upon Aaron', see that? It's the same word in verse 8, thou shalt bring his sons and put clothing upon them'. It's the same word in verse 30, 'the son of the high priest shall put on the holy garments', the words 'put on' in verse 30 is 'enduo' to be clothed; it's the same word in Leviticus 8 verse 13 where it says, 'Moses brought Aaron's sons and invested their clothing upon them'. This is the word used in the Old Testament, b&s, for the very investiture of the priests with their holy garments; so when Jesus says in Luke 24 verse 49, 'tarry ye until ye be **clothed upon** with power from on high'; what He was saying is that the Holy Spirit would both **anoint them and clothe them** for their priestly office to come.

Now see what Luke says in verse 50, 'And He lead them out as far as to Bethany; and He lifted up His hands and blessed them'. Well, now, who lifts up hands to bless the congregation, b&s? See Psalm 134 verse 2 says, 'lift up your hands in the sanctuary and bless Yahweh' and it's a reference to the priests, in fact, I think that Luke 24 verse 50 is actually based upon the consecration ceremony of Aaron. I'll give the reference and then I'll just read it out, it's Leviticus 9 verses 22 to 24, and this is what it says at the time of the consecration of Aaron, just listen to these words. 'And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people and blessed them, and came down from the offering of the sin offering', that's the very moment that Aaron was consecrated as high priest. Luke 24 verse 50 says that the Lord lifts up His hands to bless His disciples; is that a priest, b&s? Oh, yes, I think so! but on this occasion in Luke 24, He wasn't blessing the people, was He? Who's He blessing in Luke 24? and the answer is, **He's blessing His sons, His spiritual sons, who are going to manifest the face of the man or the priest, after He's gone!**

And He was going to go, He certainly was going to go and do you know why? because Luke 24 verse 51 says, 'that it came to pass, as He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven'. Do you know why the Lord was carried up into heaven? in Luke 24 verse 51, b&s. Because as the high priest, He was about to ascend into the one place where no other priest could go; He was about to go into the Most Holy Place, even heaven itself. Isn't that the force of Hebrews 9 verse 24 which says, 'For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us!' You see, Luke 24 and verse 51 is about the ascension of our high priest into the Most Holy Place.

Verse 52 says, 'And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.' Do you see in verse 53 where it says they were continually in the temple, see that word '**continually**'(1275), that's the same Greek word translated in Hebrews 9 and verse 6 as follows, 'Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went **always** into the first tabernacle'; the priests went always, it's the same word, the priests went continually into the temple. Why have we got a group of disciples in Luke 24 verse 53 that are continually in the temple, b&s? Well, the answer comes back, 'where else would a company of priests be found? as they awaited their consecration to office by the anointing oil of the Spirit! and I believe, what we're being told as the gospel of Luke comes to a close, **is that before the house of Aaron had their office terminated in AD.70, another priesthood, that of the sons of Zadok, had already been consecrated to office and had gone forth**. The commission of Luke's gospel and the close of this gospel, b&s, this is not the King, and it's not the Master, is it? it's the priest, the High Priest and He's sending forth His sons for priestly ministration. Can you see that face in that commission? I can, b&s!and He asks us to be the priests.

So how might we manifest the face of the 'man' then in that priestly capacity? Well, let's turn in our workbooks to page 28 and extract a couple of lessons then, from the face of the 'man' in the gospel of Luke. Because undoubtedly, that's what the commission instructs us to do, is to go forth and be the priests who are the sons of Zadok in obedience to our Master. Well, here's a couple of lessons then from the face of the man! **Learning to pray for others!** You see, our lives are so selfish, b&s, so terribly, terribly selfish, we get caught up in all the trials and affairs and problems of our own life and our own family and our own circle and our own consequences and we find it very difficult to be inclusive and to reach out and embrace others in our spirit of concern. You see, the spirit of the Priest was that He prayed the spirit of intercessory prayers for others; and I think we should be praying every day for other people. I think we should start with our ecclesial list that requires conscious thought, we need to take up the ecclesial list and say, who in the meeting needs my prayer this day? That's the spirit of the priest, isn't it? So if you think about the spirit of intercessory prayers which are prayers for others, other than the prayers for one's self, are there things that we could offer intercessory prayers for in taking up the role of priesthood? Why, most certainly!

We need to give prayers for those in sadness; we need to give prayers for those in loneliness; we need to give prayers for those suffering from sickness; we need to give prayers for those who are troubled by weakness; we need to give prayers for those who grieve; we need to give prayers for those in authority; we need to give prayers for those who have a shepherding role; we need to give prayers for those who preach; we need to give prayers for those who are abroad; we need to give prayers for the ecclesia; we need to give prayers for Israel! Is there any shortage of intercessory prayers? b&s, that we must needs offer? But when we offer them, we need to be **specific in our prayers**. We don't just want to pray for those who are sick, we want to pray for brother so-in-so who is sick, or sister so-in-so who was suffering at this time, our prayers need to be specific for specific individuals otherwise they're too general, b&s. Of course, you know the power of that, is that the moment we make specific prayers they become real and if we take up the spirit of the priest in that way, there's a marvellous benefit, because it's very hard to be critical of someone that you've just prayed for. If we all started to manifest the face of the priest, b&s, we'd bind our ecclesias closer together.

Now here's the second lesson from the face of the man. **Learning to offer hospitality!** You remember that the face of the priest in this gospel is the man who gladly goes and eats a meal with anyone. He's not separated by 'holy' things, he eats the meal set before him. You see, to eat a meal is an act of fellowship; it builds the bonds of spiritual kinship in the family, and eating a fellowship meal is I think, incredibly valuable; when I first moved to the ecclesia that I'm now in, we used to have family meals and gatherings almost every Sunday at a park. We used to leave the ecclesial hall and go and have a picnic together in the summer months. Then it came to our house and we would invite people round to our house, of course, the funny thing is, that as your ecclesia grows larger, you somehow find that you invite less people rather than more. So just imagine this thing as a test, b&s, can you think of 3 families in your ecclesia that you have not invited into your house for hospitality in the last 6 months? I think we all can, so imagine that we've got people that we haven't invited for 12 months; some families haven't been in our house for 2 years, 3 years! Shame on us, b&s, that we haven't extend hospitality. You know, I think when ecclesias have the spirit of hospitality and of sharing that fellowship together, that the fabric of the ecclesia is stronger. When we eat meals together, we laugh and we rejoice and we talk about sad things and we talk about happy things, but somehow when we next meet with that brother and sister in the ecclesial house, there's a spirit of kinship there that's slightly warmer and slightly friendlier because you've met as real people and broken bread together.

The social fabric of ecclesias is made stronger when the spirit of hospitality is there, and of course, who might we invite? not just our friends they're too easy to invite, aren't they? No, what did the Priest do in Luke's gospel? Well, we'd invite the quiet, we need to invite the single, we need to invite the strange, we need to invite the prickly, we need to invite the private. There are many people in ecclesial life that actually desperately need that comfort of hospitality, and people who wish to show the face of the priestly man, b&s, will reach out to those, because the Priest comes to seek and to save those that are lost, is the spirit of this particular gospel.

Well, b&s, you'd never believe what the commission of John is all about! So how does John close? Well, let's take our handbook and come back this time to page 25. So how does the gospel of John close? Well, of course, the gospel of John closes in John 21, that's not the commission of Christ though, it's just the close! So how does the gospel close? Well, I suppose if we were to summarize John 21, we would say the Lord summons His disciples and proceeds to a act of a trial scene on the beach, does He not? and the Judge examines His leading apostle, and Peter finds himself in the dock and John 21 is the final picture of our Lord and there are certainly judgment principles involved. You see, in the very last verse of the gospel of John it says, 'There are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were to be written every one, I suppose even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.' Do you see that word '**books**' (975) there, b&s, that's the same word translated 'books' in the following verse, 'I saw the dead, small and great stand before God and the **books** were opened; and another book which is the book of life and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books'- Revelation 20 verse 12. These are the books of the Judge and the judgments of the Judge, and this is the book of a Judge that's been written about His decisions in John.

But that's not the commission of John, the commission of John to His disciples is in the previous chapter, in John 20, so come and have a look at that then, the commission of John 20. Well, the reference to write down at the top is John 20 verses 19 to 23, and here's the actual commission that John records. So verse 19 says, 'The same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said unto them, **Peace be unto you**'. So the phrase 'peace be unto you' is a general salutation, but it was also given as a reassurance in case of fear-Genesis 43 verse 27 and Daniel 10 verse 9 says, that when people were affrighted that 'peace be unto you' was a reassurance to them. Well, when the Judge appeared in the midst of His disciples after the resurrection, no doubt there would have been a measure of consternation, so that the Judge had to say, 'peace be unto you'. In other words, I haven't come to judge you on this occasion! But I'll tell you what's really interesting about verse 19, b&s, was the door was locked and somehow Jesus came straight through, did you notice that? there's a locked door and Jesus is standing in their midst, now how did He do that? how did He get through a locked door? that's the puzzle of John 20 verse 19. Well, it doesn't matter how He got through, b&s, but let me tell you what I think the symbol of it is; you see, this is the man, the man that can pass through locked doors, is the symbol of the man **who can penetrate locked thoughts**. Those thoughts that are guarded in the privacy of our mind and locked away, Jesus has got the key, b&s, to that door. There is no door that this man **cannot pass through**, He's the Judge. He sees all! all things are **open** before Him; and He came and stood in the midst of His disciples.

Verse 20 says, 'When He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then Jesus said unto them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father has sent Me, even so send I you'. Now I'm just

going to read from Rotherham's translation for verse 21, 'Just as My Father sent Me forth, I also send you'. So the question is in verse 21, how and in what capacity had Jesus been sent forth in this gospel? You'll remember that '**sent**' is actually one of the key words of the gospel, He's a sent man because He came as a judge! He had the authority of the state that He represents, but He was sent from God, so He represents God in the matters of judgment. Now what Christ says now in John 20 verse 21 is, 'Just in the same way that My Father sent Me forth, so now I send you!. So that's the spirit of judgment, isn't it? b&s. As He was the Judge sent by His Father, so now He was going to send out or send forth His disciples that they might be an inspector of hearts and a discerner of thoughts, after the spirit of the face of the eagle.

So verse 22 says, 'When He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit'. He **breathed on them**, Rotherham says, 'He breathed strongly' and by the way, it's the same word translated in the Septuagint of Genesis 2 verse 7 when God breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life and he became a living soul; now the second Adam breathes into the body of His bride, His community, and breathes life into them and He says, 'receive ye the Holy Spirit', actually the word 'the' is not there in the Greek, it's simply 'receive ye Holy Spirit', and I think it's quite important, by the way, that the word 'the' is not there. Now here's the puzzle of verse 22, b&s, Jesus says to His disciples on this occasion, 'receive ye Holy Spirit', but I read the gospels that tell me that both the 12 and the 70 already had the Holy Spirit! so was this receiving of the Spirit in John 20 additional to and different to the Spirit that they already had? and was separate and addition to the Pentecostal outpouring that's yet to come in Acts 2? What's the Spirit that they were to receive in John 20, given that they already had the Holy Spirit? is it different? and the answer is, oh yes, I think it's very different! I think that the Spirit of this verse of this passage is a very deliberate and specific Spirit-power, and why do you think it says, b&s, that **He breathed on them**, unless to show that the particular Spirit that He wanted to bestow upon them, was not so much '**the** Spirit' as **His** Spirit? I think that perhaps the particular gift that He wanted to impart to them on the occasion of John 20 was that gift described in 1 Corinthians 12 verse 10 as, the discerning of spirits, the particular gift that would assist them in their role of being 'judges'. So the Judge here, calls His men to the bench and endows them with that gift of insight that would be necessary for them to take up His role; they are to go forth and be the 'eagle face'. Remember judgment isn't just the execution of punishment, it's the discernment of the issue! The discernment of the difference, the ability to see between right and wrong and to know what should be done!

Now how do we know that it was the 'spirit of the Judge' that they received? Well, verse 23 tells us, because verse 23 says, 'Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained'. Now you see, b&s, the Jewish people had two different types of legal codes, they had a **legislative** set of principles, and a **judicial** set of principles. The legislative code of the Jewish people used 2 Hebrew words to describe what the Sanhedrin could do: there was the Hebrew word 'ecar' (632) which meant to 'bind' something, which means it was prohibited or the word 'hiteer' which means 'to loose or permit something'. So binding and loosing (do

you remember that phrase?) 'that which is bound in heaven, that which is loosed', that's found in Matthew 18, by the way, those are legislative words, it's the declaration of those acts that are lawful or not lawful. What is permissible or not permissible; what is prohibited or not; to bind or to loose; why would those words be found in Matthew 18, by the way? because that's the gospel of the King and the king legislates. But that's not the words used here in John-the two words that relate to judicial matters of the Jews was the word 'zacci' which means to pronounce as innocent ; and 'pathur' which means to pronounce as liable and this was the power of judicial sentence. Now who, b&s, reading verse 23, who has the power to acquit or pronounce guilty? but a judge, and that's what the Lord empowers His disciples to do in this gospel and says, 'whose soever sins ye remit, then they shall be pronounced innocent and whose soever sins ye retain, then they shall be pronounced guilty. Basically I believe that the commission of John 20 is that the Lord sends them forth with His spirit breathed upon them, and gave them judicial power to execute the principles of discernment in the life of the truth. The commission of John is that **Christ sent out His disciples to take up His role of judge and to show the spirit face of the eagle.**

So just a couple of lessons that we ought to draw from the face of the eagle, as our study comes to a close, given that our time strangely seems to have run away with us. On page 28, and now John the face of the eagle. Well, here are two lessons, b&s, that at least we can take away with us. The first one is **learning to reason from scripture**. You know what happens in ecclesial life? well, maybe it's different over here, but in ecclesial life the common thing that we hear is, 'why can't I do this? and why shouldn't we go there? and who says we're not allowed to have this? or see that? or read that? or watch this?' You know that all those questions are utterly wrong; the question of the truth ought to be, **why should we?** not why shouldn't we! We should never be talking about why we shouldn't be doing something, the only thing we should ever talk about in the truth is why should we do something and in order to decide whether we should, we need to have a scriptural basis for all our decisions. You see, we can only exercise judgment in so far as Christ's spirit has been breathed upon us. Now we don't have the gift of insight according to the power of the Holy Spirit, b&s, but we do have the word of the Judge, and we do have the decisions of Almighty God. It's only in this book that we can find the decisions that are right, and so what we've got to do in ecclesial life is to always try and reason from scripture, whatever the problem is, what does the bible say about this? and what's the bible's answer? At arranging brethren's meetings when matters are discussed, you always should have your bibles open. If we're to go forth and manifest the face of the eagle, then we've got to reason from scripture. Here's the thing, b&s, if you're thinking of something and you're not sure, if you cannot provide solid scriptural proof for why you're doing it, **then don't!** because the spirit of judgment can only be exercised in accordance with spiritual principles. The eagle is divine!

Here's the second lesson, and it's a very good one, isn't it? learning from the face of the Judge and that is, **learning to maintain personal integrity**. You see, if we're to be involved in the matters of discernment and judgment, our own lives need to be absolutely exemplary. Funny thing, you know, b&s, as we grow older one of the things

we say, and it's quite right in a sense is, 'oh well, things are not all black and white, you know!', and there is truth in that, that as we grow older we realize that there are lots of other things that might cause some grey; but we should never get to the stage, b&s, **that we accept the greyness of uncertainty simply because life has taught us that sometimes it's best to compromise.** The amazing thing about the spirit of Christ in this gospel is, that with Christ, He only knew two colours, black and white, light and dark, heaven and earth, spirit and flesh, love and hate, truth and error; everything was so crystal clear as far as Christ was concerned; and what we don't want, b&s, is the hateful, moral, relativism of the world that say, 'well, it might be right or it might not be, and that's your opinion , but after all, we've all got different views, haven't we?' No, there's only one view, b&s, and that's the Spirit's view, and we've got to find out what the Spirit's view is, and then we've actually got to live by that. What we read and what we hear, and what we see and where we go, all need to be utterly consistent with the **truth**, or we can never be judges. Certainly not of others! So let's begin by judging ourselves, shall we? turn the face of the eagle upon ourselves and see firstly how we fare under the scrutiny of those eagle eyes.

Well, I think the commissions are consistent with the faces that we've seen so far, and that there are marvellous lessons that we can take from the gospels now, that we might go and live the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, and be empowered by what we've studied in these gospels, in order to follow Him. In the words of a hymn, b&s,

We lift our hearts to Thee,
Seeking for grace,
May we thy goodness see,
In Jesus' face.

Keep in thy narrow way,
All who thy Word obey,
Lest from thy paths they stray
And lose the race.