

# Lord, is it I? (Quality: Very good)

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Date: 20 January 1999

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Matthew 26 and verse 22, and in particular the last four words, Lord, is it I?  
And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?  
Amen. You will of course remember that Judas Iscariot asked the same question.  
You will remember too of what the Lord Jesus Christ said of Judas Iscariot, that he was a devil. He was born to destruction.  
And having covenanted with those chief priests, for 30 pieces of silver, he sought out ways to betray the Lord Jesus Christ.
- [ 1 : 11 ] But it is a very solemn question. Lord, is it I? And there are one or two ways which I desire to bring before you.  
At this time, the Lord Jesus Christ was about to be taken from the Garden of Gethsemane, and brought into the judgment hall, and then to be crucified.  
He was to be betrayed, but he was also to fulfill all righteousness. These moments which were before the Lord Jesus, was appointed before all worlds.  
And the cause of these next few hours in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, the cause was seen.  
And everyone who are found in that verse, which is so often quoted, not so much during the year, but a particular season of the year when we consider his incarnation, and the verse is that thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sin.
- [ 2 : 47 ] Now, every one of those who are his people, indeed, will be brought to this question. The sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ may well be caused by those chief priests, and scribes, and Pharisees, and captains of the temple, and the soldiers that were under them.  
But we must look a little deeper into that, and see that it is that he was appointed of God before all time to be the sin-bearer of his people.  
He was to be crucified on a cross at Calvary. And the cause, therefore, was the sins of his people, and the grief and the sorrow that the Lord Jesus Christ endured was foreseen.  
And every person who is in that number, every soul in that number, that no man can number, was responsible for the sufferings of Jesus Christ.  
Every one. I think, my friends, I feel within my spirit that's a solemn thing to say, and a solemn thing to feel.
- [ 4 : 14 ] And we would have to say with this good, with this disciple of old, when we view, and may we view, because it is a precious sight to view the sufferings of Christ, and to be able to say, as it was said, they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?  
You know what the last part, or the second part, of the hymn 153 has in it? The soul just pierced, his sight is true, but we have pierced him through and through.

The cause of the grief of Christ is the sins of his people. His visage was more marred than any man, Isaiah's prophecy tell us.

The gospel tells us, the cry from the cross was, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

That must have been an agony which cannot be understood by anyone else, that the Father in glory, who witnessed, at least twice, in those three years of the ministry of Christ, as to the deity of Jesus Christ, and of the relationship, when he said twice, this is my beloved son, that he should hide his face, because his beloved son was the sin bearer, the burden bearer for his people.

[ 6 : 04 ] Is it I? You know, when people talk about what it is to be a Christian, when people talk about doubts and fears as to whether there is a real work, or they may be sometimes distressed because they can't see the way in front of them, and so on.

My friends, this, this is the proof, this is the evidence, this can never be disputed, the church's sins calls the sufferings of Christ, and it well would be for us to indeed seek the question that it may be presented before the Lord to know where we stand.

We either were the cause of his sufferings or we was not. Blessed word, solemn word to me, Lord, is it I?

I? But then I felt led to consider too, what a mercy, my friends, if from another point of view that we have a religion that hasn't got I in it.

That is, I in the form of the natural man, the flesh, that it might be searched out and we might have that sweet comfort and knowledge that we are not of those whose religion is made up of the flesh.

[ 7 : 56 ] The apostle I was brought to consider when he was writing to the church at Corinth and these words abode with me in my thoughts.

But by the grace of God I am what I am and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain but I laboured more abundantly than they all yet not I but the grace of God which was with me.

When he was in his unregeneracy he was a very great I. He was somebody to be reckoned with. He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees as touching the law blameless.

There was a lot of I about him. But when he was a preacher of righteousness what he did in his ministry and in his writings there wasn't I in it.

but there was grace in it. Yet not I but the grace of God which was with me. And I do feel this solemnly my friends that the Lord should so teach us what it is to be indeed troubled with so much I in our religion so much of the flesh.

[ 9 : 29 ] You know it's recorded in the word it's a little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.

And I do feel this that that may well be the view of those dear souls that are under divine grace. when you come to consider the truth of how much saving knowledge how much of the glorious blessings that flow through Jesus Christ not that we would limit the holy one of his throne not that we either would disdain the little but in compared with what there is we would have to say it's but a little it is of him I little know and are still less in joy but what a mercy dear friends is if this if this work if this we can only call it religion if this experience this teaching this knowledge this understanding that we have that it's of grace and not of flesh it's a sad day you know when we come to die and find that all we've got is the flesh because death will take it away but a person who has grace the free gift of

God in not only in calling and in saving but in walk and pathway oh that it might be so with us each that we shall then have the evidence that what we have within isn't of the flesh but it isn't the spirit there's only two powers you know in the world the power of the air the prince of the power of the air that's evil wickedness and sin and the workings and teachings leadings and guidings of the holy ghost two great powers sometimes my friends we seem as if we got more of one than we have of the other the old man against the new man well true religion is not of I Lord is it I you will always find to if there's any disputes if there's anything that distresses the tender spirit of of a believer you know my friends it's more the flesh that is the cause of the distress than the spirit is there should be a contending for right things there must be so but the truth is the truth and the holy spirit is the author of it and anything but the truth is sin and that is not the and the holy spirit is not the author of sin my friends ever pray over this that we all have with us every day of our life till the last day and that's our flesh and ever pray that the Lord will keep out the flesh from being mixed up with the spirit there cannot be any mixing up but you know what

I mean that the influence of the flesh may be subdued and that grace may reign in our hearts and over our lives when we come to worship and when we draw near to the throne of grace I feel this you know and this is only by I entrust first of all the teaching of the spirit and then by the word of God as well if ever there was an exercise which the flesh takes delight in the religious flesh it can only be prayer if the Pharisees were known for their long prayers and if the Pharisees was known for their self-righteous prayers my friends what was in their hearts but for grace might be found in ours you know that mock it's a mocking of the Holy

Spirit when the flesh is but the flesh and it tries to imitate the grace of God oh my friends it's the most awful dreadful place to be in and the Lord keep us from it I'd rather be poor and needy and fearful as I so often are than to be lifted up by the flesh and go forth and try to pray in the name of the Lord Jesus and it's all flesh my friends the Lord ever keep us from it especially in our prayers that he might keep us simple and keep us nearer to the throne of grace sometimes we may be granted the liberty of access to the mercy and then it is as if well it's like opening a fountain you're able to pray but that's different my friends than long fleshly prayers now long fleshly prayers you will know the difference because of what it seeks for the child of God seeks for

[ 15 : 17 ] Christ and though it be a few broken words the poet says the upward glancing of an eye when none but God is near that's more the evidence of grace my friends than the mock humility of the flesh and fleshly prayers I scold myself sometimes especially when there seems to be no exercise and I said before when you come to read and pray at home in the family altar and it seems as if prayer well it's the last thing that seems to be going on in your mind I have to sometimes beg that even as we feel so formal and so lukewarm in these things the Lord would pardon sometimes I wonder what he'll give us to cause us to pray in the spirit and with the understanding also oh this eye then do you know my friends you trace and I'm sure you would do so but I can go a long way you know in religion oh I can go a long way it can be dressed up in all sorts of garb it can look respectable and it can sound respectable and it puts on an air of humility and an air of really that is duplicity before the

Lord oh I can be a most treacherous character of my friends and I believe if you know what it is to feel indwelling sin you have to pray against I pray against the flesh is it I I once took a thanksgiving service in a little chapel down in Sussex we had a good congregation in both services I was brought in unexpected it wasn't an engagement I had made months before it was because the minister who was engaged would not be able to be there but then perhaps you may understand this and perhaps you won't but I felt so free in the afternoon I hope I can say that before the Lord I felt so free with the liberty that I was given that after tea and we come to service time and I got into the pulpit while

I was singing the first hymn I had to plead with the Lord to take the flesh away because I feared it was all the flesh I trust it wasn't but it made me fear the flesh and I had to plead with the Lord while I was singing the first hymn that if it was the flesh he would remove it immediately you may groan some of you as far as spiritual truth and knowledge is concerned that you know so little and you feel so poor in yourself and so totally dependent and you groan and sigh over the little that you know or you think you know my friends it's far better to be like that far better far better to be poor and needy and to be lifted up and taken away with this old

I that would have the you know because that's where the there's obvious many differences but I would have the preeminence if it could it would have the acclaim wouldn't it you remember that dreadful day in the Acts of the Apostles when Herod made a great oration you remember where he shut Peter up in prison we read in the 12th of the Acts and Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon but they came with one accord to him and having made blastus the king's chamber in their friend desired peace because their country was nourished by the king's country and upon a set day Herod arrayed in royal apparel sat upon his throne and made an oration unto them and the people gave a shout saying it is the voice of a god and not of man and immediately the angel of the lord smote him because he gave not god the glory and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost these things are not left on record to condemn the wicked only but to be a warning against those who fear the lord that we shall not be lifted up as

Paul kindly reminds us in that letter to the church at Corinth that we might have a religion that has this stamp on it yet not I Lord is it I my friends you're here I as I said it can be dressed up in all sorts of displays it can mock humility it can mock prayer it can mock bring about so called worship but it never stand in the sight of God you know it'll never stand in that day many shall say that day Lord Lord and he shall say I never knew you why was the reason for that because the work wasn't his my friends where the work is of God there isn't any room for I we had an old minister when I was young at Hanover and he used to say fill a sack with wheat and there isn't much room for chaff that was an old expression of that dear man my friends so it is and one of the clearest evidences and I was going to say on the side of a poor believer is this that he will fear this he will fear this

[ 21 : 52 ] I in religion and he will mourn over it and he will pray against it and the Lord keep us in humility and in dependence because again the Lord Jesus Christ in the early chapters of this gospel speaks about the hypocrites and they don't look any different from you and I but it's what's inside isn't it and they've got this I inside of them that projects and shows in various forms what looks like a real work and yet it isn't a real work and they were exceeding sorrowful and began every one of them to say unto him Lord is it I so you can see therefore that in these eleven disciples and apostles of Christ there was a sweet spirit and a good spirit because it was as if they would desire to know so that they would indeed be warned about it

Simon Peter was one such disciple but he had to learn a strong lesson and a lesson that he never forgot you know you read in his epistles you can trace that he never forgot that lesson we closed our reading with those strong words of the apostle though I should die with thee yet I never I shall yet will I not deny thee and previous though all men shall be offended because of thee yet will I never be offended and whatever Peter knew about fishing was one thing but what he didn't know was his own heart this eye but there was a blessed prospect even though the man must learn the hard way in Luke's gospel isn't it the Lord Jesus Christ said Simon Satan hath designed to have you to sift you as wheat but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not and when thou art converted strengthen the brethren and yet to go through that time to prove that true

Peter went out we read and wept bitterly at the denial three times of the saviour oh it was with the best intention you say I believe it was but it was a lesson that he had to learn he was not impetuous after that he was not in that forefront of speaking to the Lord Jesus Christ he displayed his love and in those three times when the Lord Jesus Christ said to him lovest thou me more than these he said Lord thou knowest though he had failed how solemn then but my friends these things are left there for our learning to pray against this eye to pray against this fleshly religion to pray against the natural spirit of man it's all within us it is you know it's all within us

Naaman the Syrian was stricken with leprosy and a little maid told him to go to the prophet in Israel and the prophet didn't even come out of his house but he told him what to do to wash go and wash and Naaman stricken with leprosy thought that he might at least come out and strike his hand over the place make a great display and then he refused to wash in that river because he said are not the waters of Damascus better but there was wisdom in his servants and they persuaded him to go and wash and he went and washed and came and was healed and cleansed my friends where there is godly humility there isn't much room for eye and there's not that's never found my friends in a counterfeit religion godly humility but where there is grace godly humility will be seen and I believe too that every child of grace will see the danger pray over the danger and pray the lord would remove the danger the old man my friends is very strong very strong let it not be of any one of us my friends but may grace reign and grace rule and then you'll find this humility within the heart you will find this godly sorrow and you will find this true grace my friends of humility and of repentance and confession it's the evidence of grace it's not found in those that have much to say and much to do in this false dress and false covering and false profession that the time has gone and they were exceeding sorrowful and began every one of them to say unto him lord is it

I well may it remain and may it indeed be the cause of great exercise because every child of god would be right and the only one who can tell him he is right is god himself the only person who can assure him of being taught of the spirit and blessed of the spirit is the blessed holy ghost lord is it I the same words as judas iscariot said master is it I as if he was to be as if he was ignorant of it and we read that he had covenanted with these chief with the chief priests for 30 pieces of silver to betray his lord and master and jesus he said unto him thou hast said amen amen amen to to and