

LESSON THIRTEEN

The Gospel of John and the letters of the Apostles

I. Presentation of John's Gospel and his letters

John's Gospel is not, like the synoptic ones, a biography of Jesus. What interests the evangelist here is not the human genealogy of the awaited Messiah, but another reality much deeper and moving concerning His personality: His divine origin. He begins therefore his work with a masterly introduction to reveal us what he had discovered himself, the **divine** genealogy of Jesus, saying: "In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word **was God** (1,1)... The Word became flesh, he lived among us" (Jn 1,14).

John is thus not a historian of the earthly life of Christ, like the other evangelists are, but a **theologian** who reveals His divine nature. The synoptic gospels teach us that Jesus is the awaited Messiah. John also attests this truth, but he goes further - or rather higher to teach us what the others did not reveal, that this Messiah is God incarnated, the Creator who took a human form to be personally present among men on earth and in a tangible way. It is upsetting, striking to think of it. Furthermore it is true.

John is the only evangelist to communicate this precise information to us, that's why he was called "the theologian". He is represented by an eagle because he went high with thought.

John decided to write his Gospel only after having reached 90 years. He was the only survivor among the Apostles. He had considered not convenient to write it before, as other Gospels and various letters of the Apostles were present to inform the believers about Jesus. What spurred him to write? It is important for you to know.

We have seen in the previous lesson that the anti-Christ Jews had infiltrated within the nascent pro-Christ community to destroy it by the inside. They disturbed the believers not only by obliging them to practise the Jewish worship, but by claiming that John the Baptist, and not Jesus was the Messiah. They even attacked some Christians because they believed in the divinity of the Messiah. The faithful ones, so upset, turned to John looking for the light they needed. They knew he was Jesus' beloved disciple, and that they could have relied on his words.

John thus began his Gospel enlightening them on these two controversial points:

a) Jesus is the Messiah:

John the Baptist is not the Messiah (the Light): "he came as a witness to bear witness to the Light, so that everyone might believe (in the Messiah) through him. He was not the Light, he was to bear witness to the Light. The Word was the real Light..." (Jn 1,6-9).

Jesus, the Word of God, is thus also the Messiah.

b) Jesus is God incarnate:

Jesus is the Word, the Word is God (Jn 1,1) and the Word became flesh, He took a human body to live among men (Jn 1,14). Thus Jesus is really God incarnate.

As John had been disciple of John the Baptist and apostle of Jesus (like Andrew: Jn 1,35-40) at the same time, John was the right person to tranquillise the faithful Christians who had

turned to him. He also confuses the errors spread by the false prophets whom he denounces in his letters (1Jn 4,1-6 / 2Jn 1,7) and in the book of Revelation (where he qualifies them “false Jews” belonging to a “synagogue of Satan”: Rv 2,9 and 3,9). The “Nicolaitans” were a sect made of supposedly converted Jews who denied the divinity of Jesus (Rv 2,6).

A good method to study John’s Gospel is to read it while paying attention to discover:

- a) the verses showing that Jesus, and not John the Baptist, is the Messiah, and
- b) the insinuations -often subtle in the discussions of Jesus- where He reveals Himself as God’s incarnation.

Read this marvellous book after the explanations given on each of these two points to help your research.

a. Jesus is the Messiah

In the beginning, many Jews believed that John the Baptist was the Messiah. The Gospels inform us that John insisted to tell them: “I baptize you in water for repentance, but the one who comes after me (Jesus) is more powerful than I, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Mt 3,11). Nevertheless, Luke informed us that later, in Ephesus, there were still some Jews who thought that the baptism of John was enough (Ac 19,1-7). John was in Ephesus too, where most of the Jews were violently anti-Christ: “Some Jews from Asia (*actual Turkey*) caught sight of him (*Paul*) in the Temple and stirred up the crowd and seized him ...” (Ac 21,27 etc).

In his Gospel, John insisted and repeated often the witness of John the Baptist: “A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as witness, to bear witness to the Light... He was not the Light, he was to bear witness to the Light. The Word was the real Light” (Jn 1,6-9)... John witnesses to him. He proclaims: ‘This is the One of whom I said: He who comes after me has passed ahead of me because he existed before me’ (Jn 1,15)...This was the witness of John...: ‘I am not the Christ’ ... (Jn 1,19-27)...The next day, he saw Jesus coming towards him and said: ‘Look, there is the Lamb of God...It was of him that I said: ‘Behind me comes one who has passed ahead of me... I have seen and testify that He is the Chosen One (the Christ) of God... (Jn 1,29-36)’. “You yourselves can bear me out. I said: “I am not the Christ; I am the one who has been sent to go in front of him...” (Jn 3,26-36).

Thus, since the beginning, John tranquillises his disciples: Jesus is really the Christ-God. He finishes his Gospel by confirming them in this belief, saying that he brought back all these signs operated by Jesus to them “so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name” (Jn 20, 30-31).

b. The divinity of Jesus

John begins his Gospel with a key word having a great impact on Jewish mentality: “In the beginning”, in Hebrew “Bereshit” (“Be”: in, “reshit”: beginning). The importance of this word is due to the fact that it opens the Old Testament, the Torah. Indeed, the book of the Genesis begins as follows: “In the beginning (Bereshit) God created heaven and earth”.

John, inspired by the Spirit of God, **intentionally** uses this word to strike the Jewish hearts and shock them in order to open them to the books of the New Testament. It is in the same Spirit that John begins his first letter: “What existed since the **beginning**...”.

In order to answer the faithful who came to ask him, John wanted to write a new Genesis (Creation), a new ‘Bereshit’: “In the beginning was the Word... Through Him all things came into being, not one thing came into being except through him. What has come into being in

him was Life, Life that was the Light of men... John (*the Baptist*) was not the Light... The Word (*Jesus*) was the real Light” (Jn 1,1-9).

By these courageous words, John gave a deeper explanation of what the Genesis had said of God, the Creator of the heaven, the earth and the light. This Creator is not other than the Word: “Through Him all things came into being” (Jn 1,3), because “He was with God **in the beginning**” (Jn 1,2) and He Himself “was God” (Jn 1,1). “And the Word became flesh (*in Jesus*)” (Jn 1,14). Those who had turned to John could not hope for a better answer. You understand why John was called “the Theologian”.

All throughout his Gospel, John applied himself to report faithfully Jesus’ words on which he relied to say that “In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God”. Hasn’t John listened to Jesus Him saying to the Jews: “Before Abraham ever was, I Am?” (Jn 8,58). Hasn’t John also listened to the Baptist saying in front of him, his disciple: “behind me comes one (*Jesus*) who has passed ahead of me because he existed **before me**”? (Jn 1,30). John knew that Abraham had preceded Jesus by 2000 years and that John the Baptist preceded Jesus by six months. He could not hide in his Gospel the logical conclusions he had drawn from what he had heard. He delivered his witness to us with love and precision so that those who believe in it are saved.

The belief in the divinity of Jesus already existed before John’s Gospel. In his letters, Paul referred to it when he wrote about Jesus: “Make your own the mind of Christ Jesus: Who, being in the **form of God**, did not **count equality with God** something to be grasped” (Ph 2,6). And again: “So then, as you received Jesus as Lord and Christ, now live your lives in Him...In Him, in bodily form, lives divinity in **all its Fullness**” (Col 2,6-9). The letters of Paul have been written approximately 40 years before John’s Gospel.

Since the Christians already believed in the divine incarnation, in “all its Fullness”, in the Person of Jesus, why did John write to convince his disciples of what they had already known? It is, as I said, because they were annoyed by disturbers who aimed at sowing doubt and dissension among the Christians. These disturbers, coming from the Jewish mass which denied Jesus, are described as “antichrists” by John: “You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and now **many Antichrists** have already come... They (*the Jews anti-Christ*) have gone **from among us** (*the Jews pro-Christ*), but they never really belonged to us...Who is the liar, if not one who claims that Jesus is not the Christ? This is the Antichrist!” (1Jn 2,18-22). Paul still refers to them while warning the first Jews faithful to Jesus, the faithful Judeo-Christians: “The mystery of wickedness (*the anti-Christ Jews*) is already at work” (2Th 2,7).

a. The two Jewish categories

Speaking about the antichrists, I take the opportunity to speak about the 2 categories of Jews derived from Jesus’ Advent: those who were for Him, the pro-Christ, and the others who stood against Him, the anti-Christ.

Jesus, the spiritual Messiah, who was not a Jewish nationalist, divided the Hebraic society into two opposite parts: “These words caused a new division among the Jews. Many said: ‘He is possessed, he is raving: why do you listen to him?’ Other said: ‘These are not the words of a man possessed by a devil...’” (Jn 10,19-21).

In the same way, Paul “stirs up trouble among Jews the world over” (Ac 24,5) separating “the danel from good corn”, that is to say the believers from the unbelievers. This is what Jesus also meant when He said: “It is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword. For I have come

to set son (*who does not believe in me*) against father (*who believes in me*)..." (Mt 10,34-35). The unbelievers among the Jews reproached Jesus for having proclaimed such words and accused Him of breaking the union of the people and the family...

The believers became convinced – by the prophecies- that the Messiah had to undergo death, so that the monotheist message would pass from the Jews - who had made it hermetic- to the Pagans (Ac 17,1-4), and that "Everybody in Ephesus, both Jews and Greek (*Pagans who were polytheists*) heard about this episode; everyone was filled with awe, and the name of the Lord Jesus came to be held in great honour" (Ac 19,17). All those believed in Jesus, in spite of the resistance of the Jews of Israel who did not recognize in Him the nationalist Christ they illusorily imagined. Thus, "thousands of Jews have now become believers (*Christians*)" (Ac 21,20).

On the other hand, the fundamentalist Jews formed an exclusively Jewish fanatic party, a "ghetto" violently nationalist. This opposing camp, aspiring only to the political restoration of the kingdom of David in Palestine, opposed without pity the Judeo-Christians. This opposition was so violent that it led to the persecution of the disciples of Jesus who had to meet at "doors closed for fear of the Jews" who attacked Jesus' disciples (Jn 20,19).

The scission was thus total between the two camps, fulfilling exactly the words of Jesus: "It is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword". In fact, it is by "the sword" that a good number of Apostles perished, stoned like Stephen (Ac 7,59) or literally killed "by the sword" like "James, the brother of John" (Ac 12,2).

In God's opinion, which of these two camps represent the **true** face of the Judaism? That of the fundamentalist Jews attached to the nationalist ideal, or that of the Jewish disciples of Jesus, transformed into "universalists" after their release from the prejudices imposed by the narrow fanatic vision of a Judaism so badly understood?

Jesus answers this question when He says: "Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets (*i.e. books of the Old Testament*): I have come not to abolish but **to complete them**... If your uprightness **does not surpass** that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of Heaven" (Mt 5,17-20).

Jesus is thus the **perfection** of the Judaism and the true Jews are those who become his disciple: "If you wish to be **perfect**... then come, follow me", Jesus said to the rich young man who practised scrupulously, to the letter, the precepts of the mosaic law (Mt 19,21). Paul, who was a practising Pharisee, having understood that, declared to the Jews: "And simply by being Christ's, you are that progeny of Abraham, the heirs named in the promise" (Ga 3,29).

Thus, according to the Gospel, the true Jew is the one who becomes disciple of Jesus. Those who denied Him are not true Jews, but "false Jews", the "false friends", these "intruders" whom Paul speaks about, "trouble-makers among you who are seeking to pervert the gospel of Christ" (Ga 1,7). They are the false Jews whom John denounces like "antichrists" and "deceivers" (1Jn 2,18-22/ 1Jn 4,2-3/ 2Jn 1,7), "refusing to acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in human nature" (2Jn 1,7). "If anyone comes to you bringing a different doctrine", John continues, "you must not receive him into your house or even give him a greeting. Whoever greets him has a share in his wicked activities" (2Jn 1, 10). The Book of Revelation warns us against their reappearance at the end of times and qualifies them as "false Jews", "who falsely claim to be Jews", even belonging to the "synagogue of Satan" (Rv 2,9-3,9).

Jesus had accused their predecessors to be “from their father, the devil”, not from God (Jn 8,44). These false modern Jews are the Israeli nationalists.

II. Teachings of John’s Gospel

What John was interested in was Jesus’ teachings rather than his actions. He communicated them to us by writing the various discussions his Master had with different persons, letting us understand by ourselves the lights that Jesus wanted to give to mankind.

John thus did not leave a list of doctrines, but he relies upon the good sense of those who can read between the lines, and understand Christ’s teachings from His own words during discussions or controversies.

Jesus often took the opportunity, sometimes apparently banal (*e.g. His dialogue with the Samaritan: Jn 4*) to reveal a truth. Sometimes He even created the occasion to draw an useful discussion. Thus, the purposes of His miracles were indirect and deeper, to cause discussions during which, He could expose His points of view - about the Torah, for example - to rectify the deviationism into which the Hebraic community had sunk.

Indeed, Jesus worked miracles on Saturdays to demonstrate that one should not reduce oneself to a complete immobilism on this day, as the Jews thought. He thus healed a paralytic one Saturday, thus scandalizing the Jews and seized the occasion to declare: “My Father still goes on working (*on Saturdays*) , and I am at work too. But that only made the Jews even more intent on killing him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but He spoke of God as his own Father and so made himself **God’s equal**” (Jn 5,17-18).

John wanted to give us above all this word of Jesus :“My teaching is not from myself: it comes from the One who sent me” (Jn 7,16). This doctrine of Jesus was transmitted to us by John through the following discussions that Jesus had:

1. Building of the true Temple (Jn 2,13-22)

Jesus discussed with the Jews in the Temple about its destruction and the building of the true Temple, the “Temple that was his body”, i.e. his Person (see Rv 21,22).

2. Dialogue with Nicodemus (Jn 3,1-21)

Jesus reveals there the need to “be born again from above **in spirit**”, i.e. to decondition and to liberate oneself from the prejudices in order to see the truth and to objectively choose it after having broken the body chains, because “what is born of flesh (*human nature*) is flesh, but what is born of the Spirit is spirit” and lives eternally.

3. Dialogue with the Samaritan (Jn 4,1-42)

Jesus provoked a dialogue with a Samaritan woman for three reasons:

a) To break the hatred between Jews and Samaritans, a hatred set up by racism: “Jews, of course, **do not associate** with Samaritans”, explains John (Jn 4,9). The parbola of the **good Samaritan** shocked the Jews (Lk 10,29-37). This friendly approach of Jesus, a Jew, thus astonished the Samaritan woman: “You are a Jew! How is it that you ask me, a Samaritan, for something to drink?” (Jn 4,9). Jesus took an antiracist step.

b) To break the social prejudices of the time, especially in the mentality of His disciples who were astonished to see Him speaking with a woman (Jn 4,27), who, moreover, was a Samaritan (Jn 4, 9).

c) The main reason was to reveal to the Samaritans He was the Messiah (Jn 4,25-26/4,41-42). Notice that the Samaritans - as innocent and docile children - believed in Jesus, **not because they had seen Him making miracles**, but simply because of what they “**had heard**” from Samaritans (Jn 4,39-42). The Jews, instead, were reticent. Jesus Himself had declared, while returning to Galilee two days later: “... a prophet is not honoured in his own home town” (Jn 4,44). At Cana, He still says, not without bitterness: “**Unless you see signs** and portents, you will not believe!” (Jn 4,48)... as the Samaritans had believed in Him without seeing miracles.

4. The Spiritual Resurrection (Jn 5,1-47)

It is the resurrection **of the soul** by accepting the Truth proclaimed by Jesus. It is called the “first resurrection” (Rv 20,5-6). Healing a paralytic, Jesus took advantage to reveal his divine filiation, his “equality with God” and “God Himself” as the scandalised Jews said (Jn 5,17-18; 10,33). At this occasion, Jesus also announced that “the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and all who hear it will live” (Jn 5,25). It means that the Pagans, considered dead by the Jews, will come to the spiritual life thanks to their faith in Jesus. The prophet Baruch said to the Jews exiled among the Babylonians, considered as “**dead**” who “go down in Sheol”: “Why, Israel, why are you in the country of your enemies, growing older and older in an alien land, defiling yourselves with the dead (*Babylonians*), reckoned with those who go to Sheol?” (Ba 3,10-11).

This return to life of the **soul** is a spiritual resurrection, that of the **soul** in the living body **since down here** on earth. Jesus says indeed: “The hour is coming - **indeed it is already here** – when the dead (*the sinners*) will hear the voice of the Son of God, and all who hear it (*those who repent*) will live” (Jn 5,25). The Revelation calls it “the first resurrection” (Rv 20,5-6).

Thus this does not concern the “second resurrection”, the one that will take place **at the end of the world**. Jesus said in fact: “The hour is coming, where the right ones will have share with the Eternal Life and the irreligious people will know eternal death (*i.e. eternal sadness*: Jn 5,28-29). This final death of the soul is called the “second death” by Rv 20,6 (*the first being the physical death, and the second the death of the soul*).

Notice the *perseverance* of the healed disabled man: “**for thirty-eight years**” he had presented to be healed, but “someone else got down there before him”. Jesus healed him, because he “knew he had been in that condition **for a long time**” without losing the hope to be healed.

5. The “Bread” of the Eternal Life (Jn 6,1-67)

Jesus multiplies the breads to speak about another “Bread” which gives Life to the soul, the Eternal Life, in the same way as He had spoken to the Samaritan about the “Water” of the Eternal Life starting from the water of the well of Jacob (Jn 4,13-14).

Yet, before operating the miracle, as “he Himself knew exactly what He was going to do”, He wanted “to put Philip to the test”, as well as the other Apostles. He thus says to Philip: “Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?” Notice that He said that “**to put him to the test**” (Jn 6,5-6). Because Philip had been one of the Apostles present at Cana, when Jesus had multiplied the wine (Jn 1,43 and 2,1-3). He should thus have known that Jesus could feed these thousands of people without problem. However, neither Philip, nor Andrew,

also present at Cana, understood what the Messiah wanted to do and could do (Jn 6,8). They should have answered Him: “But Lord you can do anything! You have only to say a word, as at Cana, and there will be bread for all!”

The two miracles should be brought closer: that of the wine and that of the bread. These two products through which Jesus gives Himself to us in his spiritual Meal. I did not explain yet the miracle of Cana (Jn 2,1-11) I will do it now.

Compare the attitude of faith of Mary, the Blessed Virgin, at Cana, with that of the Apostles here. At Cana, she was the one who took the initiative to ask Jesus to multiply the wine. His Apostles -Philip and Andrew in particular, and others- “had also been invited” (Jn 2,2). Nevertheless, Philip and Andrew -in spite of the fact they knew what had happened in Cana- were far from thinking of what Jesus wanted to do and could do concerning the miracle of the breads and the fishes. At Cana, instead, His Mother had take the initiative, pushing Jesus to multiply the wine. She obtained it for the joy of the guests. Mary, to whom God does not refuse anything, thus managed to anticipate the time for Jesus to perform miracles (Jn 2,4). That should have inspired Philip and Andrew in their answer to Jesus concerning the bread.

I indicate here a bad translation: at Cana Jesus does not say to His Mother: “Woman, what do you want from me?... etc” as some translate, but: “What does it matter to you and me, woman? My hour has not come yet” (Jn 2,4). In other words, Jesus answers Mary -who tells him that the wine was lacking- what in fact really means: “What has that got to do with you and me? It is not up to us guests; it is not our business. It is neither my Wedding, nor my hour! At my Wedding the Wine will not lack. Here no one put me in charge of wine”. It is in this spirit that we should understand and translate the words of Jesus according to the original text in Greek (see the translation in the Bible of Andre Chouraqui). We should not think as some do, that in the answer of Jesus to his Mother, there was a lack of respect to her. That would have been unworthy of the Messiah...Let us not forget that Jesus, finally, granted the request of his Mother.

In his controversy with the Jews, Jesus told them: “No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me” (Jn 6, 44). He said that because many went to Him believing that He was the Messiah, therefore the **political** King of Israel. They were thus not attracted by the Spirit of the Father of Jesus. This crowd ran after Jesus, not for spiritual reasons, but because they were attracted by Him for political, economic and material interests, like Judah. This is why Jesus warned them: “Do not work for food that goes bad, but work for food that endures for eternal life” (Jn 6,27). He spoke about His Body and His Blood, Bread and Wine of Eternal Life (Jn 6,51-58). Only those who are attracted by the Father are able to get the deep meaning of the **spiritual** words of Jesus. Those who went to Him for material goods found no meaning in his words and ended up by leaving Him, as Judah did later (Jn 6,60-71).

6. Living water (Jn 7, 37-39)

When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan about the water He gave her to drink, He was referring to “the Spirit which those who believed in Him were to receive” (Jn 7,39). To be watered by this Spirit that gives the Life to the soul, it is necessary to be thirsty of it. The tepid ones are excluded. Jesus gives this same Spirit in the Eucharist to “all who are thirsty” (Mt 26,27-28 / Rv 22,17).

7. Speech of Jesus at the Temple (Jn 7,1-53)

The feast of Shelters, known also as feast of the Harvest (Ex 23,16), commemorated the stay in the desert of the Sinai in shelters during 40 years (Lv 23,42-43). In occasion of this feast

the Jews went each year in pilgrimage to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices in the Temple. This feast is famous still today in Israel.

Jesus' "brothers", i.e. the inhabitants of Nazareth, ironically told him: "Leave this place and go to Judaea, so that your disciples, too, can see the works you are doing; no one who wants to be publicly known acts in secret; if this is what you are doing, you should reveal yourself to the world" (Jn 7,3-4). John explains just after these verses that: "Not even his brothers had faith in Him" (Jn 7,5).

Why did the fellow citizens of Jesus push him to go to Jerusalem to manifest himself to the world since they did not believe in him? Furthermore they knew that "the Jews were seeking to kill Him" (Jn 7,1; 7,13)!

One must understand that it is with a cynical and mocker tone that these people addressed to Jesus and **challenged** him to appear before the people as the awaited Messiah. They did not believe He was able to be this awaited political leader, able to satisfy the Israelites thirsty of national independence. Do not forget, in fact, that John the Baptist himself and the apostles had difficulties to understand the purely spiritual mission of Jesus and his spiritual Kingdom that "is not a kingdom of this world", as He revealed to Pilate (Jn 18,35-37).

These Nazarenes spoke to Jesus in the same spirit of challenge as the devil who had said to Him: "If you are Son of God (the Messiah) tell these stones to turn into loaves... If you are Son of God throw yourself down" (Mt 4,3-5). It is still in this bad spirit that, seeing Jesus on the cross, "the passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said: 'Then save yourself if you are God's son and come down from the cross!' The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way, with the words: 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the cross now (*to restore the kingdom of David*), and we will believe in Him! ... For he did say, 'I am God's son!' (Mt 27,39-44). However, one must not "put Yahweh your God to the test!" (Dt 6,16).

We can now understand the reason why Jesus answered to his fellow citizens: "For me the right time (*to be the spiritual and universal King*) has not come yet, but for **you** any time is the right time (*to wait for the nationalist Messiah*). The world cannot hate you (*because it waits for the same Messiah as you do and has the same spirit as yours*), but it does hate Me, because I give evidence (*by my spiritual messianism*) that its ways are evil. Go up to the festival yourselves: I am not going to this festival, because for Me the time (*to be a King*) is not ripe yet" (Jn 7,6-8).

Jesus refused to go to Jerusalem with "his brothers" of Galilee, because he did not want to accompany them in their worldly and opportunist spirit. Indeed, they did not invite Him to go to Jerusalem in a spirit of pilgrimage and meditation, but in a spirit of an election campaign, making of a religious festival a springboard for a political purpose. This is why Jesus replied: "I am not going to this festival", i.e. I am not going there with you, not even in this spirit. But John adds "however after His brothers had left for the festival, he went up as well, not publicly but **secretly**" (Jn 7,10). Jesus finally went to Jerusalem but in a spirit quite different from the others, since He went up "secretly", without trying to be recognised as they thought (Jn 7,4).

Jesus always refused to reveal Himself in a spirit of noisy publicity, to the point that it was "the Jews (*who*) were on the look-out for him" (Jn 7,11). It was thus not Jesus, who sought to

manifest himself, like his “brothers” had asked him. Hadn't He recommended the apostles not to say to anyone that He was the Messiah? (Mt 16,20).

God spoke to Isaiah about this discrete Messiah, describing him as follows: “Here is my Servant whom I uphold, my Chosen one in whom my soul delights. I have sent my Spirit upon him...He does not cry out or raise his voice, his voice is not heard in the streets” to make electoral speeches and to be known by the world (Is 42,1-2). Only those who have spiritual eyes to see, they only, can understand that Jesus is the Christ, the Chosen one of God: “Anyone who has ears should listen”, Jesus often said (Lk 14,35 and Mt 13,9).

However, it happened that Jesus raised his voice, but it was always to proclaim spiritual truths and to be heard by everyone. Indeed, John said that: “On the last day, the great day of the festival, Jesus stood and **cried out**: ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to Me! Let anyone who believes in me come and drink!’ As scriptures says, ‘From his heart shall flow streams of living water’. He was speaking of the Spirit which those who believed in Him were to receive” (Jn 7,37-39; to see also Ez 47,1-13 and Rv 22,2). It is of this same “living Water” that Jesus spoke to the Samaritan (Jn 4,13-14).

The Messiah promised to His disciples neither empire on the world, nor temporal glory, but the Spirit of God who restores the man with the image of God. Those who are thirsty of it, and who will turn to Him, will never be disappointed.

The fellow citizens of Jesus did not seek this divine Spirit; they were not thirsty of this water. On the contrary, his disciples wanted to water themselves only with the vivifying Source that the Messiah had opened inside them. St Paul, for example, considered the mosaic worship of the Torah worthless compared to the faith in Jesus, saying: “Circumcised on the eighth day of my life, I was born of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrew parents. In the matter of the Law (*the Torah*), I was a Pharisee; as for religious fervour, I was a persecutor of the Church; as for the uprightness embodied in the Law, I was faultless. But what were once my assets, I now, through Christ Jesus, count as losses. Yes, I will go further: because of the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, I count everything else as loss. For him I have accepted the loss of all other things, and look on them all as filth if only I can gain Christ...” (Ph 3,5-8). Paul, who was thirsty of the Spirit of Jesus, was not disappointed. He was quite conscious of having It since he said: “I believe that I too have the Spirit of God (1Co 7,40). “We are the true people of the circumcision since we worship by the Spirit of God and make Christ Jesus our only boast” (Ph 3,3). Paul would not have said these experienced words had he been satisfied with the worship of the Torah and had he not been fully satisfied with the Water of Jesus.

For us who are studying this Biblical Course, these words about the Water of the Eternal Life are of the highest importance, because the purpose of our study is to have within us the Source of this Water promised by Jesus. We are thus directly and personally concerned and interested. This is why we must do our “spiritual assessment” as already recommended at the beginning of this Spiritual Itinerary. Let us know if we are thirsty of the Water of Jesus, if we have drunk from it, if “from our hearts flow streams of living water” (Jn 7,38). Can we say like Paul: “I believe that I too have the Spirit of God?” Do we think like God? Am I as He wants me to be? If such is the case, then happy and blessed are we! Are you happy? If so, then your study has not been useless.

Let us thank the Messiah who gave us His Life to grant us this happiness. Let us not allow anybody to tear off this “treasure we hold in pots of earthenware (*fragile*), so that the

immensity of this power is God's and not our own" like Paul says (2Co 4,7). Let us remain with God and He will protect us.

8. Discussions between Jesus and the Jews (Jn 8,12-59)

In this violent controversy between Jesus and the Jews, Jesus reveals that He always acted according to "what He has seen at His Father's side", while, on the other hand, the Jews who have refused him acted according to "the lessons they have learnt from their father...the devil" (Jn 8,38-44).

The teaching of these words is that we all act - consciously or unconsciously - according to what we contemplate in the secret of our soul. We produce acts inspired by the spirit we listen to. If our heart leans towards God, we behave in a good way, but if we are attracted by the spirit of the devil, then our actions will be diabolic. If the Jews wanted to kill Jesus, it is because they have "the devil as father", they are allured by his dominating spirit and they contemplate him, consciously or not, unceasingly.

Men always imitate what they contemplate and admire. This criminal father, the devil, "was a murderer from the start", Jesus declares. Hadn't he allured the parents of humanity, seeking to kill their souls by moving them away from God? The apostles, instead, have followed Jesus, because they were unconsciously looking for God, they were contemplating Him without knowing. The Christ wanted them to become aware of that, when He tells them on the eve of his Passion: "No one can come to the Father except through me... **From this moment** you know Him and **have seen** Him" (Jn 14,7). On this same occasion, he also revealed to them that, unconsciously, they already knew him: "the Spirit of truth...but you know Him, because He is with you, He is (*already*) **within you**" (Jn 14,17).

9. The Jews want a nationalist Christ (Jn 10,24)

The Jews gathered round Jesus and asked him: "How much longer are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us openly". Jesus answered: "I have told you, but you do not believe".

The Jews ask for an answer, not to submit to the divine requirements which are spiritual, but to lead Jesus to bend to their political requirements, to take the head of a violent insurrectionary movement against the Roman occupation. They wanted him to know they're ready to fight against the Romans and follow him if he were the nationalist messiah. He only had to say one word and they would take the weapons and follow him..

The Jewish world had forgotten what the prophet Isaiah had said of the Messiah: "On Him will rest the Spirit of YHVH...He will strike the country with the rod of his **mouth** (*his mouth, i.e with his words, not with the sword*) and with the breath of his lips bring death to the wicked" (Is 11,2-4). Jesus never restrained from fighting the Israeli violence with his words to eradicate the sin of nationalism. The fanatics refused to listen to him, preferring "to die in their sin" (Jn 8,21-24) rather than to give up their ambitions of political hegemony, as it is the case of the Israelis of the XXth- XXIst centuries who prefer to die rather than to give up their dream of the political "Great Israel".

10. The Paraclete, the Trinity (Jn 14,16-31)

John is the only one to have spoken to us so much about the Holy Spirit (Jn 15,26; 16,7-15). It is the "Paraclete" or "Comforter" Jesus spoke about (*in Greek: "Paracritos", and in Hebrew: "Menahem": Jn 14,16 and 14,26*). This Spirit will support the Apostles and "will be with them forever" after the dramatic departure of Jesus: "I shall ask the Father and he will give

you **another** Comforter (*than Me*)... I shall not leave you orphans (*without Me*); **I** shall come to you (*by this Comforter*)” (Jn 14,19). Notice that it is still Jesus who “comes to them” in the form of the Holy Spirit to “comfort and console” them. Jesus and this Spirit are thus One, like Jesus and the Father are also One. The Father, Jesus and the Spirit are thus One. This text reveals the Trinity.

The consolation derives from the fact that the Christ, after His death, appears -exclusively- to those “who love Him” (Jn 14,21) to comfort them. The Apostles did not understand these words. They still thought that Jesus would be the nationalist king of Israel, who had to manifest himself, soon and alive, to the Jews. That’s why they asked him: “Lord, how is it that you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus did his utmost, until the last moment, to explain that the kingdom they should wait for was not the one they imagined, but that it was interior: “Anyone who loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our home **in him**” (Jn 14,23). They were not able yet to understand this interior dimension. John wrote all that much later, after having himself understood the deep importance of these words. He wrote then to enlighten the other Judeo-Christians for them to overcome the limits of the false Judaism whose fatal consequence was a nationalism non desired by God. This spiritual lesson is valid for all men of all centuries...in particular the materialistic ones.

11. To sanctify the Name of God (Jn 17,1-26)

Jesus prayed aloud to give His last teachings before leaving the world:

1) The Eternal Life consists in “**knowing** God and his Messiah”, i.e. to have in oneself the true conception of God, not to imagine Him to be different than He really is. Only the chosen ones recognize in Jesus this “image” of God, thus sharing the Eternal Life since down here on earth (Jn 17,3). St Paul said: “If our Gospel seems to be veiled at all, it is so to those who are on the way to destruction, the unbelievers whose minds have been blinded by the god of this world, so that they cannot see shining the light of the Gospel of the glory of the Christ, who is the **image of God**” (2Co 4,3). That applies today to those who cannot recognize the Beast of the Revelation, those for whom the Book of the Revelation of John remains closed.

To require a Zionist Messiah means to have a misleading image of God. When Jesus asks us to pray thus: “May your Name be sanctified”, he invites us to purify our concepts of God and his plans of salvation in favour of all mankind. Our stains prevent us from seeing the divine Essence in its purity. A short-sighted eye sees a face deformed, it is not the face which is bad, but the eye which looks at it. “Father heal my eyes so that I can see You as You are. Let your Name be sanctified in me, not disfigured by my blindness”. Jesus asked a blind man: “What do you want me to do for you?” He answered: “Sir, let me see again”. And Jesus healed him at once. We must also make this request to the Christ with faith. Because Jesus is alive, and alive forever, to answer our prayers. We will hear him say, in our hearts, what he had said to the blind man: “receive your sight! Your faith has saved you” (Lk 18,35-43). Jesus even said that he had come to give the sight, meaning the **spiritual insight** (Jn 9,39-41).

“I have revealed your Name to those whom you took from the world”, Jesus said to the Father (Jn 17,6). This Name is no more “YHVH”, as it has been revealed to Moses, but it is a much deeper and **immanent** truth, within men, it is written in letters of fire in men’s intimate life: **God dwells in the heart** of the believers, and hell is a Godless heart. God is the perfect Happiness. Who knows God as He really is, enjoys perfect happiness: John informed us that “God is Love” (1 Jn 4,16), and “whoever fails to love (*Jesus*) does not know God (*i.e. does not love Him*)”, John also says, because “this is the revelation of God’s love for us, that God

sent his Only Son into the world that we might have life through Him” (1 Jn 4,9). Such is the “Name” of God, the name by which we recognize Him: Love! And the **incarnated** Love: the Messiah! This holy Name is a scandal for many. But for the believers it is the Eternal Life. Such is the Name revealed by Jesus, the only one who could reveal it to us.

Jesus revealed this Name of God and said that He “will continue to make it known”, i.e. in the future (Jn 17,26). This revelation is done **in us**, until the end of times, “so that the love with which You loved Me may be **in them**, and so that I may be **in them**”, said Jesus. This immanence of God must thus be perfect in the hearts of the believers to be full of Him. The Christ, forever alive, will keep on teaching them the Love, the Love that links and that unites to the Father.

Those who preach a “transcendence” of God have a remote and distorted image of Him, that does not conform to the Name revealed by Jesus: a Name “**within us**”, immanent to the believers, because it is love and love is never transcendent. The Name of God is “Immanent”.

2) “I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to protect them from the Evil one” (Jn 17,15). Thus, one should not isolate oneself from the world as certain monks and religious do. These believers, in the majority, are afraid of the world and they fear to face the realities of the everyday life and the difficulties of the testimony of Jesus. They resemble that scared servant who hid his single talent into the ground, thus deserving to be rejected by the Master (Mt 25,24-30). We have “to win the world” knowing that “He (*Jesus*) who is in you is greater than he who is in the world (*Satan*)” (1Jn 4,4). The Apostles never isolated themselves.

It is by dwelling in the world with the strength of God, that we will be able to save the people of good will who are misled by the tricks of the world. Those who live in the world, like Jesus, but who have the true knowledge of God and his true “Name”, do not fear “to be led into temptation”; they will overcome the worldly seductions by fighting with courage; they triumph over evil, “the gates of hell can never overpower them” (Mt 16,18). We must have this faith!

12. “My kingdom is not of this world” (Jn 18,33-36)

Pilate, **anxious**, asked Jesus if he were the king of the Jews. Jesus answered: “My kingdom is not of this world (*Pilate did not have thus to worry about nor to arrest Him*). If my Kingdom were of this world, my men (*the Apostles and all the disciples after them*) would have fought to prevent my being surrendered to the Jews”. Jesus answered Pilate, who was obviously worried, believing that Jesus presented himself as a temporal king of Israel instead of Herod, a friend of the Romans. He wanted to be sure that Jesus was not preparing an insurrection against Rome. It is necessary to note Pilate’s concern, that worsened when he heard Jesus presenting Himself like the “Son of God”: “When Pilate heard them say this **his fears increased**”, said John (Jn 19,8). Pilate’s crisis of conscience was made even more acute by the premonitory dream of his wife, Claudia Procula, in favour of Jesus (Mt 27,19). According to the tradition, she would have given up her husband, after he had delivered Jesus to the Jews. She would then have become Christian.

By his answer, Jesus wanted to tell Pilate that his mission was not to oppose Rome, otherwise he would have ordered all those who followed him to rise against Herod and Caesar, and to avoid, by the violence of the weapons, that Jesus “be surrendered to the Jews” his enemies. All his disciples were waiting for only one word from him to revolt themselves. This is what worried Pilate.

The Jewish chiefs introduced Jesus to Pilate as a revolutionist against the Romans. Luke says that they brought Jesus before Pilate and they accused him saying: “We found this man inciting our people to revolt (*against Rome*), opposing payment of the tribute to Caesar, and claiming to be the Christ-King” (Lk 23,1-2).

It was this claim of sovereignty that had worried Pilate. But when he realised that Jesus did not aspire to a political kingdom, he wanted to set Him free (Lk 23,13-16). “But the Jews shouted : ‘If you set Him free **you are no friend of Caesar’s**; anyone who makes himself king is defying Caesar... We have no king except Caesar!’” (Jn 19,12-15). It is only “**then**”, i.e. after this proclamation of the unique sovereignty of Caesar, that Pilate “handed him over to them to be crucified”, John specifies (Jn 19,16) . As a representative of Caesar, Pilate could not resist to the threat of being accused of treason to the emperor and of supporting Jesus, after he had been introduced to him like a terrorist and a rebel against the Roman occupation. To be saint, Pilate should “have made violence” to himself by supporting the right cause of Jesus until the end, with the risk of undergoing infamy among men to deserve the eternal glory of Heaven.

Finally, we must note the bad faith of the Jewish chiefs who “incited the crowd to demand that he should release Barabbas” and that Jesus should be condemned (Mk 15,11). “Barabbas was a bandit” (Jn 18,40), “a notorious prisoner” (Mt 27,16), “with the **rebels** who had committed murder during the **uprising** (*against the Romans*)” (Mk 15,7). The bad faith of the Jews is evident in the choice of the release of the activist Barabbas, a “famous” Israeli nationalist of the time, and in the condemnation of Jesus as a revolutionary activist, accusing him of being what Barabbas really was.

Notice that the Apostles were armed with two swords (Lk 22,38), still believing in an uprising against the established power. When Jesus spoke to them about the decisive fight they were to carry out, he meant the spiritual fight they were to face after his crucifixion: “Now if you have a purse, take it... if you have no sword, sell your cloak and buy one... what it said about Me is even now reaching its fulfilment” (Lk 22,36). Jesus was speaking about the sword of the word, about the moral strength the Apostles should have had in front of the difficult moments and the spiritual fights that would have presented when “what it said about him was now reaching its fulfilment” i.e. his crucifixion so on. They did not understand his words; they believed that the hour of the revolt against Herod and Caesar had come. This is why they answered at once: “Here are two swords”. Exasperated by their incomprehension, the Christ answered: “That is enough!” (Lk 22,35-38). In fact, like Paul understood later, the sword ment by Jesus is “the sword of the spirit, that is the word of God” (Ep 6,17). The Revelation explains well that, for the Christ, “the sword” is the word, the power of the word of truth: “Out of his mouth came a sharp sword, double edged” (Rv 1,16), “I shall soon come to you and attack these people with the sword out of **my mouth**” (Rv 2,16).

At the Mount of Olives, during the arrest of Jesus, “his followers, seeing what was about to happen, said, ‘Lord, shall we use our swords?’ And one of them struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear”. Jesus intervened to prevent his people from defending him by the sword and said to his Apostles: “That is enough!” (Lk 22,49-51). Receiving no order of fighting, “**then** all the (*disappointed*) disciples deserted Him and ran away” (Mt 26,56), as Jesus had just foretold them: “Listen; the time will come – indeed it has come already – when you are going to be scattered, each going his own way, leaving me alone” (Jn 16,32).

13. John remains until the Return of Jesus (Jn 21,22)

“If I want him (*John*) to stay behind till I come, what does it matter to you?...”

These words were addressed by Jesus to Peter, regarding John, “the disciple whom Jesus loved”, as John liked to define himself (Jn 21,20). These words made the disciples believe that the return of the Christ was imminent, that it would have taken place while John was still alive.

This belief is reflected in the words of Paul to the Thessalonians: “**We who are still alive for the Lord’s (*Jesus*) coming...**” (1Th 4,15; repeated into 4,17).

For this reason, John, old and close to leave this earth (*he was approximately 95 years old when he wrote his Gospel*), knowing that “the rumour then went out among the brothers that this disciple would not die (*before the return of Jesus*)”, explains the words of the Saviour saying: “Yet Jesus had not said to Peter: ‘He will not die’, but, ‘If I want him to stay behind till I come’ (*what does it matter to you?*)” (Jn 21,23).

Paul, who also had believed in the immediate return of Jesus, had realised his error well before John had written his Gospel. In his second letter to the Thessalonians, he rectified what he had said in the first one concerning the Coming of Jesus. He specified about this subject: “Please do not be too easily thrown into confusion or alarmed by any manifestation of the Spirit or any statement or any letter claiming to come from us, suggesting that the Day of the Lord has already arrived. Never let anyone deceive you in any way. It cannot happen until the Great Revolt has taken place and there has appeared the wicked One, the lost One, the Enemy” (2Th 2,1-4). This “Enemy”, called “Antichrist” by John, is the adversary of Christ Jesus (1Jn 2,22).

Before the Coming of Jesus, at the end of times, a large sign is given to us as a point of reference: the appearance of the Antichrist, the “Beast” which should be recognized (Rv 13).

The book of the Revelation of John, is given to us for this purpose. It contains the revelations given to John to help us to identify this ferocious enemy who must appear on the eve of the Return of Jesus. It is in this way, by his Book of Revelation, that John must remain in the world until Jesus returns. It is by his Revelation that John is still in the world, to prepare the believers for this Return because, thanks to this salutary book, we know that the Antichrist has already appeared on the earth. The Return of Jesus is not thus far; it has even already begun in certain hearts.

Here the study of the Gospel and the letters of John end. What I have written about his 3 letters is enough to make you read them without finding major unclear points.

Now read the Gospel of John and his letters. Then go to the letters written by the Apostles.

III. The letters of Paul

Paul has written 14 letters to strengthen the faith of the first Christians who were, in the majority, Judeo-Christians. His principal concern was to warn them against these adversaries who made every effort to move them away from Jesus. These were the Jews who resisted to him everywhere and who wanted the neophytes to go back to the practise of the Torah by all kinds of reasoning. This is why Paul, writing to the Galatians, said to them: “You stupid people in Galatia! ...who has put a spell on you...There is only one thing I should like you to

tell me: How was it that you received the Spirit – was it by the practise of the Law (*the Torah*), or by believing in the message you heard (*the Gospel*)?” (Ga 3,1-2). “I am astonished that you are so promptly turning away from the one who called you in the grace of Christ... there are trouble-makers (*the non-believers Jews*) among you who are seeking to pervert the Gospel of Christ” (Ga 1,6-7). That’s how the diabolic spirit of the Antichrist acts.

The two letters of Paul to the Romans and to the Galatians must be studied together because they tackle the same problem: to prevent the Judeo-Christians from turning over to the useless practise of the worship and of the works of the Law (*the Torah*) : “It is obvious that nobody is reckoned as upright in God’s sight by the Law (*the Torah*), since the upright will live through **faith** (*in Jesus, not through the cult prescribed by the Torah*); and the Law (*the Torah*) is based not on faith (*in Jesus*)... Christ redeemed us (*liberated us*) from the **curse of the Law**...” (Ga 3,11-13). In his letter to the Romans, Paul also says: “A person is justified by faith and not by doing what the Law (*the Torah*) tells him to do” (Rm 3,28). Paul condemned himself before the Jews by qualifying the Torah a curse. But this justified him and glorified him before the Father and his Messiah.

Thus, all the effort of Paul was to convince these Jews who became Christians- and still used to attend the worship prescribed in the books of the Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy- that these practices were sterile for the soul and that only the faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and this faith **alone** could save, without the practices of the Law (*Torah*),.

Now you can read the letter to the Galatians.

Before reading the letter to the Romans, you must know that Paul addressed it to the Christians of Rome. They were divided into two distinct and, alas, adverse communities:

- a) That of the Judeo-Christians, founded by the Jews who had believed in Jesus.
- b) That of the Pagan-Christians, founded by the Pagans (*Romans in the majority*) who have joined the disciples of Christ.

These two communities despised each other. The first, formed by Jews, considered the Pagans unworthy of belonging to the people of believers. The Jews who had followed Jesus thought that Christianity was reserved to the Jews only, they had not understood yet the **universal** dimension of the message of Jesus. Paul then wrote them: “Do you think God is the God only of the Jews, and not of Gentiles too? Most certainly of Gentiles too, since there is only one God; He will justify the circumcised (*the Jews*) by their faith (*in Jesus*), and He will justify the uncircumcised (*the Pagans*) through their faith (*in Jesus*)” (Rm 3,29-30).

The Pagano-Christian community in turn despised the Judeo-Christians, believing – wrongly - that the Jews were to be excluded from the people of the believers because Jews had rejected Jesus. Paul contradicted them saying: “I too am an Israelite?... God never abandoned His own people... There is a **remnant**, set aside by grace (*by the faith in Jesus*). And since it is by grace, it cannot now be by good actions (*cult of the Torah*)” (Rm 11,1-6). One thus had not to close the door in front of “this *jewish* remnant”, these “chosen” Jews, because they had believed in Jesus. The same situation exists today since many Jews - as the movement “Jews for Jesus” - believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

By such sincere, true and peaceful, arguments, Paul tried to put the harmony between Judeo-Christians and Pagano-Christians, inviting them to “accept one another” (Rm 15,7).

The modern Zionist Israelis avail themselves of such verses, from the same letter, to be accepted by the Christians, in spite of their refusal of Jesus as Messiah, misleading them by an astute and distorted interpretations of Paul's words and intentions. By doing this, the Zionists aim at obtaining the support of the Christian world to the State of Israel. However, the words of Paul do not refer neither to the support of the State of Israel, nor to the Israelis of the XXth-XXIst centuries, but to "this elected remnant" (Rm 11,5) among the Jews, chosen in the past, because of their faith in Jesus. These benevolent words also apply nowadays to the Jews **who will believe in Jesus**. The nationalist Hebrews of today, by their refusal to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, are the Antichrist (1Jn 2,22) and the false Jews denounced by Jesus (Rv 2,9 and 3,9).

It should not be forgotten that Paul gave to the Jews a **condition** to be saved. Indeed, he said clearly: "**If they do not persevere in their unbelief** (*i.e. in their refusal of Jesus*), they will be grafted in (*in the people of God*)" (Rm 11,23).

Those who think that Paul takes the defence of the Israelis of our time and of the State of Israel must realise that:

a) Paul was a Hebrew who became an apostle of Jesus. He gave up the Jewish worship of the Torah which he regarded as nothing, even a curse (Ga 3,13).

b) Paul fought violently the deniers of Jesus, considering them enemies of God and of men; he said indeed: "The Jews who put the Lord Jesus to death, and the prophets too, and persecuted us also. Their conduct does not please God, and makes them the enemies of the whole human race..." (1Th 2,15-16).

c) Paul said clearly that the conclusion of his reasoning was the failure of those who are for the State of Israel, and the success of the chosen ones of Jesus: "What follows? Israel (*an imperialist political State*) failed to find what it was seeking: only those who were chosen found it (*the disciples of Jesus obtained the Holy Spirit and reached the Kingdom of God*)" (Rm 11,7).

The letter to the Romans ends with greetings which Paul addressed to both members of the two communities, citing their names to contribute to their reconciliation: Prisca and Aquila are of Jewish origin (Rm 16,3) and Luke mentions them in Ac 18,1-2. You will read the names of the Pagano-Christians mentioned by Paul at the end of the letter, making to both communities a last recommendation of love: "Greet each other with a holy kiss" (Rm 16,16).

Now read the letter to the Romans, taking into account that it has been addressed to these two communities to reconcile them and to link them in the love of the Messiah, Jesus, inviting the Jews to rise above the Pharisees' considerations condemned by God (see Mt 5,20), and the seconds not to fall in turn into racism by drawing aside the Jews, as such, from the possibility of believing in Jesus to be saved.

Paul, indeed, constantly taught that Jews and Pagans merge in Jesus: "For He (*Jesus*) is the peace between us, and has made the two (*Pagans and Jews*) into one entity and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, by destroying in **his own Person** the hostility, that is, the Law (*the Torah*) of commandments with its decrees. His purpose in this was, by restoring peace, to create a single New Man out of the two of them, and through the Cross, to reconcile them both to God in one Body" (Ep 2,14-18).

Knowing that his mission was to reveal God and the Christ to the Pagans (Ac 9,15), Paul realized that he had to fight bravely against the exclusivism of the Jews who “are hindering us from preaching to gentiles to save them” (1Th 2,16).

All the letters of Paul are the fruit of his fights “to reveal his Son in me, so that I should preach him to the gentiles” (Ga 1,16). He appreciated the grace to announce to the Pagans “the unfathomable treasure of Christ” (Ep 3,8), “the glory of this mystery among the gentiles” (Col 1,27), thus becoming the indisputable “apostle of the gentiles” (Ga 2,8), as Jesus wanted him to be (Ac 9,15).

Having understood this most important point concerning Paul, you can now read his letters.

The letters of Peter, James and Judah do not present difficulties. Read them.