

(1) Discuss among yourselves the statement by Jesus that these ethnic “Jews” were not Jews but instead a “synagogue of Satan.” What did he mean? Read Romans 2:28-29 and Philippians 3:3. How do these two texts help us understand who the “true” Jews really are? Is it possible for a Gentile to be a “true” Jew? If so, how?

(2) Why must we resist the tendency of some to use this passage as a way to justify anti-Semitism?

(3) What is the relationship between suffering in its many forms and our progressive sanctification in becoming more and more like Jesus? Read 1 Peter 1:6-7.

(4) What effect does suffering have on the human heart? How might we strengthen ourselves to be ready to respond to suffering in a way that will honor Christ and prevent us from falling into bitterness and despair?

(5) Talk about the reality of the “second death”. What is it? How does it affect you to know that because of what Jesus has done for you on the cross you will never suffer the second death? Why are we so hesitant to speak about the reality of hell or the second death?