

**A Brief Survey of**  
**The Gospel of John**  
**Second Edition**

**M. David Johnson**

## **A Brief Survey of The Gospel of John Second Edition**

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M. David Johnson**

*“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:30-31, ESV).*

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### **Doctrinal Position**

I hold to traditional Reformed Theology as often expressed by the acronym TULIP:

**T = Total Depravity**  
**U = Unconditional Election**  
**L = Limited Atonement**  
**I = Irresistible Grace**  
**P = Perseverance of the Saints**

I also hold to the verbal plenary inspiration of the Bible, and affirm its authority, sufficiency, and inerrancy in the original autographs.

*Sola Scriptura – Sola Fide – Sola Gratia – Solus Christus – Soli Deo Gloria*

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## A Brief Survey of the Gospel of John: Chapters 1-3

“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:30-31, ESV).



PALESTINE IN JESUS' DAY

Suppose you went out into the desert to set up a free water stand so those who traveled across the burning sands could stop and slake their thirst along the way.

Would you hide the stand behind a dune where nobody would ever see it?

Or, would you instead erect your stand next to the major trade route and put up a big billboard saying “FREE WATER”?

The Apostle John put a big billboard on his gospel, “these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

“FREE WATER”.

While exiled on the Isle of Patmos, John wrote in Revelation 22:17, “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Except where otherwise indicated, all Bible quotations in this book are from the KJV. This version was chosen because, in many places, it’s the only English version readily available and because it’s in the public domain and can be used without having to obtain any special permission.)

“FREE WATER”.

John wants **YOU** to have eternal life. That’s why he wrote his gospel. That’s what it’s all about!

Thus, the Gospel of John is primarily an apologetic, i.e. a reasoned defense of Christianity.

Norman L. Geisler writes concerning Apologetics in John’s Gospel (Geisler, p. 340):

The Gospel of John provides evidence of truth about God (3:33; 10:38; 18:37), evidence of truth about Scripture (2:17; 19:24), and evidence of truth about Christ (2:18; 5:36). John “set forth his case” (Isaiah 41:21) and God bids, as it were, “come now and let us reason together” (Isaiah 1:18). One purpose of John’s apologetic, then, is to give evidence of the truth. In John’s words, “He who has received His witness has set his seal to this, that God is true” (John 3:33). Again, “believe the works; that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father” (10:38). Jesus said very clearly to Pilate, “for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth” (18:37).

Likewise by fulfilling prophecy Jesus gave evidence to the disciples that the Scriptures are true (cf. John 2:17; 19:24). Repeatedly the Gospel states that Jesus gave evidence to those who asked proof of who He is. Once it was the evidence of His resurrection (2:18-22), and at other times it was the evidence of the “works” which He did (5:36).

John wrote his Gospel in the latter half of the first century. Some say it was written as early as 68 A.D., i.e. before the fall of Jerusalem to the Roman General Titus Flavius Vespasianus in 70 A.D. Others say it was written as late as 98 A.D., after his return to Ephesus from the Isle of Patmos. The exact date is not a matter of great importance.

More important is the fact that it was written by John the Apostle, who was one of Jesus' closest companions during Jesus' life on Earth. This fact is confirmed by the ancient church fathers, and it was not disputed even by the most ardent opponents of revelation in the early days of the church, Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian. The book's acceptance as canonical (i.e. as a legitimate part of the Bible) was also never disputed within the early church.

John was the son of Zebedee (Matthew 4:21) and Salome (Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40). Zebedee owned a fishing business (Mark 1:19-20). Salome followed Jesus in his travels and cared for his needs (Matthew 27:55; Mark 15:41). It is probable that John was fairly well-known in Jerusalem even before he met Jesus – He was certainly acquainted with Caiaphas, the High Priest (John 18:15). Jesus commended His own mother, Mary, into John's care from the cross (John 19:26-27). John may well have been the youngest of the Apostles, and he may have lived to be more than 100 years old.

John may actually have been related to Jesus. One tradition says Salome was Joseph's daughter by a previous wife. Thus, Salome would have been Jesus' half-sister, and John would have been His nephew. But these things are conjecture and, by no means, certain. What *is* certain is that John, with his brother James, and with Peter, formed the innermost circle of Jesus' disciples.

These three alone were present at the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead (Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51), at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1; Mark 9:2), and in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-45; Mark 14:32-42). John was the one who reclined next to Jesus and leaned upon Him during the Last Supper (John 13:23).

But, as interesting as all this background may be, the *most* important and fascinating information is that which the Holy Spirit wrote to us, through John.

**John 1:1-2. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.**

This Gospel begins with the same words as the book of Genesis, "In the beginning". We are looking at the very moment when time began. And, at that very moment, the Word "*was*"; i.e. the Word already existed.

What or Who is this Word? We will see in verse 14, "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us". This "Word" is none other than Jesus Christ Himself.

What else does John 1:1-2 tell us about Jesus? It says, "In the beginning... the Word was with God". So, before time began, Jesus not only already existed; He was in the presence of God the Father.

The New Testament, including the Gospel of John, was originally written in Greek. And the Greek word translated “with” in John 1:1 is **πρὸς** (pros). This word is the common preposition used, for example, in Matthew 13:56, “And his sisters, are they not with us?” This thus indicates that Jesus (the Word), even though in close personal proximity and relationship with God the Father, was a distinct and separate person from God the Father.

John 1:1 also says, “In the beginning... the Word was God”. This is indeed a staggering concept. Right here in the first verse of the first chapter of the Gospel of John, we are bluntly told, “Jesus Christ *is* God!” In the Greek, this clause reads **θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος** (theos ēn ho logos).

Now, the literal order of those words in Greek is “God was the Word”, but that is **NOT** what the clause means, nor is that how the clause is actually translated into English.

In English, the meaning of a clause is generally determined by its word order. “This man is a sailor” has a significantly different meaning and connotation than “This sailor is a man”. But, in Greek, the meaning of a clause is *not* determined by word order, but rather by the case, gender, tense, voice, mood, person, and number (i.e. singular or plural) of its individual words. The *positions* of the words within a Greek clause indicate their relative *emphasis*.

In this clause, “logos” (Word) is in the nominative case and has the article “ho” (the) which indicates it is the subject of the clause. Since “theos” (God) is placed first in the clause, this means it has the main emphasis in the clause. We might indicate this graphically by writing the clause as “the Word was **GOD!**”

Note that “theos” (God) does *not* have the article. This is critical. If it *did* have the article, it would mean Jesus and God the Father were identical. That would contradict the clause, “the Word was with God”. That would be like saying Winston Churchill was with Winston Churchill, i.e. nonsensical.

But theos being anarthrous (i.e., without the article) means Jesus has the same nature as God the Father, and has all the same characteristics and attributes, while still remaining a separate individual.

In writing the Bible, the Holy Spirit carefully wove together even the seemingly most insignificant words in order to assure that its meanings were all perfect in every respect. It is thus by careful analysis of such details that we can deduce such doctrines as the trinity: the fact that there is only one God, but that He subsists as three individual persons.

We’ve spent a lot of time looking at just the first verse, but that’s because it’s the governing verse for the entire Gospel of John. John wanted us to use this verse as a lamp to illuminate everything else which follows in his Gospel.

Jesus’ eternal existence, and His relationship with the Father, are both further emphasized by the repetition in verse 2.

**1:3-5. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.**

In the beginning, God the Father said, “Let there be light,” and it was Jesus Christ, God the Son, who carried out that command. God the Father said, “Let us make man in our image,” and it was the Word who did the construction.

When the breath of life was breathed into Adam’s nostrils, it was God the Son who performed that task.

Colossians 1:16 says, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:”.

And Hebrews 1:2 tells us God “Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds”.

And this life was the Light of men. It was not the light of chimpanzees. It was not the light of pigs. It was not the light of amoeba. It was not the light of any other animal. This Light makes human beings different from every other animal which God created. We share some characteristics with animals, but we are *more* than animals. We are men (male and female); we bear the image of God.

In the ESV, verse 5 reads, “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” The force of the Greek **κατέλαβεν** (katelaben) includes both the concepts of failure to comprehend and failure to overcome.

Roger Fredrickson illustrates the concept of no comprehension, “The light is always a mystery to darkness. There is a hardness, a stubborn rebellion, which makes it impossible for the darkness to understand or open up to the light.” (Fredrikson, p.36).

While F. F. Bruce illustrates the inability to overcome, “a little candle can dispel a roomful of darkness and not be dimmed by it. Light and darkness are opposites, but they are not opposites of equal power.” (Bruce, p. 34).

**1:6-8. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.**

This is not John, the son of Zebedee, the author of this Gospel. It is instead John, the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, also known as John the Baptist (cf. Matthew 3:1-17; 11:2-19; Mark 1:1-11; 6:14-29; Luke 1:5-24, 39-80; 3:1-22; 7:17-35).

John came to bear witness to the Light, i.e. to Jesus the Light of men. Jesus did not simply bring light to men. He, Himself, *is* the Light.



And the purpose of John's bearing witness to the Light was the same as the purpose for which the Apostle John wrote this Gospel, "that all men through [Jesus] might believe."

John was not the Light, but in John 5:35, Jesus says John was a lamp, e.g. a mechanism from out of which the Light was able to shine.

**1:9-14. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.**

Jesus is the true Light of the world. He shines forth with more brilliance than the Sun. He is to be seen in all the wonderful aspects of creation (cf. Romans 1:20); from the beauty of the far-flung universe down to the clockwork tick of the tiniest vibrating atom.

This Light is available to everyone, but we will see in John 3:19-21 many *refuse* to see the light and refuse to come to it. They live in darkness, not because no light is available, but because they prefer the darkness.

The NCV of verse 11 reads, "He came to the world that was his own, but his own people did not accept him." In the Greek, we have two terms, the neuter plural **τὰ ἴδια** (ta idea) followed shortly by the masculine plural **οἱ ἴδιοι** (hoi idioi). The KJV translates both terms by "his own". The NCV better reveals the difference between the two different genders (neuter and masculine). One is a place and the other is a people.

But, while the majority of people may reject Him, to those of us who receive Him and believe on His name, He gives the right and authority to become the children of God.

Leon Morris writes, "The 'name' meant much more to people of antiquity than it does to us. For us it is a mere appellative, a convenient label whereby we distinguish one person from another. We ask, 'What's in a name?' and answer (with Shakespeare) 'that which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.' The name for us is a matter of indifference. Not so in the ancient world. There it stood for the whole personality." (Morris, p. 88).

We are thus born into God's family by God's express will, not by being physically born, neither by being born into a "Christian" family, nor by any other act of our own. Ephesians 2:8 reads, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God".

In verse 14, we have the event to which all of the preceding has been leading; "the Word was made flesh". The eternal broke into the mundane. The all-powerful, eternal God the Son, laid aside His power and, stepping down from His throne, became a helpless baby in the arms of a lowly human mother and step-father. Thus Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man.

John Calvin wrote, “He calls him *the Only-begotten*, because he is the only Son of God by nature; as if he would place him above men and angels, and would claim for him alone what belongs to no creature.” (Calvin, John Vol. I, p. 47).

**1:15-18. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.**

Verse 15 actually begins in the present tense, e.g. “John bears witness”, suggesting perhaps that even though John was already dead when this Gospel was written, yet his testimony was still speaking across the years.

This piece of information should be a source of blessing to our own hearts. II Corinthians 5:10 tells us, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

And I Corinthians 3:11-15 says, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

Now, if you perhaps feel what you have been able to accomplish in the Lord's service doesn't seem like very much, consider this: If, during your entire lifetime, something you say or do in passing only contributes to two other persons' salvation, or edification, or joy; and then each of them only influences two others during their lifetime, etc.; in twenty generations what you originally said or did will have influenced 2,097,150 people.

And Hebrews 6:10 says, “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”

Next, note that John the Baptist declares that Jesus “was before him” or, as the NEB renders it, “before I was born, he already was.” In point of time, John was born before Jesus. But John acknowledges that Jesus, the Word, God the Son, had already existed for all eternity before John's birth.

Lewis Sperry Chafer comments, “Had John made reference only to matters of appointment and dignity he would have said, He is before me, and not, He was before me. The text declares that, in point of time, Christ preceded John.” (Chafer, 1940, p. 276).

We receive grace for grace, i.e. grace after grace, or grace upon grace; all out of His fullness. Go down to the seashore and watch the waves rolling in. One wave follows upon another in a never-ending sequence. Such is the grace of God. It just keeps coming and coming. Nothing can stop it.

The Law was given through Moses, but the Law cannot save us. All it does is set the standard and point out to us how far short of that standard we continuously fall. But grace and truth come to us through Jesus Christ who died on the cross to pay for our sins, and who was raised from the dead as proof that His sacrifice was sufficient for that purpose (cf. Romans 1:3-4).

Verse 18 reminds us that no one has ever seen God face-to-face. But the only begotten Son, i.e. Jesus, has declared God to us. But there is actually even more force in this verse. In many of the Greek manuscripts of John's Gospel, the wording is indeed **μονογενῆς υἱός** (monogenēs huios) "only begotten Son". But in many others, including some of the oldest, the wording is **μονογενῆς Θεός** (monogenēs theos) "only begotten God". There are strong arguments favoring the latter reading, and this would further reinforce the earlier clear statement of verse 1; i.e. Jesus Christ *is* God.

Samuel Ngewa writes:

There are many in Africa who deny the message of this passage. They may call themselves Jehovah's Witnesses or representatives of Christ, but unless their message proclaims that Jesus is God, the Creator of all things, and the only basis upon which any man or woman receives blessings from God, they are to be condemned for their blasphemy. They are to be prayed for, but are also to be shunned. False teaching finds ready soil in Africa due to the natural religiosity of African people. It is time, however, that we in Africa became a little more discerning, to distinguish truth from error. We must guard the truths taught in this passage with all our being if we are to be on the same side as God, whose word clearly tells us that Jesus is God. (Ngewa, p. 1280).

**1:19-28. And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.**

Here, as in many other places throughout this Gospel, the term "the Jews" does not refer to the entire nation or race, but rather to the leadership in Jerusalem.

John the Baptist readily admitted he was not the Christ; i.e. not the Messiah (cf. Daniel 9:25-26 and note “anointed” in I Samuel 1:21). F. F. Bruce writes, “The designation ‘Christ’ represents Gk. *christos*, the verbal adjective of *chriō* (‘anoint’); it is the counterpart of ‘Messiah’, which represents the verbal adjective of Heb. *māshah* (‘anoint’).” (Bruce, p. 47). Thus “Jesus” is our Savior’s name and “Christ” is His title, i.e. The Anointed One”.

He also said he was not Elijah (Elias). Malachi 4:5 had predicted, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD”. So, presumably, they were asking him if he was declaring that the Day of the Lord, i.e. the great day of tribulation and judgment was about to come upon them.

But note that, after the transfiguration, “And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.” (Matthew 17:9-13).

John the Baptist also said he was not “that prophet”. In Deuteronomy 18:15, Moses told the people of Israel, “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken”. It was Jesus Himself who was “that prophet”.

All John the Baptist claimed for himself was that he was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, i.e. cf. Isaiah 40:3, “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

So then, why was he baptizing. Baptism was part of the rite of purification for outsiders, Gentiles who wanted to proselytize, i.e. become Jews. But John was baptizing Jews as well as Gentiles.

John replied emphatically, **Ἐγὼ βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι** (Egō baptizō en hudati) i.e. “I myself baptize with water”. If he had simply wanted to indicate, “I baptize with water”, he only needed to write **βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι** without the preceding **Ἐγὼ**. (In Greek, the personal pronouns are usually subsumed within the verb, and are generally only expressed explicitly when emphasis is required). Thus, John was indicating there was someone else who would soon be baptizing with something else

**1:29-34. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he**

**which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.**

Christians are used to hearing Jesus referred to as “the Lamb of God”. But this must’ve sounded very strange to the people of Israel 2,000 years ago. They knew of the paschal lamb which each family had to provide at the celebration of the Passover. But that was a lamb from the family’s flock; not the Lamb of God. And, it was for the Passover; not for taking away sin.

They might also have thought of the Ram which God provided as a substitute for Isaac when Abraham had been instructed to sacrifice Isaac. But, that was a ram, not a lamb.

Or, they might have thought of Abraham’s earlier words in Genesis 22:8, “And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.” But that was for a burnt offering, not a sin offering.

Perhaps the most likely antecedent is Isaiah 53:7-10, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.”

John F. Walvoord wrote, “No specific sin or kind of sin is indicated, but sin is viewed in its total. Sin as an obstacle to salvation was removed by the sacrifice of Christ as the ‘lamb of God.’ The fact that the singular is used is important in specifying the collective use of the word.” (Walvoord, p. 170).

The descent of the Holy Spirit as a dove upon Jesus confirmed He was the predicted ruler from the line of David. Isaiah 11:1-2 reads, “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD”. Also see Isaiah 42:1; 61:1.

John bore witness to what he saw and heard. Matthew 3:16-17 records these things explicitly, “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

**1:35-42. Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw**

**where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.**

So, the first question these two soon-to-be disciples ask Jesus is, “Where do you live?” Now, to Americans and others in Western Civilization, this may seem like a rather flippant and offhand question to be asking of the One who has just been labeled, “The Lamb of God.”

But to those who have grown up in Eastern Cultures, this won't seem unusual at all. Ravi Zacharias writes (Zacharias, p. 27):

[I]n the East, the home is the defining cultural indicator. Everything that determines who you are and what your future bodes is tied into your heritage and your social standing. Absolutely everything....

An introduction in the West, particularly in North America, is all about what *I* have or have not accomplished. The credentials are individual, almost as if an individual owes even his beginning to himself. There is little or no mention of family. But in India, the country of my father's birth, my father's credentials, my mother's birth, and my roots become very important to the audience.

I notice this significant difference to this very day. In the West, it does not take long for a stranger to ask, “Where do you work?” or “What is your business?” The questioner's thoughts are forming a picture, to determine your financial profile and corporate influence so that the conversation can follow that trail. In the East, the question comes with equal deliberateness, “Which was your home city when you lived here?” “Which part of town did you live in?” “What did your father do?” Names, addresses, and family background are very defining. East or West, the goal may be the same, to place you in society's assigned place. Only the routing is different.

Jesus was born and became human in Bethlehem. But He didn't begin there. At the beginning of creation, Jesus already “was”. His existence is eternal. Shortly after His birth, His family moved to Nazareth, and He's been widely referred to as “Jesus of Nazareth” ever since. But that's really a misnomer. Heaven is His throne and Earth is His footstool. All of creation is contained within Him. His “home” cannot be restricted to any one place.

Zacharias (p. 33) says, “To ask for the ‘where’ of Jesus home is the same as asking the ‘when’ of God's beginning. Such categories are necessary in our finite existence, because there was a time when we were not. But God transcends such categories.”

**1:43-51. The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip**

**findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.**

In the lists of the twelve primary disciples in the other Gospels, it's generally assumed that Nathaniel is the same as Bartholomew, i.e. Nathaniel Bar-Tholomai, i.e. Nathaniel the Son of Ptolemy.

When Philip claims to have found the one who fulfilled the prophecies, Jesus of Nazareth, Nathaniel initially makes a derisive comment about the town of Nazareth. He would probably have been well aware the Messiah had to come from Bethlehem (cf. Micah 5:2). Jesus, of course, *had* been born in Bethlehem, but his family had moved to Nazareth after they returned from hiding from King Herod in Egypt.

But, when Jesus tells Nathaniel about having seen him under the fig tree, presumably from beyond the limits of human sight due perhaps to distance, intervening topographical features, the curvature of the Earth, etc., Nathaniel immediately forsook all his doubts and praised Jesus as the Son of God and the King of Israel.

The Shema (pronounced approximately “Shmah”) is Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD”. This is Israel’s declaration and affirmation of faith in one God. Each Jew is obligated to recite the Shema every morning and every evening. For an “Israelite indeed” to have openly avowed that Jesus was the Son of God was an act of staggering proportions.

This is the first of 25 places in this Gospel where Jesus uses the very strong double affirmation, “Verily, verily”. Also see John 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19, 24, 25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; 8:34, 51, 58; 10:1, 7; 12:24; 13:16, 20, 21, 38; 14:12; 16:20, 23; and 21:18.

“Verily, verily” translates Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν (Amēn amēn).

Ἀμὴν is a transliteration into Greek of the Hebrew אָמֵן (amen) which means “Surely!” i.e. “the solemn formula by which the hearer a) accepts the validity of a curse or oath, b) accepts a salutary message, or c) joins himself to a doxology (Westminster, Numbers 5:22).

It comes from a Hebrew root word meaning to confirm, support, uphold, to be certain, or to believe in.

From (Harris, Archer, and Waltke; Vol I, p. 51) we find on the meaning of that root word:

This very important concept in biblical doctrine gives clear evidence of the biblical meaning of “faith” in contradistinction to the many popular concepts of the term. At the heart of the meaning of the root is the idea of certainty. And this is borne out by the NT definition of faith found in Heb 11:1.

The basic root idea is firmness or certainty.

Jesus tells them they are going to see “the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man”.

This picture brings to mind Jacob’s vision at Bethel, i.e. Genesis 28:12, “And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.”

But Jesus here claims He, Himself is that ladder. And that image further brings to mind I Timothy 2:5, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”.

**2:1-11. And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.**

The first miracle Jesus ever performed was at a wedding. Jesus clearly upheld God’s institution of marriage. In Matthew 19:4-6, Jesus affirmed, “And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

Six waterpots with an average capacity of 2.5 firkins each = a total of 15 firkins. Now, a firkin was about eight gallons, so we’re talking about roughly 120 gallons of water being turned into wine. Think three bathtubs full.



“Woman, what have I to do with thee?” sounds more disrespectful in English than it would have in the original Greek. But, in any event, it firmly establishes that Jesus is no longer just the son of Mary. He is now out in the world upon His Father’s business. Nonetheless, Mary has spent His 30 or so years of life to date pondering many things about Him in her heart (cf. Luke 2:19). She has a good idea of what He may be able to accomplish, and so tells the servants to do whatever He says.

A wedding celebration in those days was a lavish affair, and might go on for a week or more. It was the host’s responsibility to provide for his guests; to run out of wine was more than just an irritation or an inconvenience; it was a social catastrophe. It could even lead to legal penalties.

Please especially note the ultimate result of this miracle: It “manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.” The primary purpose of this miracle, like all the rest, is “that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:31).

**2:12-17. After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days. And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.**

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild...

So goes the children’s song. And Jesus *was* very kind and gentle, especially when dealing with those who were weak and trapped by sin.

But, with those who were filled with arrogant pride, and who flouted God’s Law in favor of their own man-made rules, He was quite severe.

Jesus made a whip.

The Greek is φραγέλλιον (phragellion) which is a word loaned from the Latin, i.e. flagellum: a whip or scourge; the Roman lash used for public punishment. (Gingrich, John 2:15). (Strong, Gk. Dict. No. 5416, p. 103).

Many commentators over the years have tried to soften the thrust of this passage by saying Jesus only used the whip to drive out the animals, not the men who were selling the animals. For example, Matthew Henry writes, “He did not make a scourge to chastise the offenders (his punishments are of another nature), but only to drive out the cattle; he aimed no further than at reformation.” (Henry, John 2:15).

And these attempts began quite early, even in the transmission of the Gospel itself. Bruce Metzger writes, “Several witnesses, including the two oldest... prefix ὡς. If this word had been present in the original text, there is no good reason which would account for its having been omitted from the other witnesses. On the other hand, it is probable copyists introduced the word in order to soften somewhat the bald statement that Jesus made a whip of cords; ‘he made a kind of whip of cords.’” (Metzger, pp. 202-203).

But the original Greek in this passage seems to me to better support the concept that Jesus used the whip to drive the moneychangers out of the temple, along with their sheep and oxen. The Greek **εκβάλλω** (ekballō) “drive out” (compare **ἐκβάλλω** “cast out” in the parallel accounts of Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46) has the force of to “expel lit. *throw out* more or less forcefully” (Gingrich, John 2:15).

And the **πάντας** (pantas) “all” seems to encompass the men as well as the animals.

Warren Wiersbe writes on this passage (Wiersbe, 2008, John 2:15):

Jesus revealed His zeal for God first of all by cleansing the temple (John 2:13-17). The priests had established a lucrative business of exchanging foreign money for Jewish currency, and also selling the animals needed for the sacrifices. No doubt, this "religious market" began as a convenience for the Jews who came long distances to worship in the temple; but in due time the "convenience" became a business, not a ministry. The tragedy is that this business was carried on in the court of the Gentiles in the temple, the place where the Jews should have been meeting the Gentiles and telling them about the one true God. Any Gentile searching for truth would not likely find it among the religious merchants in the temple.

Our Lord suddenly appeared in the temple and cleaned house! He was careful not to destroy anyone's property (He did not release the doves, for example); but He made it clear that He was in command. The temple was His Father's house, and He would not have the religious leaders pollute it with their moneymaking enterprises.

The condition of the temple was a vivid indication of the spiritual condition of the nation. Their religion was a dull routine, presided over by worldly minded men whose main desire was to exercise authority and get rich. Not only had the wine run out at the wedding feast but the glory had departed from the temple.

**2:18-22. Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.**

The “Jews” referenced here were most likely members of the temple administration. They no doubt had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. They were asking for a sign, not so much for confirmation of Jesus’ authority, but rather as a means of denying it. They were challenging His right to interfere with what they were doing.

But Jesus turned the tables on them and offered an outstanding sign of His deity. He effectively told them, “Three days after you kill me, I... I myself... will raise myself back to life.” What an outrageously powerful claim! Only God Himself could be so far above death as to be able to accomplish something like that. After all, how could *any* man do *anything* after he was dead, let alone something as powerful as raising himself back to life.

There is another fine distinction here as well. In verses 14 and 15, the Greek word used for temple is ἱερόν (hieron) which was used to refer to the entirety of the temple, including all its buildings and courts. But in verses 19 to 21, the word used is ναός (naos) which was used to refer specifically to the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, i.e. to the place where God met with the high priest.

It’s in this more restricted sense, and using this more restrictive Greek word, which Paul wrote to we who believe, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (I Corinthians 3:16).

**2:23-25** Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

Jesus knows our hearts. He knows those of us who truly believe in Him. And he knows those of us who are merely putting on an act.

**3:1-15.** There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in

**the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.**

That Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews meant he was a member of the Sanhedrin, the group of 71 elders who comprised the legislative body of ancient Israel as well as its supreme court. He may have come to Jesus at night because he was fearful of being seen together with Jesus, or he may have simply concluded nighttime would be the best time for a lengthy discussion away from the crowds.

Nicodemus began the discussion by complementing Jesus. But Jesus immediately leapt upon the need of Nicodemus' soul, "You need to be reborn." And Jesus stressed this by using the double Amen. But Nicodemus didn't understand. He thought Jesus was talking about physical birth.

Throughout this Gospel, John records many occasions where somebody misunderstands what Jesus says. Jesus then uses the misunderstanding as an opportunity to explain what He means more clearly and in greater detail. Here, Jesus is talking about the requirements for entering the kingdom of God, which generally means the same thing as entering eternal life.

This parallel meaning is found in the other Gospels too. For example, entering life in Mark 9:45 is seen as the same thing as entering the kingdom of God in Mark 9:47.

Jesus is not talking about physical birth though: He's talking about the need for spiritual rebirth. In Ezekiel 36:26, God promised Israel, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." In verse 33 of that chapter, Ezekiel records God would fulfill that promise "In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities".

In Ezekiel 37:9, God commands the prophet, "Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."

Now compare Ezekiel 36:26 and 37:9 with John 3:1-15. In the original Hebrew of Ezekiel and in the LXX (Greek Septuagint) version of Ezekiel and in this passage in John, we find the Hebrew word רִיחַ (ruakh) and the Greek word πνεῦμα (pneuma). Both of these words can mean breath, wind, or spirit, depending on their context.

Words with such multiple meanings are not uncommon; not in Hebrew, not in Greek, and not in English. Consider, for example, the English word "putting". It means one thing in the sentence, "I will be putting the children to bed." It means something entirely different in the game of golf where "putting" is what you do on the green when you stroke the golf ball with the putter into the hole.

Or consider the English word "nuts". In one context it refers to peanuts, cashews, etc. In another, it refers to someone who is crazy, as in "He's nuts!" In yet another context, it can mean the male testicles. And, in yet another context, nuts are the counterpart of bolts.

In John 3:1-15, Jesus weaves the meanings Spirit and wind into a tapestry which shows the need for a spiritual birth into God's family as being just as necessary for eternal life as a physical birth into an earthly family is for physical life.

When Nicodemus still doesn't understand, Jesus chides him, "How can you be a master (ESV = "the teacher") of Israel and not know these things?" And He observes rightly that those who don't understand earthly matters will be hard pressed indeed when they try to understand heavenly matters.

But, even so, Jesus doesn't leave Nicodemus alone in his confusion. He gently turns Nicodemus to a passage of scripture which he had probably learned very early at his mother's knee. At one point during their wanderings in the desert after God had delivered them out of the land of Egypt, the Israelites became rebellious and God sent fiery serpents to afflict them with poisonous bites. When Moses pled with God for them, God instructed him to make a brass serpent and raise it high on a pole. Then all who had been bitten and looked upon that brass serpent would be healed.

Jesus told Nicodemus, "I'm going to be lifted up just like that brass serpent, so that everyone who believes in me may have eternal life."

F. F. Bruce writes, "This is the first place in this Gospel where the frequently repeated phrase 'eternal life' (zōē aiōnios) occurs. Primarily this means the life of the age (aiōn) to come, resurrection life, which believers in Christ enjoy in advance because of their union with the one who is already risen from the dead. In the Gospel of John that meaning is certainly present, but eternal life here is the very life of God which resides in the eternal Word ('in him was life') and is communicated by him to all believers." (Bruce, p. 89).

**3:16-21. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.**

John 3:16 is probably the best known verse in the Bible. That God loved the world doesn't mean He approves of the actions of human beings. But it does mean He cares deeply for us and strongly desires the very best for us. He desires this for us even in the midst of our sin and rebellion. As fathers and mothers, we love our children even when we disapprove of their actions. It's the same with God.

That God loved the world means He loves each and every one of us. And, because He loves us so deeply, He sacrificed His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, so we might live and enjoy fellowship with Him forever. All the world has been devastated by the ravages of sin, and all

men and women, boys and girls apart from Jesus' sacrifice, stand condemned before God's wrath.

We were all hopeless and sunk in the depths of sin when Jesus died to pay the penalty we owed. That He gave His one and only Son means just that: it was a gift, freely given. We had no claim on God. We had rebelled against Him. There was no reason why He should bestow so magnificent a gift upon us, other than because of His great love for us. He had compassion on us and didn't want to see us perish forever.

That God gave His only begotten Son means the sacrifice was supreme. Which one of us would sacrifice our own son to save our sworn enemy? In the NIV, Romans 5:6-8 says, "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

God did not send Jesus to judge and condemn us. He would certainly have been right to do so: We had so treacherously dealt with God's previous gifts that we certainly deserved punishment. But, instead, out of His great love, God sent Jesus to reconcile us to Himself.

But there is certainly a danger here. If God sent His Son so those who believe on Him should not perish, how can those who reject and despise Jesus do anything else but perish. Don't remain in that wretched camp. Acts 16:31 says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved".

Suppose you go to visit an art museum such as the Louvre in Paris, France. In such a setting, it's not the great masterpieces of art which are being judged by you: it is you who are being judged by the art. You reveal your own aesthetic qualities by how you react to the paintings hung there. In the same way, if you despise and reject Jesus, it doesn't reflect poorly upon Christ, but rather upon you.

Men love darkness rather than light. "Why will sinners not come into the 'light of life'? Because they love the darkness! They want to persist in their evil deeds, and this keeps them from coming to the light; for the closer the sinner gets to the light, the more his sins are exposed. It is not 'intellectual problems' that keep people from trusting Christ; it is the moral and spiritual blindness that keeps them loving the darkness and hating the light." (Wiersbe, 1986, p. 40).

**3:22-26. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.**

The phrase, “into the land of Judaea” probably means the countryside just outside of Jerusalem here. The mention of the fact that John was still baptizing indicates the events here depicted were earlier than anything recorded in Matthew, Mark, or Luke concerning Jesus’ ministry.

**3:27-30. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.**

John is quick to remind his disciples that Jesus is Lord, and that he, John, was merely the forerunner: preparing the way for Jesus.

**3:31-36. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.**

John is not here indicating there is anything inherently evil in being earthly, but only that being earthly is limited in comparison to the one who came down from Heaven. Hebrews 1:1-2 says, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds”.

In the original Greek of verse 36, “He that believeth on the Son” uses the usual **πιστεύω** (pisteuō) for “believeth”. But the word used for “believeth not” is **ἄπειθέω** (apeitheō) which conveys the meaning of to refuse both belief and obedience.

## A Brief Survey of the Gospel of John: Chapters 4-6

**4:1-3. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.**

When a real estate agent acts for you in arranging the details for the purchase of your new home, it is really you who are legally performing all the agent's acts. So also, Jesus was the true author of the baptisms which his disciples performed.

**4:4-14. And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.**

“He must needs go through Samaria.” To go from Judaea to Galilee, you have to pass through Samaria unless you're willing to make a lengthy detour through Transjordan. Many Jews did indeed choose the detour in order to avoid any contact with the Samaritans, whom they looked upon as evil syncretists, i.e. those who mixed the worship of God with the worship of idols.

The woman's surprise was not just merely because “the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans”, but because, specifically, as the NEB puts it, “Jews and Samaritans, it should be noted, do not use vessels in common.”

This story of the woman at the well is one of the most beautiful pictures of the simplicity of salvation found anywhere in the Bible. Writing on Revelation 22:17, Zane Hodges says, (Hodges, 1997, p. 134-135):

And just now, as a resurrected Jesus spoke for the last time of living water, there was no trace of a bargain. “And he who is thirsty, let him come. And whoever wishes, let him take of the water of life freely.” No special, meritorious qualifications were laid down, no binding commitments for the future. Who could take of this water? The one who was thirsty! But was even *that* too strong? Well then, simply the one who *wants* to! “Whoever wishes – let him take!”



Salvation could not be made simpler. Nor clearer. Eternal life for the asking. And the only ones left out are those who do not want it. It was, therefore, the perfect bestowal fulfilling man's highest conception of what a gift should be – totally, unspeakably, utterly *free*!

*“If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”* And she *had* asked. She had asked if He were the Christ. And He *had* given. He had given her the life-bearing truth that He was the Christ (*“I that speak unto thee am He”*). She had believed that truth and so she had living water.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

**4:15-19. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.**

Thinking that Jesus is referring to some earthly stream of water (the term “living water” was in common use to mean free flowing water from a spring), the woman asks for this permanent end to thirst so she won't have to come to the well every day.

So, Jesus pricks her soul with an inconvenient subject: the fact of her many husbands and her current cohabitation with a man who was not her husband.

**4:20-26. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.**

As many will do when a discussion gets uncomfortable, she tried to change the subject. She was probably coming to the well at this late hour to avoid the other women of the town who came to the well earlier in the day. She probably wanted to avoid their pointed stares and unwelcome whispers about her scandalous living arrangement. So, here, she attempts to deflect Jesus' attention by switching to a theological discussion instead.

But it seems Jesus had led her to this very theological point Himself. He briefly and simply introduces the fact that the entire method of worship has changed. It is no longer tied to a specific location, but is now rather to be centered in each worshipper's heart and mind and spirit.

The woman essentially asks Him, "Are you the prophesied Messiah?"

And Jesus simply answers, "Yes, I *am* the Messiah."

**4:27-30. And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.**

To speak and have a conversation with a Samaritan was not something one expected of a respected rabbi. To speak with a woman was even less expected. But to speak with a *Samaritan* woman was simply unheard of.

But this woman became one of the first (if not *the* first) Christian missionaries. She went back into town and testified as a witness of what she had seen and heard. And, she brought others to Jesus; the ultimate definition of what a missionary does.

**4:31-38. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.**

My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. "This suggests not simply an awareness of Jesus that he is called to be obedient to the Father's will, but a devotion to it and an enthusiasm for it that takes precedence over even the natural necessities of the body." (Beasley-Murray, p. 22).

Harvest time waits for no one. If you don't harvest the crop when it's ready, it spoils in the field and there's no harvest at all.

When there was an argument in Corinth over who was the greatest: Paul or Apollos, Paul wrote in I Corinthians 3:5-9, "What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one

purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building." (NIV).

**4:39-42. And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word; And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.**

"The living water which the woman received from Jesus had certainly become an overflowing fountain in her life, and others were coming to share the refreshment that she had begun to enjoy. Let us not grow weary in well doing; the most unlikely soul may prove the most effective witness." (Bruce, p. 115).

Note the effects of her witness: "many believed" (v. 39) and "many more believed" (v. 41). And how many, many more have believed down through the centuries through her simple and powerful story?

And note *their* testimony: Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah), the Savior of the world!

Never think your efforts are wasted. God makes use of your testimony in ways you may never see this side of Glory.

D. L. Moody, the famous Evangelist, when eighteen years of age, was a boot salesman in his uncle's store in Boston. His Sunday School teacher was a Mr. Kimball, and he had set his heart on winning the young man for Christ. After praying about the matter, he arranged to visit him at the boot store. "I was determined," to use his own words, "to speak to him about Christ and about his soul, and started down to Holton's boot store. When I was nearly there I began to wonder whether I ought to go in just then during business hours. I thought my call might embarrass the boy, and that when I went away the other clerks would ask who I was, and taunt him with my efforts in trying to make him a good boy. In the meantime I had passed the store, and, discovering this, I determined to make a dash for it, and have it over at once. I found him in the back part of the building wrapping up shoes. I went up to him at once, and putting my hand on his shoulder, I made what I felt afterwards was a very weak plea for Christ. I don't know just what words I used, nor could Mr. Moody tell. I simply told him of Christ's love for him, and the love Christ wanted in return. That was all there was. It seemed the young man was just ready for the light that then broke upon him, and there in the back of that store in Boston, D. L. Moody gave himself and his life to Christ." (Pickering).

**4:43-45. Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. Then when he was come into**

**Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.**

Although His home had been at Nazareth most of His life, Judaea is probably the “country” referred to here; the country in which he had no honour. The Galileans were more receptive to His ministry.

**4:46-54. So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.**

When the Son of God was born into the world, he did not give up his attributes as God. He became a man, but He remained God simultaneously; both His God nature and His human nature residing as one person: Jesus Christ.

So, here, we see the Godly attribute of omnipresence: Jesus reached out and touched the nobleman’s son at Capernaum, many miles away, by means of that omnipresence. Hebrews 1:3 tells us the Son of God is continuously “upholding all things by the word of his power”. And He was continuing to do this by means of His omnipresence and omnipotence even while incarnated as a man.

The nobleman, i.e. βασιλικὸς (basilikos) = “royal”, was quite possibly a member of the court of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. He was clearly in desperate straits and was urgently imploring Jesus to come down and save his son.

The nobleman’s urgent request may have given those around Jesus the impression he was asking this as a means of testing Jesus’ claims, as had others who were highly placed in the government of the Jews. So Jesus dealt with that impression: “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.”

The nobleman’s urgent response, “Sir, come down ere my child die” made it clear to all those around that he wasn’t merely seeking a sign: he was truly in great distress. And so Jesus comforted him with the pronouncement, “Thy son liveth” and sent him on his way back home.

Note the result: the nobleman believed, and so did his entire household. Once again, the central purpose of John’s Gospel is stressed to us, “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus

is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20: 31).

**5:1-9a. After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked:**

“Jesus first excites attention in him, and a longing after relief, by putting the question in general. The sick man does not imagine who stands before him; he thinks only a well-disposed person is desirous of helping him to the use of the water.” (Tholuck and Kaufman, p. 143).

But Jesus does much more: He heals the man with a simple command. “Rise. Take up thy bed, and walk.”

This is omnipotence at work. The man has been crippled for 38 years and Jesus corrects it completely with seven little words.

**5:9b-18. and on the same day was the sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.**

“As long as the spiritual kingdom of heaven had not commenced, the external one was to continue; neither did Christ make any alterations. Nevertheless he frequently rent from him the painful chains which a human spirit of tradition had forged. Thus the law of the Sabbath prohibited all secular servile labour.... But the Pharisees laid down thirty... species of labour, which were prohibited, Tr. Shabbath, c. 8. § 2; and mentioned, besides, that every thing which could even remotely occasion a transgression, was a violation of the law.... In the same Tr. c. 9,

healing on the Sabbath is also prohibited, except in cases where life is in danger, comp. Matt. 12: 10, 11; how much more, then, the carrying of a bed!” (Tholuck and Kaufman, p. 143).

Jesus did not hold that all illness and suffering is the direct result of sin (for example, see on John 9:1-7 below). But, in this case, He intimated sin was indeed the cause, and that further sin would result in something even worse.

When the leaders of the Jews confronted Jesus with this violation of their precepts; with having healed on the Sabbath, He openly claimed to be equal with God.

Let me repeat that: **Jesus openly claimed to be equal with God!**

Many people today will grant Jesus was a great man, a great teacher, and even perhaps a great prophet. But Jesus’ claim for Himself went way beyond all that: He openly claimed to be equal with God.

With His having made such a claim, we can call him a liar; we can say He was crazy; or we can affirm what He said to be the truth and accept that He is, indeed, equal with God. But, we cannot legitimately say He is only a great man, teacher, or prophet.

Jesus set the strict parameters for our choice: **Liar... Crazy... or God.**

Which will you choose?

The rulers of the Jews chose to do everything they could to kill Him.

**5:19-24. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.**

But Jesus didn’t let the matter lie with a simple claim of equality with God. He went on to elaborate upon that relationship in much greater detail. He delineated the relationship in the Godhead explicitly: the Father declared what was to be done and the Son did it.

Much like the way the boy Jesus learned carpentry by imitating Joseph, so also He imitates God the Father by doing the same kind of works the Father does. God the Father raises the dead. So does God the Son raise the dead and also impart spiritual life to those who are dead in sin and evil thoughts and deeds.

The Jews firmly held that only God can raise the dead. Jesus thus further claims to be God by saying He also raises the dead. It's not merely that He does God's will by raising the dead like Elijah and Elisha did; rather He claims to have the authority to raise the dead on His own authority, just like God the Father.

Furthermore, Jesus says that God the Father has delegated the authority of final judgment to God the Son. In Genesis 18:25, God is identified as "the Judge of all the earth". Here, Jesus claims that authority for Himself.

He also makes it clear that those who reject Him are also rejecting God the father. As He says further on in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Jesus there says He is the ONLY way to God.

Again, our choices are clear: Liar... Crazy... or God.

If we choose to affirm that Jesus is God, and if we turn from our sin and trust Jesus to save us, He promises us eternal life, beginning right here on Earth at the moment of our conversion. It's not just some future life in Heaven. It includes that, but it's also everlasting life beginning right here and now.

"The saying points to their permanent safety. To have eternal life now is to be secure throughout eternity." (Morris, p. 280).

**5:25-29. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.**

In this short passage, Jesus refers to Himself both as the Son of God and as the Son of man, equating the two.

Here, Jesus also lays claim to the authority to judge the entire world and to call all the dead back to life, definitely prerogatives reserved to God.

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." John 20:31.

**5:30-47. I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to**

**rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?**

When Jesus comes to Earth again, it will (as the creeds say) be to judge the quick and the dead, i.e. those who are spiritually alive through the righteousness provided by His sacrifice on the cross, and those who remain spiritually dead in trespasses and sin because they have not accepted Jesus as their Savior.

When you sign a contract, your signature must be witnessed in order for the contract to be valid. So Jesus confirms He is not simply claiming His testimony to be true, but is also calling upon them to observe the Father also bearing witness to His testimony.

John the Baptist also bore witness that Jesus is the Son of God. (John 1:34).

And, the very works Jesus was doing also bore witness.

And the Old Testament Scriptures themselves bore witness. “Had they rightly read the Scriptures they would no doubt have come to recognize the truth of his claims. But they read them with a wooden and superstitious reverence for the letter, and they never penetrated to the great truths to which they pointed.” (Morris, p. 292).

And the ultimate witness from the Old Testament Scriptures was Moses:

“You imagine that you truly obey and reverence the law—you imagine that your persecutions towards me spring from a pure zeal for the νόμος—but, to pass over all your gross violations of the law, this one thing shall convict you of blindness and disobedience, viz., because you do not show respect to the promised Prophet as Moses commanded you, Deut. 18: 18.” (Tholuck and Kaufman, p. 154).

**6:1-15. After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. Philip**



**answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.**

This story – The Feeding of the 5,000 – also appears in Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; and Luke 9:10-17.

Jesus blessed the loaves and the fish. The common form for such a blessing in those days was, “Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who bringest forth bread from the earth.”

“However plentifully the Lord bestows his grace, he has always enough and to spare for others; he is never impoverished by the generosity of his giving. So too his people, when they imitate his liberality, will prove the truth of the proverb: ‘One man gives freely, yet grows all the richer’ (Prov. 11:24).” (Bruce, p. 145).

While the leaders of the Jews refused to recognize Jesus as the prophet Moses had predicted, these recipients of the loaves and fishes proclaimed Him as that prophet indeed. They seem to have misunderstood the significance, and thus sought to make Him their Earthly King, but I wonder how many people today would not make that simple mistake in the face of similar evidence.

Jesus was ever tenderhearted toward those who struggled with the evidence, but He was hard with those who openly rejected it and tried to rely on their own self-righteousness instead.

**6:16-21. And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.**

Some have tried to deny this was a miracle at all. They say what the disciples actually saw was Jesus walking along the shore.

But that is *not* what this passage says. It clearly says Jesus was walking **ἐπι** (epi) = “on” the sea. There would have been no reason for the disciples to be terrified at the sight if Jesus were merely walking along the shore.

This is another indication that Jesus is the Son of God. Who else could walk across the lake on top of the water?

Moses stretched out his hand, and the water parted for him (Exodus 14:21-22). Elisha smote the waters and they parted for him (II Kings 2:14). But Jesus simply walked across the top of the water.

**6:22-25. The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:) When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?**

The people couldn't figure out how Jesus had come to Capernaum. Apparently, only the disciples in the boat were aware Jesus had walked across the sea.

**6:26-27. Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.**

Jesus was offering much more than just full bellies. He was not insensitive to their earthly needs, but He wanted them to perceive the eternal as well as the temporal.

**6:28-29. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.**

Believing on Jesus is the first responsibility, above all others. Nothing else matters if you don't believe on Jesus Christ. Nothing you do in this world or in this life is of any real or lasting consequence if you don't believe on Jesus Christ.

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” (John 15:5).

On the other hand, once you have passed the first step of believing on Jesus, a whole wealth of meaningful service opportunities open out before you.

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Philippians 4:13).

The Greek word is **πιστεύω** (pisteuo) = believe. It's an active verb and indicates intentional action on your part. But, even so, it's not something you can work up on your own. God gives you the gift of being able to believe. Your responsibility is to take that gift and make use of it.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

If you're uncertain in your belief, pray and read.

Pray because God tells you to pray:

“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:9-13).

And read this Gospel.

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:31).

**6:30-40. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.**

The Jews still didn't understand. They wanted bread to fill their bellies, bread which would satisfy their earthly hunger for a day. But Jesus was offering them Himself, the bread which would satisfy their spiritual hunger for all eternity.

Note this outstanding and overwhelming promise: Everyone the Father gives to Jesus, i.e. everyone who believes on Jesus, will never be cast out and will be raised to life eternal.

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.” (John 10:28-29).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16).

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:31).

**6:41-51. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.**

The English “murmured” doesn’t do full justice to the Greek **γογγύζω** (gonguzo), which carries the connotation of muttering sullen discontent and indignant complaint under one’s breath. The Jews were scandalized that this local carpenter, from a family they knew well, should claim to have come down from Heaven.

But Jesus was not surprised. They didn’t have to mutter. They could speak their complaint out loud. Jesus knew perfectly well many would reject Him, His claims, and the Father God who had sent Him.

Verse 44 says it clearly, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Paul echoes this in I Corinthians 2:14, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

The concept of salvation is, in one way, very simple:

“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” (Acts 16:31).

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” (Romans 10:9).

But, in another way, it’s rather involved and includes several steps and details:

1. Election – God chose those who would believe and be saved long before they were born. In fact, He chose them even before He created the Heavens and the Earth. “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love”. (Ephesians 1:4).

2. Common Grace – God formed His creation so it would testify to us that there is a God and that we need a relationship with Him in order to be complete. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.” (Psalm 19:1), and “The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.” (Psalm 97:6).

3. The Gospel Call – God sends someone to preach the Gospel to one who is going to believe. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! .... So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:13-15, 17).

4. Regeneration – God gives, to the one who is going to believe, Spiritual Life. In an instant, the person passes from death to life. This is what it means to be “born again”. It is done by God alone – the person who is going to believe has no part in it. It is a gift from God. It is unmerited grace.

In some of the elements of the application of redemption..., we play an active part (this is true, for example, of conversion, sanctification, and perseverance). But in the work of regeneration we play no active role at all. It is instead totally a work of God. We see this, for example, when John talks about those to whom Christ gave the power to become children of God – they “were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13 [RSV]). Here John specifies that children of God are those who are “born...of God” and our human will (“the will of man”) does not bring about this kind of birth.

The fact that we are passive in regeneration is also evident when Scripture refers to it as being “born” or being “born again” (cf. James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3; John 3:3-8). We did not choose to be made physically alive and we did not choose to be born – it is something that happened to us; similarly, these analogies in Scripture suggest that we are entirely passive in regeneration. (Grudem, p. 699).

5. Conversion (Faith and Repentance) – After regeneration, but often at almost the same instant, the person who has just been regenerated responds to the Gospel Call with faith and repentance, believing on Jesus Christ and turning away from their previous pathways of sin. (Believers

continue to struggle with sin for the rest of their lives, but sin is no longer a friend: it's now an enemy).

6. Justification (Right Legal Standing Before God) – Immediately upon conversion, God justifies the new believer by legally declaring him/her forgiven and righteous. This, like regeneration, is something which God does, completely without any participation by the new believer. “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Romans 8:30).

The gospel call invited us to trust in Christ for forgiveness of sins. Regeneration made it possible for us to respond to that invitation. In conversion we did respond, trusting in Christ for forgiveness of sins. Now the next step in the process of applying redemption to us is that God must respond to our faith and do what he promised, that is, actually declare our sins to be forgiven. This must be a *legal declaration* concerning our relationship to God's laws, stating that we are completely forgiven and no longer liable to punishment.

A right understanding of justification is absolutely crucial to the whole Christian faith. Once Martin Luther realized the truth of justification by faith alone, he became a Christian and overflowed with the new-found joy of the gospel. The primary issue in the Protestant Reformation was a dispute with the Roman Catholic Church over justification. If we are to safeguard the truth of the gospel for future generations, we must understand the truth of justification. Even today, a true view of justification is the dividing line between the biblical gospel of salvation by faith alone and all false gospels of salvation based on good works. (Grudem, p. 722).

7. Adoption – Immediately upon justification, we are adopted into God's family as sons and daughters. This, again, is something God does. It requires no effort on our part. “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:15-18).

8. Sanctification (Growth in Likeness to Christ) – Sanctification is a life-long process in which we participate. God has an ultimate goal for each of His children: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Romans 8:29).

9. Glorification – When Christ returns, we will receive a resurrection body like His resurrection body; “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (I John 3:2).

*Glorification is the final step in the application of redemption. It will happen when Christ returns and raises from the dead the bodies of all believers for all time who have died, and reunites them with their souls, and changes the bodies of all believers who remain alive, thereby giving all believers at the same time perfect resurrection bodies like his own. (Grudem, p. 829).*

How can you know if you're really a Christian?

Having Godly parents doesn't make you a Christian. Many people have had Godly parents and have still wandered far away from the faith.

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian. Anybody can walk through the doors of a church. The term "wolf in sheep's clothing" didn't become cliché for no reason.

Doing good deeds doesn't make you a Christian. "Claiming" to have faith doesn't make you a Christian. How can you know if you're *really* a Christian?

God knows all about our fears and doubts in this area. Because He loves us and wants to comfort us in such quandaries, He gave us a six-point checklist in John's first epistle.

1. I John 2:29 – Righteousness: Doing what is right. If we're really Christians, we have a desire to please the Lord. We're far from perfect at it. We stumble a lot. But, we're dissatisfied with our failures to please God. "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."

2. I John 3:9 – Repentance: Turning from sin. We don't want to go on sinning. Of course we *do* go on sinning. But we hate our sin. Before we became Christians, we didn't hate our sin. Most likely, we didn't even think of it in those terms. If you're comfortable with your sin, you're not a Christian. "No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God." (ESV).

3. I John 4:7 – Love: Loving God and other people. If we're really Christians, He has installed His love in our hearts so that, for the first time in our lives, we can really begin to understand what love is. And this love expresses itself in love for God, love for our sisters and brothers in Christ, and even love for our enemies. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

4. I John 5:1 – Faith: Believing that Jesus is the Christ. "Christ" is not Jesus' last name. "Christ" is a title; it means "The Anointed One". It's not just having faith of some sort; it's having the very specific faith that Jesus is the unique Son of God. Prophets were anointed to speak God's words to the people. Priests were anointed to offer sacrifices to God on the people's behalf. Kings were anointed to reign and to direct the people's activities. But Jesus, as the unique Son of God, was anointed to be all three: Prophet, Priest, and King. "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well." (NIV).

5. I John 5:4 – Power: Overcoming the world. As Christians, we know we’re in a struggle. We feel our own weakness. But, we know we’ve been given power: Christ in us; the hope of glory. Everything in the world is trying to drag us down: cravings, lusts, boasting. We are under attack, but we know our struggle will ultimately lead to victory. The enemy preaches defeat. He tells us we can’t win. But we have been given the power to overcome his lies. “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

6. I John 5:18 – Security: Being kept safe. But from what? Christians are not immune to sickness. We’re not immune to accidents. We’re not immune to atrocities like 9/11. We’re not immune to physical death. So, what are we kept safe from? We are kept safe from the attempts of Satan to recapture us. “We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.” (ESV). In John 10:28, Jesus said, “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.” (ESV).

These are the six signs of our salvation. If you’re aware of these six signs in your own life, then you can be confident you are indeed a Christian and that Jesus will keep you safe and raise you up at the last day.

But, if you see no evidence of these six signs in your life, then you’re not a Christian; no matter how Godly your parents were, no matter how often you go to church, and no matter how you behave or how many good deeds you do. If you’ve always thought of yourself as a Christian, but you don’t see any evidence of these six signs in your life, then you might want to re-examine your life and ask Jesus to save you. (Smith, 2009).

**6:52-59. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.**

Some have accused Christians of being cannibals because of these verses. But the members of the synagogue congregation who heard Jesus speak these words didn’t misunderstand Him that way. They knew He was speaking figuratively.

But the natural sense of His words was offensive and it angered them. The word “strove” in the KJV (“disputed” in the ESV, “quarrel” in the Worldwide English version, “argue” in the NIV, NASB and many others) is **εμάχοντο** (emachonto) in the Greek. It’s the third person, plural, imperfect middle indicative of **μάχομαι** (machomai) which includes the concept of “to fight”, and thus means the quarrel was heated indeed. This is further emphasized by the fact that, in the Greek, **εμάχοντο** stands first in the sentence. Being in the imperfect also shows the dispute was not over quickly, but continued for some time.



**6:60-66. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.**

The dispute even caused some of His disciples (not among the twelve but others in the multitude who were following Him) to turn away.

These words echo what has been said in verses 37 and 44. None can come to Christ in faith but those who are persuaded and enabled to do so by the Spirit; but all these will come, drawn by the irresistible grace of heavenly love, and none who comes is rejected. (Bruce, p. 164).

**6:67-71. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.**

Jesus' question, "Will ye also go away?" is a Second Class Conditional in the Greek, i.e. it assumes the answer will be "No". And so it is. Peter confirms it.

It's clear Jesus knew Judas would betray Him even before He selected him as a disciple. In fact, Jesus chose him specifically for that reason: so that the scripture might be fulfilled: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." Psalm 41:9.

## A Brief Survey of the Gospel of John: Chapters 7-9

**7:1-9. After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jew's feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast: for my time is not yet full come. When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee.**

The word “walked” in verse 1 is in the imperfect tense, indicating Jesus continued walking in Galilee.

The Feast of Tabernacles lasted one week and began on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the Jewish month of Tishri. If the year was 29 A.D., this would have fallen on our October 12<sup>th</sup>, exactly six Jewish months before Jesus’ last Passover.

Jesus’ “brethren” here were probably members of His own family; other sons of Mary. Basically, they were suggesting He should go preach and perform His miracles openly in Jerusalem if He really wanted to be publicly recognized.

But, they didn’t understand His plan or His motives, because they didn’t yet believe in Him, and they wouldn’t until after the resurrection (cf. Acts 1:14; I Corinthians 15:7).

**7:10-13. But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.**

The “Jews” who were looking for Him at the feast were probably members of the Sanhedrin who were looking for an opportunity to arrest Him. They are distinguished from “the people” who were probably members of the general crowd attending the feast.

The various opinions about Jesus were not all that different from today’s opinions about Him. Some say He was a good man. Others say He was a charlatan. Still others say He was crazy; that He thought He was something more than He actually was. But a few claim Him for exactly who He says He is: the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:30-31).

**7:14-24. Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.**

Jesus had not gone to any of the great rabbinical schools of the day. He had not studied the approved curriculum. He didn't quote the proper rabbinical authorities in His teaching. He "taught as one who had authority". (cf. Matthew 7:29). The Jews couldn't fathom where or how He obtained all this learning, or how He could make pronouncements as if He Himself were God! Even the mighty prophets said, "Thus saith the Lord". But Jesus said, "I say unto you".

He defended Himself by pointing out that, for all their veneration of Moses and the Law", they obeyed neither Moses nor the law. Moses directed that they should listen to the Prophet whom God was going to raise up like Moses, but they rejected Jesus who *was* that prophet. The Law said, "Thou shalt not kill" (i.e. not do murder), yet they were seeking to murder Him.

Jesus further argued that if it was permissible to set aside one provision of the Law (do no work on the Sabbath) to fulfill another (circumcision on the eighth day), then it was also permissible to heal a man's whole body on the Sabbath day.

**7:25-31. Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me. Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?**

There was a popular misconception circulating about the Messiah in that day. Since Jesus didn't conform to it, people questioned how He could be the Messiah.

It was thought that when the Messiah came, He would remain hidden for a time until He was due to be revealed in the midst. But Jesus had not remained hidden: everyone knew where He came from.

But Jesus says they really don't know Him at all. He also says He was sent by the Father, and no one really knows the Father except Jesus. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." (Matthew 11:27).

**7:32-36. The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him. Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?**

Their sin – especially the sin of not believing in Him - (cf. John 8:21-24) made it impossible for them to go where He was going. As for those who *did* believe in Him, they indeed would be going where He was going (cf. John 12:26).

**7:37-39. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)**

As the scripture hath said...

The reference here is particularly to "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be." (Zechariah 14:8).

And to "And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh." (Ezekiel 47:9).

Also cf. Joel 3:18 and Isaiah 33:21).

**7:40-44. Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.**

The early Christians may have been the first to identify the prophet like Moses with the Messiah of David's line, and they did so because they recognized in Jesus the one who fulfilled what was written of both these expected figures. (Bruce, p. 183).

Some of them couldn't countenance Jesus as being the Christ because he was known as Jesus of Nazareth, a town in Galilee. They didn't know He had actually been born in Bethlehem, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Micah 5:2, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

**7:45-52. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.**

Even the chief priests and Pharisees missed the fact that Jesus had actually been born in Bethlehem.

Nicodemus, who earlier we might have assumed to be rather timid because he only came to Jesus by the dark of night, here stands up before the rulers and Pharisees and castigates them for ignoring their own rule of law; the rule which stated no man could be condemned unless and until he had been given the opportunity to speak in his own defense. This was both Jewish Law and Roman Law, cf. Acts 25:16.

**7:53-8:11. And every man went unto his own house. Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.**

Many modern textual critics and other scholars don't believe 7:53-8:11 is a legitimate part of John's Gospel. They take this position on both external and internal evidence.

Externally, this passage is missing from many of the earliest manuscripts of John's Gospel, and other manuscripts mark it with asterisks or daggers to indicate it as being suspect.

Internally, the style of the passage does not well match the style of the rest of John's Gospel; in fact the wordage has a closer affinity to the language of the other three (the Synoptic) Gospels.

For example, the phrase "scribes and Pharisees" is common in the Synoptic Gospels but, except for this passage, the word "scribe" doesn't appear anywhere else in John's Gospel.

Nonetheless, even though modern versions of the Bible express their suspicions concerning 7:53-8:11 (e.g. the NIV sets the passage off with ruled lines above and below and heads it with "The earliest and most reliable manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53-8:11"), none of the modern versions have dared to exclude it completely.

I, myself, find the arguments which would exclude this passage unconvincing.

To say that it does not belong in the Gospel is not identical with rejecting it as unhistorical. Its coherence and spirit show that it was preserved from a very early time, and it accords well with the known character of Jesus. (Tenney, p. 89).

Here is an incident which seems out of place in the flow of the intense tabernacle dialogue, an account that is abruptly inserted with somewhat artificial transitional language. It is almost certain that this account was not written by the Apostle John. For neither the language nor the style of writing are his. Yet this account has shown up in the inspired record in a variety of places, most recently and permanently in this Gospel, and it is a lovely witness to Jesus' caring love for one lonely, frightened sinner. The details in the story are so unusual that it is highly unlikely it could have been fabricated, as some have claimed. Professor Westcott says, "It is beyond doubt an authentic fragment of apostolic tradition." (Fredrickson, p.153).

But if we cannot feel that this is part of John's Gospel, we can feel that the story is true to the character of Jesus. Throughout the history of the church it has been held that, whoever wrote it, this little story is authentic. It rings true. It speaks to our condition. And it can scarcely have been composed in the early church with its sternness about sexual sin. (Morris, p.779).

I see several possibilities. This passage may have been written by John, but at a different time than the rest of his Gospel. It may have been written by John's amanuensis (secretary) and John may have considered it worthy of inclusion, even though it didn't fully match his own writing style. It may have been written by another apostle and conscripted by John. It may have been a short passage of apostolic writing which the church couldn't easily decide where to put (it's been found in various manuscripts after verse 36, after verse 44, at the end of John's Gospel, and even after Luke 31:38) and just finally decided to place after John 7:52.

In any event, I consider it to be a legitimate part of God's word, and I believe it should be taught as such. But, I urge you to be a Berean (cf. Acts 17:10-11): study the scriptures for yourself, and allow the Holy Spirit to guide you to understanding.

The death penalty was prescribed for adultery in Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22-23. The scribes and Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus. If He disagreed with the Mosaic Law, He could be called an enemy of God. But if He agreed with it, He could be charged with rebellion, because only the Roman Governor had the power to impose the death penalty at that time.

Instead, He turned the tables on them with “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” He didn’t dispute her guilt. He tells her, “go, and sin no more,” clearly showing He recognized that guilt. But, He did not condemn her.

Whatever textual problems are raised by this passage, ‘the account has all the earmarks of veracity’. We may safely recognize the incident as taking place in the temple precincts during Holy Week, a companion piece to those which are related in Mark 12:13-14, and especially to the incident of the tribute money. (Bruce, p. 417).

**8:12-20. Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.**

The scribes and Pharisees were trying to sit in judgment on Jesus, accusing Him violating His own dictum in John 5:31, “If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.” But Jesus says His own witness is true because He’s not a solitary witness: God the Father also bears witness to His veracity. In fact, it was really Jesus who was sitting in judgment over them. And they are found wanting because they know neither Him, nor God the Father who sent Him.

With the words, “if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also,” Jesus foreshadows His great claim of John 10:30, “I and my Father are one.”

And here in verse 12 He makes another great claim about Himself, saying, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

And, as His followers, not only do we have the light of life, but we also reflect that light to others, “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.” (Matthew 5:14).

And the world needs us to reflect that light, “And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?” (Luke 6:39).

**8:21-24. Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.**

Verse 21's "and shall die in your sins" is not the best translation here. The NIV reads, "and you will die in your sin." The Greek **ἁμαρτία** (hamartia) = "sin" is singular. There's nothing in the apparatus of either NA27 (page 349) or (Hodges, 1985, p. 321) to indicate that any of the ancient Greek manuscripts has anything other than the singular **ἁμαρτία**.

The "sin" Jesus was speaking of was clearly their refusal to believe in Him. In John 16:9, Jesus says when He has ascended and the Holy Spirit comes, the Spirit will reprove them "Of sin, because they believe not on me".

The words "I am he" in verse 24 translate the Greek **ἐγὼ εἰμι** (egō eimi).

The words *egō eimi*, which NEB renders 'I am what I am', are capable of a wide range of meaning in this Gospel. On the most pedestrian level, they mean 'It is I', as when Jesus identifies himself to the disciples on the lake (John 6:20). But when Jesus uses these words in this Gospel one wonders whether the Evangelist's thought is moving on two planes simultaneously. In the present context, at any rate, there is no question of simple self-identification: Jesus is saying something important about his person.

The NEB rendering is reminiscent of the revelation to Moses at the burning bush: when God commissioned him to go back to Egypt and tell his people that the God of their fathers was about to deliver them, Moses said, 'What name shall I give you when they ask for one?' and God said, "'I am who I am'; tell them that "I am" has sent you' (Ex. 3:13 f.). In the Septuagint of Ex. 3:14 God's reply to Moses is "Egō eimi ho ōn (I am the one who is)"; tell them that "ho ōn (The one who is)" has sent you'. If a direct reference had been intended to Ex. 3:14 in the present passage, one might have expected *ho ōn* rather than *egō eimi*. It is more probable here that *egō eimi* echoes 'I am He' (*ἄνι ἡὺ*), used repeatedly as a divine affirmation in Isa. 40-55 and translated *egō eimi* in the LXX (e.g. Isa. 41:4; 43:10, 13, 25; 46:4; 48:12). (Bruce, p. 193).

**8:25-30. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. As he spake these words, many believed on him.**



Jesus declares His crucifixion (i.e. “When ye have lifted up the Son of man”) will be His definitive answer to the question, “Who art thou?”

Here He foreshadows His great claim of John 10:18, where He affirms He has the power to both lay down His life and to take it up again, “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

**8:31-47. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.**

Jesus is speaking to two different groups here. First, He speaks to those who believed on Him, and tells them if they continue in His word, i.e. follow and obey His teaching; they will be freed from the bondage of false beliefs and ushered into His kingdom of truth.

Then the other group pipes up and claims they are Abraham’s children and have never been in bondage (conveniently failing to note 400 years in Egypt, 70 years in Babylon, and the Diaspora). But Jesus simply tells them sin is their slavemaster. They may physically be Abraham’s descendants, but Abraham’s true children are those who follow his example.

They then essentially called Jesus an illegitimate bastard, i.e. one “born of fornication”, denying the virgin birth, and casting aspersions on the honor of His mother, Mary. They claim God is their Father.

But Jesus says God is *not* their Father. God is *His* Father, but *their* father is Satan, the devil. Notice that Jesus doesn’t say they don’t believe Him even though He speaks the truth; He says

the fact He speaks the truth is the very *reason* why they refuse to believe Him. Because they are children of Satan, the truth is anathema to them.

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild...

Not *always* so meek and mild! Jesus did not deal lightly with willful, intentional self-righteous sin. Back in John 2:15, we read that Jesus drove the money changers out of the temple with a whip, "And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables".

And we also read more about Jesus' opinion of these scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:23-39, where he calls them outwardly decorated graves, snakes, murderers, and hypocrites:

<sup>23</sup>Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

<sup>24</sup>Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

<sup>25</sup>Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

<sup>26</sup>Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

<sup>27</sup>Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

<sup>28</sup>Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

<sup>29</sup>Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

<sup>30</sup>And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

<sup>31</sup>Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

<sup>32</sup>Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

<sup>33</sup>Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

<sup>34</sup>Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

<sup>35</sup>That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

<sup>36</sup>Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

<sup>37</sup>O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

<sup>38</sup>Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

<sup>39</sup>For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

**8:48-59. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.**

Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote (Chafer, 1940, p. 279):

Most emphatic, indeed, is this claim on the part of the Savior to pre-existence. He said, "Before Abraham was, I am." That the phrase "I am" sets forth the meaning of the ineffable name, Jehovah, and that it asserts no less than eternal existence, has been demonstrated under the general theme of Biblical Theism. It is evident, too, that the Jews recognized that by this statement Christ declared Himself to be Jehovah. This is seen in their bitter resentment. How could He, being not yet fifty years old, have existed before Abraham? In answer to this query Christ replied, that He not only existed before Abraham, but that He had always existed prior to the time when He was speaking. Such is the claim embodied in the application of

the eternal I am to Himself. For the last degree of blasphemy, which the Jews believed this to be, they were by their law obligated to stone Him to death. This they proceeded to do, but Christ displayed the very supernatural power which He had professed by disappearing from their midst.

**9:1-7. And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.**

Pain, suffering, and disastrous events can sometimes be God's punishment and discipline. C. S. Lewis tells us, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains; it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world." (Lewis, p. 81).

But, here, Jesus tells us this is not a case of specific punishment or discipline, but rather part of the general result of the fall of man; a situation He was going to use to show forth the works and glory of God.

Here again, as in John 8:12, Jesus labels Himself as the light of the world; the one who gives sight to the blind (both physically and spiritually).

**9:8-12. The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.**

His neighbors were astonished. They knew the man; they knew he had been blind from birth. The miracle was so staggering that some of them thought it couldn't be him; they thought it was only somebody who looked like him.

When the neighbors questioned the formerly blind man about how his eyes were opened, he related the event exactly as it happened, identifying his Benefactor as "A man that is called Jesus."

The very first step of faith is believing a fact. In this man's case, the fact was "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight."

In our case, the fact is related by the Apostle Paul in I Timothy 1:15a, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”.

**9:13-17. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.**

It was the Sabbath day.

Jesus had healed the paralytic man on the Sabbath day (John 5:1-18) and the leaders of the Jews tried to kill Him for it. Now, He had done it again!

So, when the formerly blind man was brought to the Pharisees, they questioned him very closely indeed.

Some of the Pharisees tied their analysis of the event to Exodus 31:14, “Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.”

Jesus had made a paste of earth and saliva. That was work. He had also healed a man. That was also work. Therefore He had broken the Sabbath and could not possibly be a man of God.

But others of the Pharisees argued, “How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?” Perhaps Nicodemus was one of this group. This question certainly sounds like his opening greeting in John 3:2, “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”

In John’s writings, his primary word for a miracle is **σημείον** (sēmeion) = sign. This is the word translated “miracles” here in verse 16. It’s also the word translated “miracles” in Nicodemus’ greeting of John 3:2. Other miracles in John’s Gospel include:

- John 2:11 – Turning the water into wine at the wedding in Cana (“the beginning of miracles”).
- John 2:23 – The many “miracles” He did in Jerusalem during Passover.
- John 4:54 – The healing of the nobleman’s son from a distance. (“the second miracle”)
- John 6:2 – Various healings (“miracles”).
- John 6:14 – The feeding of the five thousand (“miracle”).
- John 12:18 – Raising Lazarus from the dead (“miracle”).

And John also uses this word **σημείον** in John 20:30-31. “And many other **signs** truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written,

that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (emphasis mine).

The purpose of all the signs is to encourage belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. And that belief, in turn, has the ultimate goal of securing eternal life for those who believe.

The formerly blind man took the second step of faith: he translated his initial belief in a fact into a conclusion about the source of that fact. When the Pharisees asked what he had to say about Jesus, the man said, “He is a prophet.”

In our case, the second step is to recognize that saving sinners only works because it is the Son of God doing the work; John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

**9:18-23. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.**

The scribes and Pharisees didn't want to believe what the man was telling them. So they called in his parents, no doubt hoping they might say he wasn't their blind son at all, but somebody else instead. Or perhaps they might admit he hadn't really been born blind. Or, failing that, perhaps they would at least have some other story than “Jesus did it.” But nothing worked.

**9:24-34. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.**

So they called the man himself back in, and tried to badger him into recanting his tale. They called him a liar and a charlatan to his face. When he confounded all their arguments, they called him a vile sinner and kicked him out of the congregation.

Samuel Ngewa says:

They covered up the weakness of their argument with a show of authority, throwing the man out (9:34b). In other words, they excommunicated him from the synagogue and in so doing separated him from God, at least in their own minds. But as the Akamba (Kenya) say, *kiumo kya nguku kiikwataa mbolosya* [‘the hen’s curse does not affect the hawk’]. Their excommunication did not remove this man from God’s presence, as the next section shows. (Ngewa, p. 1298).

**9:35-38. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.**

It’s interesting to note that Jesus waited until the scribes and Pharisees were done with the man before He came and found him. How often do we wonder where God is when we’re going through a particularly difficult time? Perhaps God is just waiting to see how we will use the opportunity before He comes to comfort us.

May we use such opportunities like this formerly blind beggar did; to glorify God in the midst of it all, and to testify to His Love and His Grace and His Honor.

Then the man took the third and final step of faith: he responded to Jesus’ call for commitment.

He believed the fact of his new sight, he translated that belief into the conclusion that Jesus was a prophet, and now he commits himself to Jesus as the Son of Man and as his Lord, and he worships Him.

In our case, we need to take the first step of believing the fact that Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and then we need to take the second step of translating that belief into the conclusion that this salvation is only possible because Jesus is the Son of God.

And we also need to take the third and final step of commitment and worship. “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” (Romans 10:9).

**9:39-41. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.**

The blind beggar knew he was blind, and he didn't hesitate to admit it. But the scribes and Pharisees refused to admit their spiritual blindness. Because they insisted they could see when they were really blind, there was no way they could be helped.

Since they refused to accept the only real remedy there is, there was no other solution possible for them; they were doomed to perpetual spiritual blindness and separation from God by their own refusal to accept the help which Jesus stood ready to provide.



## A Brief Survey of the Gospel of John: Chapters 10-12

**10:1-6.** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

The sheepfold was often a sort of courtyard adjoining a house. On any given night, there might be several different flocks sojourning in the fold. But, come morning, when a shepherd entered the fold and called to his sheep, those who were of his flock would follow him out, because they knew his voice. The sheep of the other flocks wouldn't follow him, because to them he was a stranger.

**10:7-18.** Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Further on, in John 15:13, we'll read Jesus' pronouncement, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

How many of you imagine that you love someone enough to literally die for them, in their place.

....

That many? Wow! That's excellent. You have indeed caught the very thrust of Jesus' love for you. He loved you enough to die for you, in your place.

....

But now.... How many of you who love someone enough to die for them.... How many of you also imagine that you have enough personal power to just pick up your life again and return to living after you've made that sacrifice?

....

Aha! Not quite so many.

As for those of you who *do* believe you have that much personal power.... I'd like to introduce you to my two friends.... Yes, those two over there.... The ones with the white coats and the big net. They have a nice, quiet room for you, with nice, comfortable, padded walls; up there in the asylum on the hill.

**10:19-21. There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?**

Many of the scribes and Pharisees were figuratively ready to call for the men with the white coats and the big net as well. They thought Jesus was crazy. The same way people will think you or I are crazy if we try to claim we can lay down our lives and then pick them up again.

But others were more pragmatic: Crazy people can claim to have power, but Jesus *really* did have power. The fact He was able to heal one born blind was an overwhelming testimony to the truth of that power.

Jesus is God while we are not. Jesus truly did have that power. And the resurrection proved it.

The resurrection is God's "Paid-In-Full" stamp which guarantees us eternal life.

Suppose you owed the electric company a million dollars (or pounds, or rupees, or yen, or whatever) and you couldn't pay it. You're about to lose everything.

Then I come along and offer to pay the bill for you....

Are you happy?

Probably not. You probably suspect the truth: I haven't got enough money to pay the bill either.

But, now suppose Bill Gates of Microsoft comes along and offers to pay the bill for you.

That's different. Bill Gates has that kind of money.

So you and Bill go to the electric company. He pays the bill and the electric company stamps it "Paid-In-Full". That stamp says they can never try to collect that particular bill from you ever again.

Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”.

And, Romans 6:23 begins, “For the wages of sin is death”.

*Eternal death and separation from God.*

But Romans 6:23 goes on to say, “but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Jesus, God the Son, paid that price at the crucifixion.

And, by the Resurrection, God the Father and God the Son stamped the bill “Paid-In-Full”!

If Jesus is your savior, nobody can ever try to collect that bill from you again. Romans 10:9, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou **SHALT** be saved.” (emphasis mine).

**10:22-30. And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.**

The leaders of the Jews surrounded Jesus and hemmed Him in. They seemed to be complaining that He was speaking in riddles and evading their questions. Now they wanted a straight answer out of Him.

Was He, or was He not, claiming to be the Messiah?

They got much more than they bargained for.

He told them, “Not only am I the Messiah; ***I AM GOD!***”

They called on Him, “If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly,” i.e., “Are you the Messiah?”

He replied, “I told you,” i.e., “Yes, I am.”

He continued, “the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me,” i.e., “The works prove that I’m the Messiah. But, not only that. I do these works in my Father’s name.”

With respect to His sheep, He said, “I give unto them eternal life”. This was one of the works he was doing in His Father’s name. But, since only God could give eternal life, this was the same as saying, “the works that I do in *God's* name, they bear witness of me,” i.e., “God is my Father.”

And He further confirmed this by stating “My Father, which gave them me, *IS GREATER THAN ALL*” Only God is greater than all.

He then sums all this up with “No man can pluck them out of my hand. No man can pluck them out of my Father’s hand. No man can pluck them out of *God's* hand. I and my Father are one. I and *God* are one,” i.e., “*I AM GOD!*”

They had asked for a plain answer, and they had gotten one.

There was no evasion. There was no attempt to soften the claim. Jesus didn’t say, “I represent God.” He didn’t say, “I’m like God”. He didn’t even say, “I’m A God”.

He said plainly, “*I AM GOD!*”

And it’s clear His questioners understood His answer exactly that way, because they immediately “took up stones again to stone him.”

**10:31-39. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him. Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,**

They knew exactly what He meant. They intended to stone Him, “because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.”

Jesus made them an offer, “If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.”

Today, He’s making us exactly the same offer, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:30-31).

They didn’t accept His offer. Instead, “they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand”.

How will we respond to His offer today? Will we accept it? Or will we, like them, throw stones at Him and try to kill Him instead?

**10:40-42. And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there.**

In Jerusalem, the religious center of Israel, they tried to kill Jesus.

Here, in the comparatively despised region of Perea, they listened to the words of the great, but now dead, preacher John the Baptist and came to Jesus and believed.

Back in the fourth chapter, in the even more despised region of Samaria, the people listened to the simple witness of the outcast woman at the well and came to Jesus and believed.

I thank my Lord that no voice; not mine; not yours; is ever so humble that it cannot glorify His name and point others to Jesus.

“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11).

**11:1-16. Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.**

“And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe”. Here is another statement of the great purpose of John’s Gospel, ala John 20:30-31, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are

written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

“When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” This sounds odd, since Jesus certainly knew Lazarus was indeed going to die.

There is ample evidence for the biblical idiom in which ‘not ... but’ means ‘not only ... but also’. But the words mean more than that: the glory of God was to be demonstrated in the raising of Lazarus from death, so that while the illness resulted in temporary death, it resulted more impressively in resurrection and life. (Bruce, p.240).

The raising of Lazarus was one of the signs which were written “that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

But do note that Lazarus’ resurrection was not like Jesus’ resurrection. Lazarus was merely raised back to life. His body was not changed into a spiritual body like Jesus’ body was at His resurrection. And Lazarus most surely died again later in life and now awaits the ultimate resurrection at the end of the age just like the rest of us.

**11:17-27. Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.**

Note that Martha calls Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God, and He does not contradict her.

John 11:25, “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live”.

In John 8:12, He makes the great claim, “I am the light of the world”.

In John 10:18, He makes the great claim, “I will lay down my life and take it up again”.

In John 10:30, He makes the great claim, “I and my Father are One”, i.e., “***I AM GOD!***”

And here, He makes the great claim, “I am the resurrection and the life”.

These are not the words of someone who is merely a great prophet: no true prophet would ever claim Godhood for himself.

These are not the words of someone who is merely a great teacher: no truly great teacher would ever claim Godhood for himself.

These are not the words of someone who is merely crazy: no merely crazy person could perform the miracles of Jesus.

The only truly supportable and sustainable conclusion about Jesus is that He is exactly who He claims to be: “I am the light of the world. I will lay down my life and take it up again. I am the resurrection and the life. I and my Father are One. ***I AM GOD!***”

Martha had taken the third and final step of faith: she had made her commitment in response to Jesus’ invitation to believe.

**11:28-32. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.**

Mary rose quickly, taking the fact He was calling for her as a command to come. Arriving in his presence, she fell down at His feet. Every time we encounter Mary of Bethany in the Gospels, she is at Jesus’ feet (cf. Luke 10:39; John 12:3).

Mary’s words echo Martha’s, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.”

**11:33-44. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was**

**dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.**

The shortest verse in the Bible is perhaps also the most poignant, “Jesus wept.” (John 11:35).

Think of it! God, Himself, wept over the death of a friend! Even knowing what He was about to do, still He wept. Even knowing the death was only temporary, still He wept. He wept, no doubt, not only over the death itself, but also over the grief which that death had caused.

How great is His love for us, that He should weep over the grief we suffer; that He should share our grief, condescending to become One with us.

How can we be so callous as to turn Him away?

The simplest children’s hymn is also the most profound:

Jesus loves me! This I know,  
For the Bible tells me so.  
Little ones to Him belong;  
They are weak, but He is strong.

*Refrain*

*Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
The Bible tells me so.*

Jesus loves me! This I know,  
As He loved so long ago,  
Taking children on His knee,  
Saying, “Let them come to Me.”

*Refrain*

Jesus loves me still today,  
Walking with me on my way,  
Wanting as a friend to give  
Light and love to all who live.

*Refrain*

Jesus loves me! He who died  
Heaven’s gate to open wide;  
He will wash away my sin,  
Let His little child come in.



*Refrain*

Jesus loves me! He will stay  
 Close beside me all the way;  
 Thou hast bled and died for me,  
 I will henceforth live for Thee.

*Refrain*

Jesus loves me! Loves me still,  
 Though I'm very weak and ill,  
 That I might from sin be free  
 Bled and died upon the tree.

*Refrain*

Words: Anna Warner and David McGuire. Music: William Bradbury.

**11:45-57. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples. And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.**

The raising of Lazarus from the dead was the capstone of Jesus' public ministry. It solidified peoples' opinions about Him. Some believed on Him. But others ran off to tell the Pharisees what He had done.

The Sanhedrin was the Jewish Supreme Court and consisted of 71 members, including the presiding High Priest, Caiaphas.

Jesus was now extremely popular in some circles (although His popularity had waned somewhat in other circles because He had refused to become enmeshed in a political coup, c.f. John 6:15) and many of the common people thought He was the promised Messiah. The Sanhedrin was

afraid a popular uprising would occur, with or without Jesus' permission, and the Romans would then take away their current arrangement of self-government under Roman rule, imposing direct Roman rule instead, which, of course, would mean the end of the Sanhedrin itself.

So the Sanhedrin determined to kill Jesus. But, God Himself had put the sentence of death in Caiaphas' mouth.

Remember what Jesus said in John 10:18, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

So, the chief priests and the Pharisees, i.e. the Sanhedrin, published the order which made it clear to everyone who heard. They intended to arrest Jesus. They probably kept the predetermined death sentence to themselves, planning to carry out a sham of a trial to make everything at least *seem* to be legitimate.

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The first half of John's Gospel has dealt primarily with the three years of His public ministry.

The second half deals with the last week of His life, and with His death and resurrection.

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**12:1-8. Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.**

Jesus had committed Himself to follow the divine purpose His Father had set before Him, despite the temptations to depart from it to ensure His own power and safety, cf. Luke 4:13.

John now relates the sequence of events leading up to the crucifixion with even greater detail and precision than he has heretofore exhibited.

Nard was an oriental perfume. A pound (roughly about a pint or a half liter) constituted a very large amount. The three hundred pence would have been about equivalent to an entire year's wages for an ordinary laborer.

Indeed, it may have actually been Mary's life savings because Nard would have made an excellent investment. It wouldn't have taken up too much room, was easily portable, and was also readily negotiable on the open market.

Judas complained about the waste, but Jesus knew His crucifixion was near and that Mary was doing this in advance preparation for His burial. Mary cared about Jesus. Judas only cared about himself.

While Mary is giving her best in preparing for Jesus' death, Judas will go on to be one of the proximate causes of His death.

A little later in this Gospel there is an incident in which Jesus rebuked the disciples by washing their feet, a menial task that none of them would willingly undertake (13:2ff.). To attend to the feet was the task of the most lowly slave, so that Mary's action involved great humility as well as great devotion.... The act is all the more striking in that a Jewish lady never unbound her hair in public. (Morris, p.512).

**12:9-19. Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus. On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him. The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.**

The chief priests were so frightened by the specter of Roman retaliation against rebellion that they thought to kill Lazarus as well as Jesus, because Lazarus was a living, breathing testimony to Jesus' power.

Psalm 118:25-26 was one of the Songs of Degrees, often sung by Jewish pilgrims on their way up to Jerusalem for Passover:

Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

“Hosanna” transliterates the Greek Ὡσαννά (Hosanna), which itself transliterates the Hebrew הוֹשִׁיעָה-נָּא (hôshî‘āh-nnâ) = “give salvation now” or “give victory now”. So then the cry of John 12:13 closely parallels that of Psalm 118:25-26:

Give salvation now.

Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

The Song of Degrees was traditionally addressed to God. Now, the people were addressing the song to Jesus.

The quotation which follows this is from Zechariah 9:9, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”

This quote promises a reign of peace, not only because riding on the colt of a donkey signified peace (a conquering warrior-king would instead have ridden into town on a warhorse), but also because of the following promise in Zechariah 9:10, “And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.”

And the last sentence of Zechariah 9:10 is taken from Psalm 72:8, “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth”, which refers to the promised reign of the coming Son of David.

No wonder the Pharisees were in such a panic; nothing they said or did was able to stem the tide which seemed destined to drown them all in a sea of Roman soldiers.

**12:20-36a. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted**

**up? who is this Son of man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.**

Somehow, the fact that Greeks (as well as Jews) now wanted to meet Jesus was a signal to Jesus that his “hour” had arrived.

At the wedding in Cana, where He performed His first miracle, Jesus told his mother, “My hour is not yet come”. (John 2:4).

At the Feast of Tabernacles, when the Jews sought to arrest Him, no hands were laid on Him because, “His hour was not yet come”. (John 7:30).

When Jesus claimed to be the Light of the World, again no man was able to lay hands on Him because “His hour was not yet come”. (John 8:20).

But now, when two Greeks ask to see Him, Jesus immediate response is, “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified”. (John 12:23).

Since these men had come up to worship, it is likely that they were “God-fearers.”.... The “God-fearers” were people who were attracted by the lofty morality and the monotheism of Judaism, but who did not care to become full proselytes by circumcision. (Morris, p. 525).

As always in this Gospel, Jesus’ “Verily, Verily” (literally, “Amen, Amen”) introduces a truth of great importance, cf. John 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19, 24, 25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; 8:34, 51, 58; 10:1, 7; here in 12:24; and also 13:16, 20, 21, 38; 14:12; 16:20, 23; and 21:18).

The man who attempts to preserve his life will lose it, while the man who readily sacrifices his will keep it for eternal life. The two words translated “life” are different. The first, *psychē*, is generally rendered “soul” and denotes the individual personality, with all its related experiences and achievements. The second, *zōē*, in Johannine usage is usually coupled with the adjective *eternal* (*aiōnios*) and means the spiritual vitality that is the experience of God (John 17:3). (Tenney, p.129).

When Jesus says He will draw all men to Himself, He’s not indicating that everybody in the whole world will be saved (nor by the term “all men” does He mean that only men and not women will be so drawn). Rather, He is saying all who come to Him will come because they are drawn, i.e. it is only through this drawing that any can come to Him.

People do not naturally come to Jesus of their own accord. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (I Corinthians 2:14).

Only those who are drawn will come, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44).

When the people ask “who is this Son of Man?” they weren’t asking which individual was the Son of Man: Jesus had clearly told them *He* was the Son of Man. They were rather asking whether the “Son of Man” was to be the same person as “The Messiah” or someone different.

Note that Jesus doesn’t end this soliloquy with “While ye have light, walk in the light”. Instead, He ends it with “While ye have light, **BELIEVE** in the light” (emphasis mine). Jesus is reminding us that **HE** is the light. He’s not just talking about illumination; He’s talking about faith.

In the Greek, the word translated “believe” in John 12:36a is **πιστεύετε** (pisteuete), the second person, plural, present, active, indicative of **πιστεύω** (pisteuō) = to believe. The present tense carries the concept of a continuing activity, i.e. “is believing”; continuously believing.

But the word “be” translates the Greek **γένησθε** (genēsthe) which is the second person, plural, second aorist, middle, deponent, subjunctive of **γίνομαι** (ginomai) = to come into existence; i.e. to become. The aorist tense indicates something which will happen in an instant and be completely done on the spot, so to speak.

Believing is something to be done continuously, but becoming “children of light” happens in an instant. In that instant, one is “saved” and passes from death into life. Regeneration is something God does to you in a single moment; being born again takes no actual time at all.

Sanctification, the work of becoming more and more closely conformed to the image of Christ, is progressive and takes an entire lifetime, not being complete until He calls us home and we see Him face-to-face.

But regeneration happens in an instant.

Sanctification is something we participate in.

But regeneration is something that is done to us.

**12:36b-43. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.**

The purpose of the miracles was to draw them to Jesus and to encourage them to believe in Him. Many didn't believe, but others did.

John 20:30-31, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

**12:44-50. Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.**

At the end of the Bible, In Revelation 20:11-15, we read, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

## A Brief Survey of the Gospel of John: Chapters 13-15

**13:1-11.** Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

Up until now in John's Gospel, Jesus ministry has been directed primarily to the general populace of Jerusalem and Galilee. But, now, in Chapters 13-17, the ministry is directed to the inner circle of Jesus' disciples, cf. the phrase, "having loved *his own*" (emphasis mine).

John begins his narrative at the end of the Last Supper; i.e. after it was over. (Or perhaps, as some manuscripts have it, while it was "in progress" – the difference involves only a single Greek letter). For more on the events leading up to and during the Last Supper, see Matthew 26:17-35; Mark 14:12-25; and Luke 22:7-23.

Jesus is described as "knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God". Following a statement like this, we might expect Him to rise to some act of great sovereign majesty.

But, No!

Instead, observe Philippians 2:5-11:

<sup>5</sup>Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

<sup>6</sup>Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

<sup>7</sup>But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

<sup>8</sup>And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.



<sup>9</sup>Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

<sup>10</sup>That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

<sup>11</sup>And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus took on the servant's role and washed His disciples' feet, cf. Luke 22:27b, "I am among you as he that serveth."

The phrase in verse 10, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet", has suffered from many different interpretations over the centuries. I suggest we see it as a picture of salvation and fellowship with God. Our salvation occurs at our regeneration; a sovereign and instantaneous act of God. But, in order to maintain our sweet fellowship with Him, we have to regularly confess our sins to Him and be cleansed.

Sin breaks fellowship. Psalm 66:18 says, "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened" (NIV).

But I John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

**13:12-20. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.**

Jesus calls upon His disciples to be true followers; to follow in His footsteps and imitate Him.

He also, once again, repeats the purpose of the signs, "Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he."

And, once again, compare this verse to John 20:30-31, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

**13:21-30. When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.**

Tom Thatcher writes, “By having Judas depart from the Supper only after Jesus has told him to leave, John stresses Jesus’ control over his [own] destiny, and over Judas’ destiny as well. Jesus commanded Judas to betray Him, demonstrating His control at this crisis point. Having eaten Jesus’ bread, Judas departed into the “night” (v. 30). His treachery, however, would not endanger Jesus; quite the contrary, it would lead to Jesus’ ‘glorification’” (Thatcher, p. 444).

**13:31-35. Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.**

This new commandment, John 13:34-35, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another”, is to exemplify all our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Augustine wrote (Augustine, p.317, Tractate LXV):

But was not this already commanded in the ancient law of God, where it is written, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”? Why, then, is it called a new one by the Lord, when it is proved to be so old? Is it on this account a new commandment, because He had divested us of the old, and clothed us with the new man? For it is not every kind of love that renews him that listens to it, or rather yields it obedience, but that love regarding which the Lord, in order to distinguish it from all carnal affection, added, “as I have loved you.” For husbands and wives love one another, and parents and children, and all other human relationships that bind men together: to say nothing of the blameworthy and damnable love which is mutually felt by adulterers and adulteresses, by fornicators and prostitutes, and all others who are knit together by no human relationship, but by the mischievous depravity of human life. Christ, therefore,

hath given us a new commandment, that we should love one another, as He also hath loved us. This is the love that renews us, making us new men, heirs of the New Testament, singers of the new song.

John provides his own commentary on this passage in I John 2:3-11:

<sup>3</sup>And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

<sup>4</sup>He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

<sup>5</sup>But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

<sup>6</sup>He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

<sup>7</sup>Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

<sup>8</sup>Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

<sup>9</sup>He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

<sup>10</sup>He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

<sup>11</sup>But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

And also in II John 1:5-6:

<sup>5</sup>And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

<sup>6</sup>And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

A century after John's Gospel was written, Tertullian wrote about the pagans of his day and their opinion of Christians, "But it is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. *See, they say, how they love one another*, for themselves are animated by mutual hatred; how they are ready even to die for one another, for they themselves sooner put to death. And they are wroth with us, too, because we call each other brethren; for no other reason, as I think, than because among themselves names of consanguinity are assumed in mere pretence of affection." (Tertullian, p. 46, Chap. XXXIX).

**13:36-38. Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.**

Peter was impetuous and verbally clumsy, but his love for Jesus was certainly genuine. He wanted to follow Jesus. He wanted to go where He went. But Jesus knew he would crumple in the face of imminent death on that fateful night. Peter was not yet ready for the martyrdom which was eventually to be his.

**14:1-7. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.**

Roger Fredrikson writes (Fredrickson, p.229):

Yes, Jesus' disciples were troubled. They needed to be reassured by this One whom they loved, but often could not understand. He had spoken of one among them being His betrayer and that He would be leaving them, going where they could not come. These disciples were gripped by that same fearful emotion that Jesus had experienced when He faced death at the tomb of Lazarus and when He spoke of Judas betraying Him (John 11:30, 13:21).

The only remedy for this dread of death and separation, which is the stronghold of Satan, is faith in God, who is firm and cannot be shaken. If they have this faith in God they will have faith in Jesus. And in being united with Him in faith they will conquer the world through the victory of Jesus (John 16:33).

And Merrill Tenney tells us, "Jesus never speculated about a future life; he spoke as one who was as familiar with eternity as one is with his hometown." (Tenney, p.143).

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” – John uses the concept of “coming” in more ways than one.

In one sense, Jesus comes to His followers at the point of conversion. “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” (John 6:56). “And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” (I John 3:24).

In another sense, Jesus comes for us and takes us home to Heaven to be with Him when we die. “And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43). “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” (II Corinthians 5:8). “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better”. (Philippians 1:23).

But, in the final sense, Jesus will come back and raise our bodies from the dead, turning them into perfect resurrection bodies, and reuniting them with our souls at the Second Coming at the end of the age:

“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.” (I Thessalonians 4:13-18, NIV).

“Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for (that day will not come) until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.” (II Thessalonians 2:3-8, NIV).

Jesus tells them they know where He's going and they know the way to get there. But Thomas raises a very honest and penetrating question. Jesus has just told Peter that where Jesus is going, Peter cannot follow now. Thomas complains that they don't know where He's going, so how could they know the way to get there?

And Jesus replies with another one of His greatest claims, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

“I am the way!”

“I am the truth!”

“I am the life!”

“No person can reach God the Father without coming through Me!”

i.e.

**“I AM THE ONLY WAY TO GOD!”**

The “modern”, “politically correct” idea that all paths lead to God, and thus all religions are equally valid, is nothing more than a pleasant-sounding fiction made up by those to whom “tolerance” is the god of this age; those who seem to see offending anyone in any way as being the greatest sin of all.

But Jesus says, “Mohammed is NOT the way to God; Vishnu is NOT the way to God; The Jewish Temple is NOT the way to God; **I AM THE ONLY WAY TO GOD!**”

And Jesus is not yet done; He goes on to voice the even more astounding claim, “In knowing Me, you know the Father,” which echoes back to His baldest and boldest claim, “**I AM GOD!**”, i.e. John 10:30, “I and my Father are one.”

**14:8-14. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.**

“Those who have seen me **HAVE** seen the Father.” Notice Jesus doesn’t restrict this to the apostles alone. If He had made such a restriction, He would have said “You who have seen me have seen the Father.”

Likewise, when He says, “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do”, that promise is not restricted to the apostles either. It certainly did apply to the apostles: Peter preached on the day of Pentecost and 3,000 new believers were added to the church. (cf. Acts 2:14-42).

But such works are not limited to the apostles. Down through the ages, believing preachers have led thousands and thousands more to the Lord: the Church Fathers, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Billy Sunday, D.L. Moody, Billy Graham, and many, many others.

And when you tell others what Jesus has done for you, you're among that group too. When you pray for another, when you give money to God's work, when you lend a helping hand, when you do *anything* to the glory of God, you're among that group too. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." (Hebrews 6:10).

In working for the Lord, there are two traps to be wary of. The first is thinking you're doing the work yourself. Rather, you are a channel through whom the Holy Spirit is performing the work. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5).

The other danger lies in thinking you're inadequate for the task. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13).

Now we come to a passage which has often been misused, John 14:13-14, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."

Those who belong to the "name it and claim it" set think of this passage as a magic formula by which they can control God if their faith is strong enough. Just ask for it. Append "In Jesus' Name" to the request. And it's yours! ... What? ... It didn't show up? ... Then your faith must not be strong enough. You can move a mountain if you have faith like a mustard seed.

This error arises through misunderstanding the phrase "in my name". The faithful ask for many things in Jesus' name in their prayers and many don't receive the things they've asked for. Why? Is Jesus promise no good?

Not at all. James 4:3 says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Suppose you go to prayer, "Lord, my neighbor's wife is so beautiful. Please take her away from him and give her to me. I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen."

Should God honor such a prayer? Does not Exodus 20:14 command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery"? Is God likely to honor a request which would directly violate one of His own commandments?

Suppose God did allow your foolish request and, as beautiful as she is, your neighbor's wife turns out to be a shrill, nagging shrew who makes your life miserable for the next 60 years?

You would have been better off if you had instead prayed that God would have led you back to the love of the good, rather than asking for the evil you desired. And often, we don't know what's best in a given situation and should rest on the mercy of God rather than asking for

something which may not be the best for us. That's why the Lord's Prayer includes, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil".

Even Paul the apostle asked God three times to remove his thorn in the flesh, and God's response was, "No. My grace is sufficient for thee." (cf. II Corinthians 12:7-9).

And we should also realize God has four answers which He can give to our prayers, "Yes. No. Wait. And, I rejoice to give you abundantly more than you even thought to ask." (I like the fourth one best). But it's important to note "Wait". Our timing is not God's timing. What we ask for, we may indeed receive; just not until later.

Wake up, then, believer, and give careful heed to what is stated here, "*in my name:*" for in these words He does not say, "whatsoever ye shall ask" in any way; but, "in my name." How then, is He called, who promised so great a blessing? Christ Jesus, of course: Christ means King, and Jesus means Saviour! For certainly it is not anyone who is a king that will save us, but only the Savior-King; and therefore, whatsoever we ask that is adverse to the interests of salvation, we do not ask in the name of the Saviour. And yet He is the Saviour, not only when He does what we ask, but also when He refuses to do so; since by not doing what He sees to be contrary to our salvation, He manifests Himself the more fully as our Saviour. For the physician knows which of his patient's requests will be favourable, and which will be adverse, to his safety; and therefore yields not to his wishes when asking what is prejudicial, that he may effect his recovery. (Augustine, p. 332).

We may not see the benefit at the moment, but "...all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28). How much better it would be then to pray, "Father, Thy will be done. Please conform my will to Yours. Show me Your will and strengthen me to do it. For I know Your will is what is best for me, even if I don't see how right now."

Now, that's a prayer we can *really* pray "in Jesus' Name"!

**14:15-17. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.**

This is not to say both faith and works are required for salvation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9).

But, once salvation is received, it should manifest itself in good works on the basis of gratitude and the desire to please our Lord who gave Himself for us. "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." (James 2:18).



We need everywhere works and actions, not a mere show of words. For to say and to promise is easy for any one, but to act is not equally easy. Why have I made these remarks? Because there are many at this time who say that they fear and love God, but in their works show the contrary; but God requireth that love which is shown by works. (Chrysostom, p.273, Homily LXXV).

**14:18-24. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.**

The world had seen Jesus during His public ministry. They would see Him for a little while longer; during His trial and crucifixion. But, after that, they will never see Him again until they stand before Him at the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15.

But His disciples would go on seeing Him through the eyes of faith for ever and ever; “the world seeth me no more; but ye see me”. The Greek for “ye see me” here is **θεωρεῖτέ** (theōreite), the second person, plural, present, active, indicative of **θεωρέω** (theōreō) = “to be a spectator, to gaze on, contemplate; to behold, view with interest and attention”. (Perschbacher, p.202). The present indicative here shows the “seeing” would be continuous, stretching out into the infinite future.

**14:25-31. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.**

John 2:22 and 12:16 have told us Jesus’ disciples didn’t understand much of what Jesus said and did during His earthly ministry. But Jesus promises them the Holy Spirit would teach them all things. He would enable them to remember what Jesus had said and taught, and would interpret it all for them. Samuel Escobar tells us:

In John's Gospel we find Jesus' clearest teaching on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. To begin with, he says that the Holy Spirit will be sent by the Father to be with the disciples in view of the physical absence of Jesus himself (Jn 14:16). The Spirit will both remind the disciples what Jesus has taught them (Jn 14:25-26) and lead them into all the truth that Jesus has been unable to teach them while with them (Jn 16:12-13). These promises apply in the first instance to the apostles who were with Jesus in the upper room and were fulfilled in the writing of the New Testament. But they also have a secondary reference to the Spirit's continuing teaching ministry, the aim of which is to glorify Christ by taking truth from Christ and declaring it to the disciples (Jn 16:14-15). The Spirit and the disciples testify on behalf of Christ. There is a connection between the testimony of the Spirit to the church and the testimony of the church to the world. The presence of the Spirit among the disciples in the church is what makes the church different from the world. The willingness to be filled and guided by the Spirit comes from God himself to the church (Jn 14:15-17). This disposition of the church to let the Spirit act in her midst is related to the love of the church for Christ, expressed in the keeping of his commandments. (Escobar, p. 123).

Meanwhile, Satan is about to meet his doom. Satan thinks he's about to destroy the Son of God via crucifixion. But the resurrection and the ascension will be Satan's downfall. Yes, Satan continues to roar and rage and go about seeking those whom he can deceive, but the Cross spelled his ultimate defeat and destruction, which now merely awaits God's chosen point in time.

**15:1-16. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.**

This passage is the subject of various different interpretations.

Lewis Sperry Chafer comments on abiding (Chafer, 1950, p.2):

The word μένω, which is translated abide, is used about 120 times in the New Testament. Other English terms used to translate this word are equally significant—'remain, continue, tarry, endure' (Matthew 10:11; Luke 19:5; Acts 9:43; 27:31; 1 Corinthians 13:13; 2 Timothy 2:13). The Apostle John employs this verb sixty-four times, and in his writings the Authorized Version translators have rendered the word abide twenty-one times. The meaning of this Greek term is thus clearly indicated as that which remains, dwells, continues, tarries or endures; it is what abides in the position in which it is placed. In reference to spiritual reality the word abide indicates a constancy in relation to Christ. It is also true that Christ referred to His own abiding in the believer (cf. John 15:5), which relationship could never fail since it depends only on His faithfulness. There is little basis, consequently, for the sentiment expressed in certain hymns wherein Christ is petitioned to abide with the believer.

The general meaning of the word abide lends itself to at least two ideas—one which suggests a continuing in union with Christ, and another which suggests a continuing in communion with Christ. The most revealing passage is John 15:1-17, where the believer is enjoined to abide in Christ as a branch abides in the vine. This passage will not support the notion that to abide in Christ means to remain in union with Him; when this superficial rendering is accepted, only false doctrine ensues. On the other hand, it is clear that the word of exhortation directs the believer to remain in communion with Christ, as He remained in communion with His Father. As the sap flows from the vine into the branch that remains in contact, so the spiritual vitality flows from Christ to the believer who abides. Communion depends upon agreement, and agreement requires complete subjection of one to his superior: thus it is imperative that the commandments of the one shall be kept by the other. Christ said that by keeping His Father's commandments He abode in His love. There was, of course, no attempt on Christ's part to preserve a union with His Father. That had been unbroken and unbreakable from all eternity; but, on the human side, He did maintain communion by doing the Father's will.

But J. Carl Laney writes (Laney, p. 65):

There is a clear relationship in John's Gospel between believing and abiding. The one who believes in Christ—that is, who "eats My flesh and drinks My blood," a concept exegetically parallel to "believe in Him" (6:40-54)—abides in Christ (6:56). Everyone who genuinely believes in Christ does not abide in "darkness" (12:46), a Johannine symbol of unbelief (12:35-36). John equated confessing Jesus as the Son of God with abiding in God (1 John 4:15). He equated the commandment to believe with abiding in Him (1 John 3:23-24). One who allows the gospel message to abide in his heart "will abide in the Son and in the Father" (1 John 2:24). Kent comments, "These passages show that confessing Jesus as the Son of God (i.e., believing in Jesus) establishes the relation of abiding. Thus to abide in Christ is equivalent to believing on Christ." This is especially true in

John 15:1-6, which helps explain the otherwise strange absence of “believe” in this passage.

But Joseph C. Dillow disagrees with Laney’s analysis (Dillow, p. 51):

R. K. Harrison points out that the word translated “takes away” (αἶρω) is best rendered “lifts up.” It is used this way in at least 8 of its 24 occurrences in the Gospel of John (5:8-12; 8:59; 10:18,24). Contrary to Laney, Harrison says fallen vines were lifted “with meticulous care” and allowed to heal. The writer has observed this practice in the vineyards behind his home in Austria. If that is the meaning, then a fruitless branch is lifted up to put it into a position of fruit-bearing. This does not contradict verse 6, which states that a branch that does not abide is “thrown away,” literally “cast out” (βάλλω ἔξω). This would suggest that the heavenly Vinedresser first encourages the branches and lifts them in the sense of providing loving care to enable them to bear fruit. If after this encouragement, they do not remain in fellowship with Him and bear fruit, they are then cast out.

In this passage, Jesus also repeats the new commandment of John 13:34-35. Whenever the Bible repeats something, it’s wise to pay attention – the repetition indicates this is something God wishes to stress; something He considers especially important.

The Ten Commandments, the primary guide for the nation of Israel, were repeated in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. The New Commandment, our primary guide, is repeated in John 13 and here in John 15. And John comments further upon the New Commandment in I John 2 and II John 1.

**15:17-21. These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.**

The Godless world hates Christ, Christianity, and Christians. We call upon the world to face the reality of its fallen and evil state. Nobody wants to face that reality, and so they hate us for bringing it to their attention.

Being hated and persecuted shows we belong to Jesus. And we are promised rest and comfort from this persecution in II Thessalonians 1:5-10:

All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not

know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you. (NIV).

**15:22-25. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.**

The greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility; and no greater privilege could have been enjoyed than that of hearing Jesus' teaching and seeing his works....

They thus passed judgment on themselves: if they rejected the giver of true life, they shut themselves up to the only alternative – death. (Bruce, p. 314).

**15:26-27. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.**

Note that in John 14:26, it is the Father who sends the Holy Spirit. Here, it is Jesus who sends the Holy Spirit. This is another verification of "I and my Father are one."

## A Brief Survey of the Gospel of John: Chapters 16-18

**16:1-4. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.**

The willful, determined refusal to accept Jesus will alienate the Jews from the Father as well, and will lead them to believe excommunicating and even killing Christians is a service to God. Jesus promised, in the midst of such persecution, the Holy Spirit would be both a comfort and a guide.

Note that here Jesus refers to “*the* Father”, not to “my Father” and not to “He who sent Me”. He chides the Jews with the very form in which they should have recognized God.

Jesus did not detail this coming persecution for them at the beginning of His ministry because He was with them, and the force of His enemies’ ire fell naturally on Him directly. But now He was returning to the Father, His enemies would persecute His disciples in His stead. So He gave them this warning so they wouldn’t be surprised when the axe fell.

**16:5-15. But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.**

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter; Greek = **παράκλητος** (paraklētōs) = “*one called or sent for to assist another; an advocate, one who pleads the cause of another*” (Perschbacher, p. 308). For we who believe, the Holy Spirit is our guide, our comfort, our strength, and our “Defense Attorney”.

But for those who don’t believe, He is the “District Attorney”, the Prosecutor, the one who accuses them and brings before them their sin, the one who shows them their failure to meet the righteous demands of God, and the one who shows them a foretaste of the awful judgment to come.

It is the rejection of Jesus which is at the root of all the world's sin. If there is no faith in Jesus, self-centeredness, hatred, and immorality, all concrete signs of unbelief, will take over. (Fredrikson, p.244).

Also, whereas Jesus' earthly ministry had been restricted primarily to Jerusalem and Galilee, the church was soon to explode across the entire known world; the Holy Spirit would be with every Christian everywhere.

**16:16-18. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.**

John's Gospel does not strictly distinguish between future time periods. What does "A little while" refer to here? The time between His death and resurrection? The time between His ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit? The time between His ascension and His Second Coming? Or what?

There are three Greek nouns which deal with time periods. The first, **χρόνος** (chronos) speaks of a period of time, short or long; i.e., a duration. The second, **ῥά** (hōra) is "primarily, any time or period fixed by nature." (Vine, Volume IV, p. 138). The third, **καιρός** (kairos) signifies a fixed, definite period, e.g. a season or an opportune or seasonable time.

Technically **χρόνος** is the word used here, although **χρόνος** doesn't actually appear. Instead, the word is **μικρόν** (mikron), properly = little, small, "micro", the opposite of "mega". Short for **μικρὸν χρόνον**, it's the same word used for "a little while" in John 13:33 and John 14:19.

Matthew and Mark use **μικρόν** to indicate a short time in Matthew 26:73, "And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee" and in the parallel Mark 14:70. But, there is no time period indicated for the corresponding question in John 18:26.

μικρὸν χρόνον or μικρόν (neut.) is common, though μικρόν can have many different references, temporal, local, and quantitative.<sup>14</sup> ....

<sup>14</sup>Often μικρὸν χρόνον, Rev. 6:11; 20:3; Jn. 7:33; 12:35; shortened to μικρόν: Jn. 13:33; 14:19; 16:16ff.; Mk. 14:70; Mt. 26:73. (Michel, p. 650).

So, what does "a little while" mean here.

Roger Fredrikson says, "Jesus is not speaking of linear time, the measurement of hours or days or weeks, but of crisis time, kairos, time that is heavy with decision, judgment, and opportunity." (Fredrikson, p. 247).

But that certainly can't be correct: In the first place, **καιρός** doesn't carry the connotation of crisis, and, in the second place, **καιρός** doesn't even appear in this passage.

Merrill Tenney writes, "His prediction of disappearance refers to his death, but to what does the second appearance refer? He did not have in mind a coming in the person of the Holy Spirit because he had emphasized the distinction between himself and the Spirit and between their respective ministries.... The best solution seems to be that he was referring to the resurrection". (Tenney, pp. 158-159).

But, I tend to see Leon Morris' analysis as best here:

It is not surprising that these words of Jesus proved difficult to the men in the upper room. They have puzzled Christians ever since. The main problem concerns the meaning of the coming again of which Jesus speaks. Does he mean that he will come again in the person and work of the Holy Spirit? Or is he referring to the post-resurrection appearances? Or even to the ascension and the parousia? Great names can be urged in support of each of these views. Barrett is of the opinion that the ambiguity is deliberate: "By this ambiguity John means to convey that the death and resurrection were themselves eschatological events which both prefigured and anticipated the final events." In these verses we are concerned not with the resolution of the difficulty, but with stating it. But it seems that the language accords better with a reference to Jesus' death and then to the post-resurrection appearances than to anything else (though this is not to deny that, as often, there may be a secondary meaning as well).

**16:19-24. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.**

Jesus doesn't explain His obscure language, but He instead assures them that sorrow and confusion will soon be swallowed up in joy. In fact, the sorrow will not merely be replaced by joy; it will itself turn into joy. Just as the pain of childbirth turns into the joy of childbirth, the distress and sorrow of the cross will turn into the joy of the cross.

Jesus had taught them to pray to the Father (i.e. "The Lord's Prayer") but now he tells them they're going to be able to pray to the Father in Jesus' name. This was an entirely new privilege.



**16:25-30. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.**

What Jesus has said had seemed obscure, but He assures them all will soon be made plain. He will not have to pray to the Father for them, because the Father was eager to hear and respond to their prayers directly.

In John 14:13-14 we read, “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.”

And, in John 16:23-24, we read, “And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

Now, here in John 16:30, we read, “Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.”

Some, including Bruce (pp. 323-324), see a tension between the Greek words translated “ask” in these verses. In 14:13-24, the second appearance in 16:23, and in 16:24, the word is **αἰτέω** (aiteō) = “to ask, request, demand, desire” (Perschbacher, p.9). But in the first appearance of 16:23 and in 16:30, the word is **ἑρωτάω** (erōtaō) = “to ask, interrogate, inquire of... to ask, request, beg, beseech” (Perschbacher, p. 173).

They see **αἰτέω** as asking for something and **ἑρωτάω** as asking a question. But John has a penchant for expressing the same thought in different ways, and these two words are close enough in meaning that **ἑρωτάω** is rather ambiguous here. Such a fine distinction in meaning may indeed be what John intended, but I think the evidence is too weak to insist on that difference.

**16:31-33. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.**

Zechariah 13:6-7 prophesied, “And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of

hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.”

Jesus tells his disciples they are about to face a test which will drive them from His side. But, He also tells them; from henceforth they will simultaneously be “in Me” and “in the world”. And, despite the tribulation they will face in the world, they will simultaneously have peace in Him, because He has overcome the world through the cross.

**17:1-5. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.**

Chapter 17 is Jesus’ prayer for you and me. In John 17:20, Jesus says, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word”. That’s you and me! We’re the ones who have believed on Jesus through the words of the apostles written in the Bible.

If you have not yet believed on Jesus, do so now, and this chapter will then be Jesus’ prayer for you as well.

Can there be found, in all the records of mankind, in all the documents that have ever been preserved, anything that can match the record of our Saviour’s great intercessory prayer? He seems to pray here as if he stood already within the veil; not pleading in agony as he did in the garden of Gethsemane, but speaking with that authority with which he is clothed now that his work on earth is done. (Spurgeon, Volume XV, p. 53).

In John 10:10, Jesus said, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

In John 6:51, He said, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

And in John 6:40, He said, “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Now, here in John 17:3, Jesus says giving us eternal life is the way He will use to glorify the Father.

And, in verse 4, He defines that eternal life as knowing the Father and the Son.

In John 10:10, the Greek word for “abundantly” is **περισσός** (*perissos*), which carries the connotation of an exceedingly extraordinary largess. The thought is somewhat similar to that of Luke 6:38, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”

In John 6:51, the Greek words translated “for ever” are **εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα** (*eis ton aiōna*). **Αἰῶνα** is the accusative, singular, masculine of αἰών (*aiōn*) = “*a period of time of significant character; life; an era; an age... illimitable duration, eternity*” (Perschbacher, p.10).

The phrase **εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα** (literally “to the age”) is a figure of speech meaning “forever”.

Certain words are generally plural: *e.g.*, αἰῶνες (*aiōnes*), *ages*. This may be to mark the fact that eternity is made up of successive ages: the singular referring either to one such age; or including all, as a whole. Hence we have **εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα** (*eis ton aiōna*), *unto the age* or *forever* (Matt. xxi. 19, John vi. 51,58, 1 Pet. i. 25 from Isa. xi. 8, etc.). And **εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας** (*eis tous aiōnas*), *unto the ages* (Luke i. 33, Rom. i. 25; ix. 5, Heb. xiii. 8, etc.). (Bullinger, p. 531).

In John 6:40, the Greek word for “everlasting” is **αἰῶνιος** (*aiōnios*) = “*indeterminate as to duration, eternal, everlasting*” (Perschbacher, p. 10).

And, in John 17:3-4, the Greek word translated “eternal” is also **αἰῶνιος**.

And this eternal life consists of knowing the Father and the Son; i.e., of being in the same kind of relationship with them as they have with each other. John 17:21 clarifies this relationship, “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

**17:6-19. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the**

**world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.**

Jesus had revealed His Father to His followers and they had kept His word and committed themselves to Him.

Jesus is here praying for we who are believers. He is not praying for the world in general.

In like manner also in 1 John 5: 6 the Apostle forbids prayer to be made for him who has sinned *unto death* ; of which the ground is contained in this, that such an one can no more attain unto *μετάνοια. repentance*, Heb. 6: 4—6. Whilst Calvin and Melancthon think that these words contain an absolute exclusion of the world from the affectionate participation of the Redeemer, and, as it were, a giving of them over to the eternal judgment of God, Luther more correctly remarks: "How does his refusing to pray for the world harmonize with the instruction which he himself has given in Matt. 5: 44, that we should pray for our enemies? The answer to the question is short;—to pray for the world and not to pray for the world must both of them be right and good. For he himself says very soon after ' I pray not for these only, but also for those who shall believe in me through their word.' These same must yet (ere they are converted) be of the world, and he must therefore pray for the world, that is, for such *as should yet come out from the world*. [The same is contained also in v. 21, 23, see the conclusion of the remarks on v. 21.] St. Paul was indeed also of the world when he persecuted the Christians and put them to death. Still St. Stephen prayed for him that he might be converted. In the same manner also Christ prayed upon the cross, Luke 23: 24. It is therefore true that he both prays for the world and that he does not pray for the world. The difference however is this: he prays not in the same mode or measure for the world that he does for Christians. For Christians, and all those who should be converted, he prays that they might abide and increase in the true faith, and for those who are *not yet* in it, that they should come out of and depart from their evil life." (Tholuck and Kaufman, p. 392).

“I have been glorified in them” is in the perfect tense – Jesus speaks as if this had already happened – even though He knew the disciples would all soon be scattered when He was arrested. But He looks beyond to the powerful witnesses they were to become. In the same way, our own failures don’t keep Jesus and the Holy Spirit from picking us up, dusting us off, and setting us back on the path to His glory.

“And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.” He was saying these things while He was still with them, so they might know and be assured they were being welcomed into the relationship of love which had existed between the Father and the Son from all eternity past.

And the world hated them and it hates us. But Jesus leaves us in this world because it is through us; through our witness that He and the Father and the Spirit predetermined to save those out of

the world whom the Father has given Him; those who will be converted and who will believe on Him and become Christians in the future.

Awesome!

We are God's partners!

How amazing that He should choose us for so magnificent a task.

“I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” Jesus asks that we not be removed from the world because our remaining here for now will increase our ultimate happiness in Heaven, it will give greater glory to God, and it will be the means by which others are led to the Lord. But, while we remain in this world, Jesus prays that we should be kept “from the evil”, i.e., the evil of sin.

Afflictions are often beneficial, therefore Christ does not plead that we should be kept entirely from this kind of evil. Trial brings us to his feet, and gives new life to prayer, therefore Christ has not asked that this bitter-sweet might not be given to us. Death itself, which seems an evil, is a good thing for believers; so Christ does not ask that we may not die. The petition he here puts up for his people is, “I pray that thou shouldest keep them from the evil,” – the special evil, the particular, the deadly evil of sin. (Spurgeon, Volume XII, pp. 277-278).

Our lives are not to be without direction either. Just as Jesus set Himself apart for the work of the cross, so also we are set apart to be witnesses to His work.

**17:20-26. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.**

Here are you and I, being inducted into the same loving relationship which the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have enjoyed among themselves for all eternity. Here we are, participating in Their glory.

See what He prays? “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”

And we are soon to be with Him and behold His glory!

Amen and Amen!

Here we have the true “Lord’s Prayer,” the one He actually prayed. We are accustomed to speak of the prayer He taught His disciples to use as the “Lord’s Prayer,” but as the Sinless One, He could not offer the prayer Himself. The prayer before us, however, abundantly poured out for His own, begins and ends with the glory of God, and is, as Mrs. A.T. Robertson beautifully expresses it, “Like a rose, half drowning us with its sweetness, like some lovely falling melody that comes again and again, the reiterated love and longing of the chapter are almost more than we can bear.” (Lockyer, p. 228).

Even So! Come Lord Jesus!

**18:1-12. When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,**

Matthew 26:36 and Mark 14:32 refer to this garden as Gethsemane. Jesus and his disciples had come here often, and so Judas knew the place well.

The Greek word translated “a band of men” here is **σπεῖρα** (speira), a technical term for a Roman maniple or cohort, i.e. a company of soldiers. So, we see that Judas was accompanied by Roman soldiers as well as by Temple guards.

“I am He” = **ἐγὼ εἰμι** (egō eimi) in the Greek. (See discussion under John 8:21-24 above). It seems clear from the way the Roman soldiers and Temple guards fell back and collapsed when Jesus said this, that He was doing more than simply replying, “Yes, that’s me”; He was applying to Himself the name of God, “**I AM**”.

Jesus didn’t allow Peter’s attempt at violence to escalate; He now had His eyes focused on the cross and wouldn’t allow anything to stand in the way of our salvation!

**18:13-14. And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.**

Annas had been the high priest from 6 A.D. to 15 A.D. But he remained a powerful political force even after he left office. Five of his sons, one grandson, and one son-in-law (Caiaphas) were high priest after him. Caiaphas held the office from 18 A.D. to 36 A.D.

**18:15-18. And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.**

In this passage, we can't be certain whether the title "high priest" refers to Caiaphas, the current high priest, or to Annas, the high priest "emeritus"; nor can we be certain which disciple it was who was known to him.

There is, however, good reason to think it was Annas because many may have thought of him as the only legitimate high priest. Under Jewish law, the high priesthood was an appointment for life. The fact that the Romans had removed him from office may have been a "reality" which was ignored in practice.

The lady who kept the door asked Peter if he was one of Jesus' disciples. Peter said, "No".

Denial No. 1.

**18:19-24. The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.**

The Fifth Amendment to the United States of America's Constitution reads in part, "No person... shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself." This was based on English Common Law and goes back to Magna Carta in 1215 A.D. It was also a tenet of Jewish Law in Jesus' day that an accused person should not be forced to incriminate himself.

But Jesus had no reason to conceal anything about His teaching. It had all been done openly in the Temple precincts. All they had to do was ask members of the crowds who had heard Him speak.

Much like the President of the United States' State of the Union Address, it was all a matter of public record.

**18:25-27. And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.**

The guards asked Peter if he was one of Jesus' disciples. Peter said "No".

Denial No. 2.

One of Malchus' family asked Peter if he had not seen Peter in the garden with Jesus. Peter said "No".

Denial No. 3.

The rooster crowed.

Jesus' prophecy had been fulfilled.

Luke 22:61-62 records, "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."

**18:28-32. Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.**

"It was early" – It was common among Roman officials to start their work early in the morning so they could be finished well before noon.

Some have thought the Last Supper was the Passover meal. But this passage shows the Passover had not yet passed. The last meal Jesus had shared with His disciples was thus not the Passover meal.



There is, of course, characteristic Johannine irony in this reference to the chief priests' scrupulousness in the matter of ceremonial defilement, when all the time they were incurring incomparably greater moral defilement by their proceedings against Jesus. (Bruce, p.349).

History portrays Pilate as a subtle and wily politician. He knew very well this was a capital case. But he played ignorant and made the Jews openly declare it. "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death". This was not strictly correct. They had a special dispensation which allowed them to summarily put to death anyone who violated the sanctity of the Temple. They exercised that right when they stoned Stephen to death, cf. Acts 7:54-60.

They had tried to trump up such a charge against Jesus (cf. Mark 14:57-59) but had been unable to make it stick. This was because it was God's plan for Jesus to suffer death by crucifixion (a Roman execution), rather than death by stoning (the Jewish method).

**18:33-40. Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.**

Pilate examined and cross-examined Jesus and his testimony at some length, and found no guilt in Him. Jesus' kingdom, not being of this world, was no threat to Caesar. Pilate was baffled by Jesus' statement that His purpose in the world was to bear witness to the truth. Pilate had heard many cases and found the very concept of "truth" to be rather ephemeral.

So, Pilate sought to release Jesus under the pretext of the Passover tradition. But the Jews didn't want Jesus released, and they clamored for the release of the robber Barabbas instead.

## A Brief Survey of the Gospel of John: Chapters 19-21

**19:1-6a.** Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.

So Pilate examined Jesus more stringently; under the lash, the usual Roman method for extracting the truth from recalcitrant defendants before the bar. The soldiers mocked and belittled Jesus. But, still, Pilate could find no guilt in Him.

Since Jesus was not guilty of the sedition with which He was charged, Pilate may have also hoped the flogging would satisfy the Jews' thirst for blood, and allow a return to normality.

So, again Pilate tried to release Jesus, but when the Jews saw Him robed and crowned as a King, they were even further scandalized by Pilate's affront and shouted, "Crucify Him!"

**19:6b-16a.** Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified.

In saying, "Take ye him, and crucify him," Pilate seems to be mocking and taunting the Jews even more than his soldiers had mocked and taunted Jesus. He knew they didn't have the authority to crucify Jesus (and he also knew stoning rather than crucifixion was their method of execution).

So the Jews, fearing their plans were about to go awry, added another charge to their complaint against Jesus: Claiming to be a King was a capital offense against Roman law; and claiming to be the Son of God was a capital offense against Jewish law.

This seriously frightened Pilate. Perhaps Pilate thought that, being the son of a god, Jesus might suddenly turn on him and destroy him. Or, perhaps, since Caesar was considered divine himself, Pilate might have been afraid he had missed something which connected Jesus to Caesar and, thus, persecuting Jesus might have very unpleasant political ramifications.

Pilate tried to get at the source of his concern through further questioning, but it was to little avail. Jesus declined to answer further, except to confirm that “he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin,” probably meaning Caiaphas’ sin was greater because he held such a high office.

Throughout history, Pilate has been vilified as evil in the extreme. But these passages show he was probably no more evil than you or me. Here again, he attempts to release Jesus, and only gave up on it because the Jews threatened to denounce him to Caesar. Without the strength of the indwelling Holy Spirit, how many of us would be able to stand against such an angry mob and face the prospect of the loss of our jobs, our reputations, and probably also our lives; all over the fate of some itinerant preacher who everybody was calling a threat to society?

**19:16b-22. And they took Jesus, and led him away. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.**

Crucifixion, ‘the cruelest and foulest of punishments,’ as Cicero called it, was carried out in a variety of ways. The commonest way, which is implied in this narrative, was to fasten the victim’s arms or hands to the cross-beam and then hoist it on to the upright post, to which his feet were then fastened; a piece of wood attached to the upright might serve as a sort of seat (*sedecula*) – not so much for the victim’s relief as to prolong his life and his agony. The hands and feet might be fastened to the wood with thongs or nails. According to John (who is the only one of the evangelists to give this detail), nails were used in Jesus’ crucifixion (cf. 20:25). (Bruce, p. 367).

The title, “The King of the Jews” which Pilate had posted above Jesus’ head was his parting shot at the chief priests. It was a deliberate insult, openly intended to infuriate them. But it’s clear it also signaled Pilate’s capitulation to their demands, in that it represented the charge upon which they initially brought Jesus before Pilate; that of sedition. Thus it was also a sign of Pilate’s weakness and pettiness.

**19:23-24. Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted**

**my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.**

Psalm 22:18, “They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”

**19:25-27. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.**

When Jesus calls her “*woman*” He is not using a cold, formal word, but a warm term of respect. It is to John the disciple, and his mother’s nephew, that He gives the responsibility for her care. (Fredrikson, p.275).

**19:28-30. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.**

Psalm 69:21, “They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”

The Greek word translated “vinegar” here is **ὄξος** (oxos) = vinegar, i.e. sour wine. This is not the same as the wine mixed with myrrh which was offered to Jesus when He first arrived at Golgotha, and which He refused (cf. Mark 15:23).

Wine mixed with myrrh was a sedative, and Jesus was determined to suffer the crucifixion in full possession of all His faculties.

“It is finished” is **τετέλεσται** (tetelestai), the third person, singular, perfect, passive, indicative of **τελέω** (teleō) = to complete, to finish, to conclude. The perfect tense indicates the full and final completion of Jesus’ work on earth. “It is finished” was a shout of victory!

**19:31-37. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.**

“The preparation” could be used both of the Sabbath eve, i.e. Friday, and also of the Passover eve. It is thus doubly correct here since Passover fell on Saturday that year.

Breaking the legs was the common method for hastening the death of victims of crucifixion.

The only way a crucified man could obtain a full breath of air was to raise himself by means of his legs to ease the tension on his arms and chest muscles. If the legs were broken, he could not possibly do so; and death would follow shortly because of lack of oxygen. (Tenney, p.184).

But they didn't break Jesus' legs because He was already dead. As He had said He would, Jesus simply laid down His life. The Roman soldiers were experts at crucifixion and they confirmed Jesus was dead by piercing His side.

Throughout the past 20 centuries, many have tried to deny Jesus really died on the cross. But these hard-bitten executioners recognized the truth – Jesus was indeed dead.

And John was a witness too, “And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.”

And note the purpose in this statement, “that ye might believe.”

Once again we encounter the purpose for this entire Gospel, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:30-31).

This passage says, “For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.”

Exodus 12:46, “In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof.”

Psalms 34:20, “He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.”

And, finally, this passage also says, “And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.”

Zechariah 12:10, “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”

**19:38-42. And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus,**

**which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.**

These were men of position and wealth. Both Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea were members of the Sanhedrin. Their gift to Jesus was Joseph's own new tomb and Nicodemus' expensive burial preparations.

The amount of myrrh and aloes involved would have been more than enough for the burial of King Solomon and, of course, this highlights the fact that Jesus is indeed *The King*. 100 Roman pounds = about 75 pounds avoirdupois (34 kg).

For them to have done these things was an open confession of faith, and a rather dangerous one because it labeled them as friends of Jesus and thus likely associates in His sedition. But Pilate was probably just glad to be done with this troublesome episode, and thus granted them permission to remove the body.

**20:1-10. The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the LORD out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.**

John begins this chapter in the present tense, thus most vividly portraying the events of the resurrection and Mary Magdalene's emotional upheaval in the midst of those events. To avoid any furtherance of a fairly common confusion, note that Mary Magdalene is *not* the same person as Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus.

The beloved disciple peers into the tomb and sees the graveclothes lying there, making it clear something more than a simple removal of the body was afoot. Peter, of course, doesn't hesitate but runs right into the tomb.

The napkin "that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself," presents the picture of having been neatly rolled-up and set aside, as if by someone who no longer had any need of it.

When he had followed Peter into the tomb, the beloved disciple saw not only what Peter had seen, but also the greater message contained in those articles; that Jesus had risen from the dead.

The other disciples didn't believe because they saw the empty tomb – they believed because they saw the risen Lord. But the beloved disciple perceived the resurrection from the arrangement of the burial clothes, even before he saw Jesus in the flesh.

But the empty tomb was, and still is, a powerful witness indeed. If the tomb had not been empty, or if the Jews could have produced Jesus' body, the apostles' proclamation that Jesus had risen from the dead would have fallen flat.

Thus, in terms of formal logic, while the empty tomb was not a sufficient condition precedent for the truth of the resurrection, it was certainly a necessary one.

**20:11-18. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my LORD, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the LORD, and that he had spoken these things unto her.**

The resurrection is the most essentially and entirely divine of all Christ's works. It stands out forever as at once the mightiest miracle and deepest mystery connected with His redeeming work. The significance of its power is beyond all human conception or measure. For, if it be not true, the whole claim and promise of grace is confounded. But if it be true that Jesus burst the bands of death and revealed Himself as Death's conqueror, then all the claim He ever put forth is substantiated, and all the promise He ever made is confirmed. (Holden, p. 139).

And note Jesus' simple, yet new and astounding, declaration of us as His brothers and sisters, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

**20:19-23. Then 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 saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the LORD. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the**

**Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.**

“Peace be unto you” was the common greeting between friends among the Jews in those days.

The greeting is still common in Hebrew today, **שְׁלוֹמֶךָ לְךָ** (shalôm lekā), cf. the Arabic Salaam ‘alaikum. This was the greeting of Judges 6:23; 19:20; and Daniel 6:25; 10:19. In all these cases the Greek **εἰρήνη** (eirēnē) = peace is the word which translates shalmô in the LXX, and this is also the Greek word used here in John 20:19.

John 16:22 predicted, “And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.” And here in 20:19-23 that prediction is fulfilled.

In John 17:18, Jesus had prayed, “As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.” And here in 20:19-23 is the actual sending.

John 20:21 is John’s version of the Great Commission (cf. Matthew 28:18-20). Samuel Escobar writes:

Here we have not only a mandate for mission but also a model of mission style in obedience to the loving design of the Father, patterned by the example of Jesus Christ and driven by the power of the Holy Spirit. At the cross, Jesus Christ died for our salvation and also left a pattern for our missionary life. Mission requires *orthodoxy*, a concern for the integrity of the gospel, but it also requires *orthopraxis*, a concern for the way in which the missionary practice is carried on. (Escobar, p. 25).

With respect to the forgiving or retaining of sins, Tenney (p. 193) says, “We announce it; we do not create it. This is the essence of salvation. And all who proclaim the gospel are in effect forgiving or not forgiving sins, depending on whether the hearer accepts or rejects the Lord Jesus as the Sin-Bearer.”

So, therefore, by the authority of this passage I can legitimately declare that if you are one of the saved whom Christ has redeemed, your sins are all forgiven. And similarly, if you have rejected Jesus, your sins are not forgiven.

**20:24-29. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the LORD. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My**



**LORD and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.**

Jesus here makes it clear that He knew what Thomas had said; another sign of Jesus' divinity – omniscience.

But, He doesn't belittle or berate Thomas. Instead, He meets him where he is and invites him to perform the actions he had declared would be necessary before he could believe. Jesus gently provides him with all he needs for faith.

And Thomas' reaction is immediate, "My LORD and my God!"

Thomas calls Jesus both Lord and God.

And notice that Jesus does not deny Thomas' affirmation.

If I say to you, "You are Robert," and you don't respond, "No I'm not," that's the same as if you had responded, "Yes I am."

Jesus does not respond with, "No, I am not God," so that is the same as if He had responded, "Yes, I am God." And that's simply another confirmation of His declaration in John 10:30.

And, as blessed as Thomas was by that revelation, Jesus goes on to tell you and me that we are more blessed than Thomas, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

**20:30-31. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.**

This is an evangelistic document in which that "*name*" has been lifted up. For the central issue for both Jews and Greeks throughout the writing has been the identity of Jesus. And as all men and women read and ponder and dare believe that Jesus is "I AM," the Christ of God, they are given life. But those who turn against Jesus in unbelief are condemned to die. So there is the wondrous possibility of life in reading these words but also the great danger of rejection and death. We must read carefully and critically, for our lives depend upon how we read. (Fredrikson, p. 290).

**21:1-14. After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any**

meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

Peter said, "I go a fishing". Some have seen in this the voice of despair. But I believe George Morrison had a better insight into this declaration. He saw in it the voice of duty.

Will you follow me then while I handle it in this way: first, there are seasons when Christ seems to be lost; second, in such seasons duty still remains; third, through duty lies the road to restored fellowship.

When the disciples went northward into Galilee, they traveled in the radiant hope of meeting Christ. It was not in their thoughts that they would have to wait....

When Simon Peter said "I go a fishing".... It was the action of a man of energy, to whom it was torture to be sitting idle, and who would fill in the hours till his Lord appeared by doing the plain duty at his hand.... There was no joy for him – his Lord was absent – but the doing of his duty still remained....

They must have been intensely disappointed. The fish were there, for other boats were taking them, and they were quite as skillful as the best. And yet they held to it all through the night, and till the dawn was crimsoning the east, and it was then that Jesus Christ came back. They did not find Him because of their success. They found Him because of their fidelity. (Morrison, pp. 133-138).

**21:15-19. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.**

**This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.**

Jesus is intent on restoring Peter to fellowship and equipping him for the mission Jesus is about to assign to him (as well as the others). This mission is to evangelize (i.e., to catch fish), but it is not that alone. It is also to disciple those who are so caught (i.e., to feed the sheep).

Does Peter love Jesus? Jesus asks this three times, and the third time cuts Peter to the quick and exposes his pain and shame. But Jesus reassures him he is welcome in Jesus' heart and that Jesus considers him worthy to serve, "Feed my sheep."

And now Jesus reveals to Peter that he will indeed suffer martyrdom for Jesus' name, even as he had so rashly avowed (John 13:37) before his subsequent three-fold denial of Jesus.

"Follow me" translates ἀκολουθεῖ μοι (akolouthei moi). ἀκολουθεῖ is the second person, singular, present, active, imperative of ἀκολουθεῖω (akoloutheō) = to follow, imitate. The present imperative signifies continuous action, i.e. "keep on following me".

**21:20-23. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?**

Curiosity is natural. So is comparing yourself to others. But it's not really very healthy. Here Peter has just been given a commission, i.e.: "Follow me; Feed My sheep."

And what's the first thing the impetuous Peter does? He turns around and asks, "Hey, what about this guy?"

Now, it may not have been asked in that tone. Peter may have been genuinely interested in what commission Jesus had for this other disciple. But Jesus wanted Peter to concentrate on his own commission, "Follow thou Me."

And that's a good path for each of us to walk:

O soul, are you weary and troubled?  
No light in the darkness you see?  
There's a light for a look at the Savior,  
And life more abundant and free!

*Refrain*

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,*

*And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.*

Through death into life everlasting  
He passed, and we follow Him there;  
Over us sin no more hath dominion—  
For more than conquerors we are!

*Refrain*

His Word shall not fail you—He promised;  
Believe Him, and all will be well:  
Then go to a world that is dying,  
His perfect salvation to tell!

*Refrain*

*Words & Music:* Helen H. Lemmel, 1922

**21:24-25. This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.**

John knew much more about Jesus than he wrote down. He selected the words he put on the page with the overriding goal of helping his readers to penetrate below the surface of the things which had occurred to their underlying picture of Jesus, the one who loves us:

The love of God is greater far  
Than tongue or pen can ever tell;  
It goes beyond the highest star,  
And reaches to the lowest hell;  
The guilty pair, bowed down with care,  
God gave His Son to win;  
His erring child He reconciled,  
And pardoned from his sin.

*Refrain*

*O love of God, how rich and pure!  
How measureless and strong!  
It shall forevermore endure  
The saints' and angels' song.*

When years of time shall pass away,  
And earthly thrones and kingdoms fall,

When men, who here refuse to pray,  
 On rocks and hills and mountains call,  
 God's love so sure, shall still endure,  
 All measureless and strong;  
 Redeeming grace to Adam's race—  
 The saints' and angels' song.

*Refrain*

Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
 And were the skies of parchment made,  
 Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
 And every man a scribe by trade,  
 To write the love of God above,  
 Would drain the ocean dry.  
 Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
 Though stretched from sky to sky.

*Refrain*

*Words and Music:* Frederick Lehman; arranged by his daughter, Claudia L. Mays

Lets take one last look at the purpose of this Gospel:

John 20:30-31. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

For most of you who are reading this, I have never met you. And I probably never will meet you this side of Glory.

Nevertheless, it is my earnest and fervent prayer that you will believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and thus I will indeed meet you someday in His presence.

Even so.

Come Lord Jesus!

## Glossary and Bibliography

### Glossary

BHS = *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*

ESV = English Standard Version

KJV = King James Version.

LXX = The Septuagint Greek translation of the Old Testament.

MSS = Manuscripts.

MT = Masoretic Text.

NA27 = Nestle-Aland 27<sup>th</sup> Edition (of the Greek New Testament), i.e. (Aland, 2007).

NASB = New American Standard Bible.

NCV = New Century Version

NEB = New English Bible

NIV = New International Version.

UBS4 = United Bible Societies' 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (of the Greek New Testament).

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